

In memoriam

Kjell Johansen 1932–1987

Professor Kjell Johansen, Viking and Physiologist, is no longer with us. He died at the age of 54, on March 4, in an accident while staying on the Côte d'Azur.

Born in Norway on September 9, 1932, Kjell Johansen attended the University of Oslo where he obtained his first degrees (candidatus magister and candidatus realus) in 1955 and 1958, respectively, and his doctorate in philosophy in 1963. By this time, he had worked as a Research Fellow at the Institute for Experimental Medical Research, University of Oslo, and as a Research Associate at the Department of Physiology and Biophysics, University of Washington. His career advanced rapidly at the University of Washington, and by 1968 he became Professor of Zoology.

Three years later, he moved to Aarhus, Denmark where a beautiful animal physiology laboratory was established for him, with a fabulous system of aquaria and terraria for all purposes. There one would see crocodiles next to flamingos, crabs, fish, amphibia, turtles, lizards and snakes, each animal having been selected on the basis of a fascinating problem he had recognized. Kjell Johansen was trained in both zoology and veterinary medicine, which enabled him to perform the most delicate surgical operations like cannulating small vessels, making implants in all kinds of animals, or placing sutures. His approach towards any physiological problem was straightforward. His interests were broad: they centered on circulation, temperature relations, and respiratory physiology, but allowed excursions into other fields, such as muscular physiology and osmoregulation. Anatomy as the basis of function was never neglected. He drew from a wealth of ideas and from a wealth of animals – a comparative physiologist in the best sense. This brought him in contact with many colleagues, and he and they drew inspiration from each other. He

travelled to every part of the world where interesting animals live under special conditions – Africa, Australia, Mexico, the Amazon, the Arctic and Antarctic. Many of us remember the story of the difficulties he had explaining to the Danish custom authorities that the big clumps of earth he was carrying in his suitcase must not be broken up for inspection because they contained estivating lungfish. He published some 240 papers (not counting abstracts), many of which will be considered key papers for a long time to come. His reviews are lucid and make fascinating reading, as a compilation of the facts was always secondary to posing problems and showing nature's solutions.

Besides his manyfold other duties and activities, Kjell Johansen spent a great deal of time as an editor and consultant. He gave freely of his time and ideas. Collaborating with him, as I have had the privilege for more than 12 years, was a refreshing experience which never faded to a dull routine. He was not only an editor of the *Journal of Comparative Physiology*, but also worked on *Respiration Physiology* and other journals. He was a member of the editorial boards of *Physiological Reviews* and the book series *Zoophysiology and Ecology*. He pulled his weight soliciting manuscripts, and whatever came through him had a special touch of originality. Likewise, he advised the research councils of several countries, including the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*, for which he helped to launch a special program to foster organismic physiology. He was also a member of many societies and of two academies.

Kjell Johansen was a great man. He was a huge person, a true descendant of the Vikings – blond, powerful, enthusiastic, highly committed to his friends, and open to anybody. He was direct in his criticism and could become quite angry, but

he never carried over bad feelings and never spoke negatively behind a person's back. He was an explorer in life as he was in science. Those of us who were closer to him also knew of the problems and darker facets in his life that caused much suffering.

It would have been difficult to imagine Kjell Johansen as senescent, let alone senile. Dying while still in possession of his full physical and mental

powers would correspond to his Viking nature, and he even expected it. But as it happened, on March 4, it was much, much too early.

Bernt Linzen

on behalf of the Editors and Advisors of the *Journal of Comparative Physiology*, and of Springer-Verlag