

IN MEMORIAM
Karel Benda, MD, DrSc
January 23, 1936 - May 24, 2016



On May 24, 2016, we lost our dear friend and colleague Professor Karel Benda, a man with a unique outlook on life who was a great teacher and a responsible and dedicated physician. Professor Benda

was a prominent Czech lymphologist and the first chairman, then later Honorary Chairman of the Czech Society of Lymphology of the Czech Medical Association of J. E. Purkyne. He was a leading authority on Czech radiology who made multifaceted contributions to the development of various sectors of radiology itself, particularly intervention.

He was born January 23, 1936, in Brno, one of the major cities of the former Czechoslovakia, and he maintained a close connection to this city throughout his life. He studied in the Faculty of Medicine at Masaryk University in Brno, where he graduated in 1960. Shortly thereafter he joined the Institute of Radiology in Olomouc.

In the 1970s he worked at the Institute for Clinical and Experimental Medicine in Prague, where he honed his lifelong interest in interventional radiology. After his tenure there he went back to University Hospital Olomouc, where he habilitated in 1980.

In 1984 Professor Benda returned to Brno, where he began working at the Department of Radiology and Nuclear Medicine at the Masaryk University Faculty of Medicine, and in April 1985 he was appointed professor of radiology.

In 1989 Professor Benda de facto established the Radiological Clinic at University Hospital Brno and headed the clinic until his retirement in 2001. From then on, however, he served there as a Professor Emeritus. He was a pioneer in the field of interventional radiology, and, above all, is among the founders of both the Czech and European schools in the area of uro-radiology. He introduced a number of techniques into clinical practice in Czechoslovakia, headed by percutaneous nephrostomy.

A substantial part of his career was devoted to the lymphatic system, its disorders and its visualization. During his tenure at the Institute for Clinical and Experimental Medicine in Prague, he had the opportunity to work with Czechoslovak lymphologists of the time and International Society of Lymphology members Professors Málek, Belán, Bartos, and Brzek. Owing to this professional opportunity and experience, he was able to devote himself to the imaging of the lymphatic system from the beginning of his career.

He thoroughly expanded the methodology and evaluation of X-ray lymphography, and he was the principal researcher of the grant whose goal was to develop a special contrast agent for the displaying of lymph nodes using magnetic resonance imaging. This experience led him to be recognized as a leading expert in diagnostics of lymphatic drainage disorders.

In Brno in the 1980s, he developed a close clinical partnership with leading plastic surgeon Professor Barinka, which ultimately

led to the introduction of extensive resectional work in elephantiasis of the lower extremities in cases of chronic lymphatic insufficiency.

For his contribution to the modern concept of comprehensive care for lymphoedema patients, Professor Benda was awarded numerous accolades. In 1986, among other awards, he received the silver medal of the Faculty of Medicine at the J. E. Purkyne University in Brno. On the occasion of the founding of the Czech Society of Lymphology in 1992, he became its first chairman. He was an Executive Committee member of the International Society of Lymphology and a member of the European Society of Lymphology.

The pedagogical and scientific work of Professor Karel Benda is extensive and follows logically from his active lifestyle. It includes more than 200 scientific papers, two monographs and numerous chapters in books. He was a renowned propagator of modern techniques in the comprehensive treatment of patients with lymphedema, author of many professional publications in

the Czech Republic and abroad, and a long-time guarantor of lymphology courses in which hundreds of lymphologists and lymphotherapists were educated.

Professor Karel Benda was above all a great gentleman, and, therefore from a purely human perspective, has been indelibly imprinted in our memories as a man worth emulating.

His life motto, which he truly lived by, was expressed in the words, "I have always been convinced that a kind and objective approach has a calming effect; it gives the opportunity for perspective and allows for reasonable cooperation. People will come to an agreement with anyone, and therefore even with themselves, if the basic approach is a decent one."

On behalf of all of his friends, colleagues and students,

Martin Wald
President of the Czech Society of
Lymphology