

MARTIN WIENBECK 27.12.1936 - 27.04.2005



With the greatest sadness we announce the dramatic death of Martin Wienbeck, one of our distinguished members of the editorial board of the Romanian Journal of Gastroenterology.

Martin Wienbeck was born in Breslau in 1936. His father was full professor of pathology in the medical school of Breslau, which at that time was the second university center in Germany. He had a young age, when he lost his father, fallen in the World War 2. Overcoming the shortcomings of the German society in the postwar period, he studied medicine in Marburg and France (actually he was the German physician who spoke perfectly French). After the graduation he worked in Marburg and between 1969-1970 he collaborated with Jerry Christensen in Iowa City. It was the time he approached the methodology to investigate the gastrointestinal motility disorders, becoming well known worldwide thanks to his publications. Back in Germany he continued to work in Marburg and in 1973 he moved to Düsseldorf where he established the pioneering department for gastrointestinal motility, the first in Germany. In 1982 he worked 3 months in Mayo Clinic, Rochester. In 1987 he was appointed full professor and chairman at the Third Medical Department of the Klinikum Augsburg. Here he continued his impressing researches on gastrointestinal motility becoming an outstanding authority in this field. In 1990, he chaired in Augsburg the European Congress of Gastrointestinal Motility. As Paul Enck, secretary of the German and of the European Society of Neurogastroenterology states, "he was mentor and teacher to many of us, and cofounder of what is today called "Neurogastroenterology". He retired in glory in 2001 and continued to work hard. He organized with

tremendeous physical and financial efforts the Foundation for Medical Development and traveled to help whenever he was useful: Kenya, Haiti, etc. In recent years he settled in Kabul where he helped enormously to rebuild the medical school there. He organized a department of digestive endoscopy, of ultrasonography, helped in the training of young physicians, engaged in humanitarian aid, brought young physicians to meetings abroad, etc. Meanwhile he traveled home to his beloved family in Düsseldorf where he continued high quality scientific projects. He was admired and respected by everybody who met him. The commonest description of him that we could hear among his colleagues was "he is a very good man". He was a great friend of Romanian gastroenterologists.

During the European Congress of Neurogastroenterology in Tübingen in 2002, David L. Wingate paid an impressive and unforgettable tribute to him.

At the beginning of May he was expected to return home and to embark for DDW. He promised an editorial for our journal, too. But his fate projected something different.

Unfortunately he was killed in a traffic crash caused by a police jeep in Kabul, while he returned home from the hospital to the guestroom where he lived, on the evening of 27 April. Reports on the circumstances of his death in Kabul can be found on Internet under

<http://foundation.wienbeck.net> as well as under

<http://www.afghan-aid.de/wienbeck.htm>.

His dramatic disappearance has shocked the gastroenterological world and his friends. His wife Elisabeth, a daughter and a son with his family survive him.

We all will miss him so much.

Those who wish to continue his humanitarian work are encouraged to make donations to the Foundation Wienbeck for Medical Development, Augsburger Aktienbank,

Account No. 4379877560 (BLZ 720 207 00), IBAN Code: DE 38 720207004379877560 or through the web site of the European Society of Neurogastroenterology.

Dan L. Dumitrascu, Cluj
Jürgen Barnert, Augsburg