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Professor Jan Jirout (1912–2001)

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Professor Jan Jirout

In this year we commemorate the ninetieth anniversary of the birthday of Professor Jan Jirout MD, DSc, who, unfortunately, died in October 2001. Dr Jirout was one of the world's leading authorities in neuroradiology.

He was born on July 3rd 1912 and educated in Prague, where he graduated from the Medical Faculty of Charles University in 1937. His education was completed at the Neurological Clinic of the same faculty under the supervision of two recognised professors: Kamil Henner, a neurologist, and Jan Baštecký, a radiologist. After World War II Dr Jirout, with his already excellent knowledge of neurology, quickly recognised the boom in imaging methods in his discipline. His enthusiasm, extreme intelligence and diligence orientated him towards a newly arising discipline: neuroradiology. He soon became one of most prominent representatives of this subspecialty.

Professor Jirout was an extraordinarily hard-working man, who demanded very much of himself, and at the same time a modest personality. Along with his daily work in the Clinic, he studied permanently,

read lectures, organised seminars and participated in conferences and congresses, making his own contributions. At the same time, he was active in many professional organizations. He was elected a member of the praesidium of the Czechoslovak Neurological Society, and later became its president. He was awarded *venia docendi* at the Charles University in Prague, in 1949, Doctor of Science in 1957, and in 1959 he became a professor.

By virtue of his scientific and organizational efforts, Jan Jirout soon became well known not only in Europe, but throughout the world. In 1960 he was one of the founders of the European Society of Neuroradiology. At this time, and for many years, he dealt with air studies as part of diagnostic imaging of the brain, spinal cord, spinal canal and subarachnoid space. He described caudal dislocation of the brain stem with intracranial space-occupying processes. Later on, he meticulously elaborated protocols for investigations of the dynamics of the cervical spine. In 1984 he succeeded in his efforts to hold the XII International Congress of Neuroradiology in Prague. This scientific event was very important

for the Czechoslovak Republic at this time, because the Czech and Slovakian neuroradiologists were not allowed to participate in congresses abroad, to keep close personal contacts with western colleagues or to present their studies abroad.

Professor Jirout published over 150 scientific papers in Czech and foreign journals. He produced nine neuroradiological monographs that became important textbooks of neuroradiology in Czechoslovakia and abroad; many were translated, mostly into English and German. His *Neuroradiology* (in two volumes) became a textbook in Germany and *Pneumomyelography* was published in English by Thomas in the U.S.A. Dr Jirout was also one of the first people to recognise and analysed the changing position of the spinal cord during movements of the body. Increasing recognition of his

contributions to neuroradiology ultimately led to invitations for lecture trips to Canada, the U.S.A. and Germany (1964, 1969). He was awarded honorary memberships by many European neuroradiological societies and enjoyed general respect.

When the Czech Society of Neuroradiology was established in 1992, he participated regularly at the sessions of its praesidium and general scientific events, until the end of his life.

Although scientific work occupied the majority of his time, he did not miss any opportunity to visit theatres and music festivals. He was an excellent violinist. He is survived by his wife, his son and daughter (both doctors) and grandson – Jan. The world of neuroradiology will sorely miss Jan Jirout, a great European, who truly deserved our admiration.