

Farewell to Professor Peter Schärer

Professor Peter Schärer was able to have his dream of a sorrow-free retirement fulfilled only for a short period of time. He passed away after a long illness on December 22, 2004, at the age of 71.

We, as representatives of Professor Peter Schärer's numerous students, would like to honor him by presenting a few highlights of his long professional and academic career. In looking back on his brilliant career as a teacher, clinician, and researcher, we also take the opportunity to make some very personal observations about a unique man, an extraordinary personality with the rough edges of utter honesty, but with charisma and a visionary mind.

Professor Schärer's basic clinical philosophy—calling for holistic treatment of patients, always taking biological factors into due account—has found its expression in his numerous publications. If a university teacher's success is measured by his or her impact on the careers of young academics, Peter Schärer succeeded beyond all expectations. The gratitude and the loyalty of his co-workers was something he was able to accept and enjoy to the very end of his days.

Generations of dental students, clinical and research assistants, clinicians in private practice, and dental technicians were able to participate in his clinic's success. He fiercely promoted a special partnership with dental technology which resulted in a level of quality being attained in this field—especially in the Zurich region—that is internationally renowned and maximally competitive. He was also the founder of ADOR, the Academy for Dental and Occlusal Rehabilitation, a unique association of cooperating dentists and dental technicians who meet regularly to exchange knowledge and report on their experiences. The prominent international reputation of Swiss dental technology today is something we can thank Professor Schärer for.

Since his appointment to full professorship, Peter Schärer showed a visionary feeling for any developments that might achieve clinical relevance, shaping and promoting esthetic restorative dentistry, including biomaterials, especially ceramics and dental implantology, untiringly and in an exemplary fashion. He was one of the true founding fathers of esthetic dentistry. This was true not only in Switzerland, but also in other countries. This was particularly true in the United States, where, as a dedicated dentist from Europe with a perfect command of English, he had many friends and gained great renown and respect with his intensive active presenta-

tions and his contributions at congresses. For three decades, he was one of the most reliable speakers at the annual meetings of the various prosthodontic academies held each February in Chicago. His presentations were famous not only for their scientific content, but also for his spontaneous and often humorous style.

The international acclaim for Professor Schärer's achievements and leadership manifested itself not only in the form of numerous prizes and awards, but also in the many presidencies of renowned academic associations: the European Academy of Gnathology, the American College of Prosthodontists, the International College of Prosthodontists, and the European Academy of Esthetic Dentistry, the latter two of which he was a founding member. His unrivaled openness to everything new, as well as his own professional charisma, brought "Zurich prosthodontics" global acclaim.

Peter Schärer demonstrated gifts, energies, and ambitions that went beyond what most of the best have to offer, and the result can best be summarized as "leadership." He was not only an untiring and disciplined clinician, but a strict, yet charismatic, teacher and discussion partner as well. As a coach, he was excellent at promoting a playful yet effective spirit of competition among his students—a competitiveness that was fun and that not only promoted creativity within the clinic, but also attracted excellent heads from outside. He demanded excellence not only of himself, but also of his students and collaborators. He was a stout defender of the merit principle not only in a professional sense, but also in a rhetorical and communicative sense. He loved and craved heated professional discussion, a competent and pragmatic fight. He always said right out, without hedging, what he himself thought and wanted, and what he expected from others. He was hard but fair in his judgment and able to accept hard judgment himself.

The apparently rough professional shell of Peter Schärer concealed a soft and highly sensitive core, a man of loving paternal generosity, and a man who enjoyed the good things in life—characteristics known not only to his family, but also to a small circle of his closest coworkers.

We hope that the personal and professional philosophy of Professor Peter Schärer, his dedication to dentistry, and the many personal memories he brought into our lives will live on within us for a long time to come.

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