

In memoriam Otto Martin Hess, MD

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Otto Martin Hess

At the age of 64, shortly before his planned retirement, Otto Martin Hess succumbed to an exacerbation of a chronic disease. Otto has been an important figure in European and worldwide cardiology for the past 30 years. Born and raised in the Zurich area in Switzerland, he went to the medical school of Zurich University where he graduated in 1973. After becoming board certified as an internist and cardiologist at the local university hospital he spent more than a year in the United States - first in San Diego, California, and later in Ann Arbor, Michigan - to further his knowledge and skills in haemodynamics, myocardial perfusion, and cardiovascular imaging.

Until 1996 he was the leading figure of academic cardiology in Zurich by the side of his tutor, Hans-Peter Krayenbühl and an avid interventional cardiologist in the footsteps of the local hero Andreas Grüntzig. He then went to the University Hospital of Bern where he acted as Deputy Chief of Cardiology until his untimely death. During the past six years, in addition to his other duties he was the Head of the Cardiovascular Department encompassing cardiology, angiology, and cardiovascular surgery. A lesser known activity of his was innovation. During the past 20 years he successfully developed a preventive multi-pill, a coronary stent and an implantable heart valve, to name just a few of his achievements.

Otto has been a devoted doctor for his patients, an astute clinician, and a gifted teacher for students, doctors, and all medical personnel in general. He was well versed in talking to lay people and media, convincingly submitting his gospel of a healthy lifestyle. He has been a highly solicited speaker at national and international meetings, as well as a coveted partner in research and teaching courses. He wrote – and helped write – countless articles in the best journals and contributed to review articles and books. He was one of the lead editors of a top German cardiology textbook. He gave his continuous support to, among other projects, the Medical School of the University of Bari, Italy, as a guest professor since 1989 and he has been recipient of numerous prizes. He also has had important tasks as reviewer and editor of cardiovascular journals, thereby both fostering research and assuring the quality of publications.

Above all, Otto has been liked and adored by virtually everyone because of his never-tiring, energetic and motivating personality which he not only displayed in professional activities but also on many social occasions with peers and pupils. Together with his wife of 32 years and his two daughters, one a lawyer and one a doctor, we mourn this tremendous loss and will keep Otto's good memory in our hearts forever.

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