

Professor Dr. med. Sigurd Wende

Professor Dr. Sigurd Wende died on 19 July 1991, deeply mourned by his family and his many friends. It was such a short time since his retirement and, although he had recently not been well, everyone looked forward to his enjoying his years of well-earned relaxation. He wanted to travel for fun, to see the world as a pleasure rather than in the line of work and duty as a committee man or a conference delegate. How very, very sad, and how our hearts go out to his family. How badly we now miss his robust good sense, his honest iconoclasm and his teasing sense of humour.

Moreover he worked extremely hard and efficiently. The editors of *Neuroradiology* will know that papers sent to him were always reviewed and sent on more quickly than ever seemed possible to other referees. His comments were direct and, whether laudatory or pungently critical, expressed in few words. His registration systems were an example to all: nothing was ever even temporarily mislaid from his office, and if delays occurred in returning papers or opinions to him, a reminder would come detailing the day on which the outward letter had been written and posted.

He had been a founding Editor-in-Chief, and played a crucial part in the pattern, growth and continuation of *Neuroradiology* since the beginning. Even had he not been a prolific researcher in his own right, all that editorial work would require an acknowledgement of his important influence on our specialty.

His research and his organisational ability were both acknowledged in his election to the Presidency of the XI Symposium Neuroradiologicum which took place in Wiesbaden in 1978. It was an outstandingly good meeting, memorable for the rigour of the method of blind selection of oral presentations, the beautiful opera house, the boat trip on the Rhine and a nightingale that sang daily in the sunshine beside one of the busy roads.

Sigurd Wende was born in Berlin on 22 June 1924, matriculated from High School in 1942 and then, as so many in Europe, saw military service until 1946, when he was enrolled as a medical student at the Humboldt University of Berlin. He graduated in medicine from the Free University of Berlin where he had studied, in 1952, at a time when the speciality of neuroradiology was just beginning to spring up in a number of European countries and

in North America. His path into the neurosciences was characteristically immediate. In the year of his graduation he became Medical Assistant at the Neurological and Psychiatric Hospital of the Free University of Berlin, and was recognised as a specialist in neurology and psychiatry by examination in 1958, after which he spent time as a Guest Assistant at the Neuroradiological Department of the Neurological Hospital of the University of Munich, under Professor Dr. Decker.

Returning to Berlin, he worked for 9 years under Professor Dr. Oeser in the Radiological Institute of the Free University as Medical Assistant, but during these years he equipped himself by travel and study to be a leading figure in his special field. Thus in 1959 he was with Professor Lindgren at the Serafimer-Lasarettet of Stockholm. In 1960 he served on the Workshop group for neuroradiology in the World Federation of Neurology. In 1962 he was admitted as a University Lecturer in Berlin and travelled as a Henry Ford Foundation stipendiary for a year in the United States where he worked with Dr. Juan Taveras in Neuroradiology at the Neurological Institute of the Columbia Presbyterian University, New York; with Dr. Robins at the Department of Radiology of the Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston and with Dr. Morgan at the Department of Radiology of Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore.

His advances in knowledge and seniority were marked by recognition as Scientific Advisor and certification as a specialist in roentgenography and radiotherapeutics in 1965 and nomination to be a Professor of Radiology in 1968.

Since 1968 he had been head of the Department of Neuroradiology of Johannes-Gutenberg-University of Mainz.

In addition to the constant editorial work for the journal *Neuroradiology* and the high spot of organisational struggle and honour as President of XI Symposium Neuroradiologicum he was a Founder Member of the European and German Societies of Neuroradiology and the President of the latter (in 1981). He was also a member of the International College of Angiology. The French and the Polish Societies of Radiology and the Brazilian Society of Neuroradiology had elected him to honorary membership.

Between 1952 and 1989 Sigurd Wende published 192 papers on neuroradiological, general radiological and neurological subjects and was the co-author of 12 books. His many studies of cerebral tumours, generally as a member of a distinguished team that included neurologist, neurosurgeon and neuropathologist, are exemplary and often quoted.

Sigurd Wende, surrounded by his departmental colleagues, staff and co-workers, as, for instance at his retirement meeting, was visibly leader, father and boss. A generous host and friend (he gave me the best bottle of spätzle that I have ever drunk), he could be challengingly mocking, half in jest. In the early days of our friendship he several times punctured my complaints about relative salaries or equipment with, "Remember, you won the war!". He was too big to knock down. When I stayed in their beautiful house as guest of Ruth and Sigurd I gave him a

clay sculpture of a king, wearing his crown. At home we have a sculpture of a highwayman by the same artist. Perhaps that says something about both of us.

One other thing he gave me lives always on my desktop. It is a porcelain plaque commemorating Frederick the Great, inscribed with a quotation from that inspiring figure:

„Unser Leben führt uns mit raschen Schritten von der Geburt bis zum Tode. In dieser kurzen Zeitspanne ist es die Bestimmung des Menschen für das Wohl der Gemeinschaft, deren Mitglied er ist, zu arbeiten.“

The English translation was also supplied: "Life is leading us at a quick pace from birth to death. During that short period of time man is destined to work for general welfare, for he is a part of community."

Sigurd Wende, we salute you!

G. du Boulay