

## Tribute to Mirko Tos (1935-2016)



Mirko Tos, Professor, D.M.Sc., died in Copenhagen on 21st January 2018 at the age of 86.

Among rhinologists he will especially be remembered for his significant and important contribution to basic and clinical research on nasal polyposis from his time at the ENT Department at Gentofte Hospital. Mirko was also an outstanding otologist and lateral skull base surgeon. Back in 1976 he pioneered with the introduction of the translabyrinthine approach for the removal of acoustic neuromas.

Mirko, the number two of two sons, was born in a minor village, Vitomarci, Slovenia (formerly a part of Yugoslavia) on October 3rd, 1931. His dad was the mayor. During the World War II he was forced to learn German due to the occupation. After the war he left his family and home in order to attend high school at a nearest larger city. The medical studies were successfully conducted at The University of Ljubljana, Yugoslavia. In parallel with his studies he very early showed his interest and talent for teaching younger students as an instructor on several anatomic dissection courses. In his spare time he often went to Germany to work at a steel mill. In 1957 he graduated from medical school in Ljubljana and in the same year he married his wife, Nives.

They decided very quickly to leave the communist governed Yugoslavia as they moved to Germany, where Mirko had been offered a locum at a nursery associated with the steel mill while Nives worked at the local chocolate factory. Advised by good friends on the good life and possibilities in Denmark, Mirko and Nives moved after three months from Germany to Denmark, where Mirko learned Danish working as a junior radiologist at the hospital in Vejle. Their two daughters, Mirian and Vivian, were born during this time. Next stop was Copenhagen as he wanted to pursue a medical career in Denmark. In 1960 he graduated from the medical school in Copenhagen. Along with his medical studies he worked full time as a physician at local hospitals exploring several clinical specialities. From here the career within ENT went very fast. In 1966 at the age of 36 he defended at the University of Copenhagen his doctoral thesis on "The development of the tracheal glands in man". In the same year he obtained the position as associate chairman at the ENT department. During the period his widespread and original research was established comprising epidemiology and pathoge-

nesis of sinonasal polyposis, secretory otitis media and acoustic neuroma surgery. Their 3rd daughter, Tina, was born 1970. In 1980 he became professor and chairman of Gentofte Hospital. His well-known Otopathologic Laboratory was established the same year. He was very productive with his research. He has published more than 500 internationally peer reviewed papers beside numerous text books and book series with manuals on surgical procedures. Mirko was open minded, very respected and known for his ability to stimulate, inspire and supervise many young researchers and clinicians in Denmark and internationally. He always enjoyed an academic discussion and he was a popular and frequent invited faculty member at various international meetings, conferences and instructional courses. Mirko was also successful organizer: President, organizer 3rd Cholesteatoma Conference, Copenhagen, 1989, 1st International Conference on Acoustic Neuroma, Copenhagen, 1991, 15th European Rhinological Society Congress and 13th International Symposium on Infection and Allergy of Nose, Copenhagen, 1994, Copenhagen Otitis Media Conference, 1997, 5th European Skull Base Society Congress, 2001. Organizer yearly tympanoplasty courses for Scandinavian otologists. Organizer, chairman 4 international courses in acoustic neuroma surgery.

At the age of 70 (in 2001) he retired from his professor- and chairmanship. In 2002 he became affiliated – and the first professor in otolaryngology, University Maribor, Slovenia.

As a very active sportsman most of his life, Mirko enjoyed playing tennis, down-hill skiing and wind surfing. The latter especially when he stayed with the family at their summer cottage in Slovenia next to the Adriatic Sea.

Mirko died surrounded by his family on 16th January, 2018. He leaves his wife, Nives, three daughters and five grand-children. Mirko was a loving family man and has made an extraordinary contribution to our speciality and will be sorely missed.

Prof. Christian Buchwald