In Memory of Jean-Claude Givel

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Published online: 22 September 2015
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Jean-Claude Givel 1946–2015

Professor Jean-Claude Givel has died, aged 69, at the end of August this year whilst attending the 46th meeting of the International Society of Surgery Society (ISS) in Thailand. He was a brilliant surgeon combining his professional life with a passion for the Arts. He had been the secretary general of the ISS for 4 years, one of the many valuable contributions to Surgery and Surgical Societies.

He was educated in Lausanne and qualified there in medicine in 1970 at the Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Vaudois (CHUV). He went on to train as a surgeon and in 1980 spent a year at the General Hospital in Birmingham with John Alexander Williams. Here he confirmed his interest in visceral but particularly colorectal surgery, and all things Anglo-Saxon. He loved the British heritage and was a proud honorary member of the Coloproctology

Section of the Royal Society of Medicine and member of the Association of Coloproctology of Great Britain and Ireland.

After training in Great Britain, he returned to Lausanne and the CHUV where he was appointed consultant surgeon. He loved to teach and was a meticulous operator. Junior surgeons remember particularly his approachability and help with their careers. In Swiss surgery, he was a trusted and a wise councillor and was President of the Swiss Surgical Society from 2000 to 2008. In 2000, he cofounded the Alpine Colorectal Meeting with me. This group played a significant role in the development of European Coloproctology. He gave the Marc Claude Marti Lecture founded in honour of another great European coloproctologist at his last Alpine Colorectal Meeting in January of this year.

Professor Givel was also an important figure in the British Journal of Surgery where he was a Council member and a Vice Chair, steering through a number of measures to globalise the journal. He had been a governor on the Board of the American College of Surgeons, a member of the international committee and chair of the scholarship selection committee. He was also a strong supporter of the European Society of Coloproctology and was one of its trustees.

On his retirement from the CHUV in 2011, he poured his energies and love for the Arts into ballet, music and Swiss artists. He was the President of the Bejart Ballet Foundation, President of the Council of the Cully Music Festival, President of the Foundation Hermanjat and was an important collector of paintings by Marius Borgeaud and hence had become the President of the Association of Friends of the artist. His lovely small chateau in Lonay just outside Lausanne was full of beautiful objets d'art. He was a true collector with an encyclopedic knowledge of his

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possessions. This extended to a brace of vintage Rolls-Royces which he was having carefully restored.

Jean-Claude would describe surgeons he particularly liked as elegant. Yet he himself was the epitome of elegance. Always in an immaculate suit, he was kind, generous, brilliantly organised and quite simply the perfect

colleague. Although he was blessed with much he was not selfish. He was a great contributor and died “on duty” helping the ISS to successfully promote the highest standards in surgery and the education of the surgeons of the future. I and many others will miss him dearly as friend and colleague.