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Published online: 8 September 2017
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Homage to a spiritual mother, an ode to her image **Doctor Jacqueline VIGNAUD**

I would first like to thank the European Society of Neuroradiology for giving me the precious opportunity to write the eulogy of Doctor Jacqueline Vignaud.

It is a great personal honour for me to write the funeral oration of our, of my dear Jacqueline. Jacqueline, first, let

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me say it loud and clear at the very outset so that the younger ones amongst us know it and that the oh so slightly less young remember it: you were a shining ambassador of our discipline, a beacon of light, the international ‘star’ of our science at the height of your career in the 1980s. Now that that has been said, let us move to more serious things.

Jacqueline, my mentor, my spiritual mother, my dear and tender friend, I could have honoured you following conventions by retracing every step of your brilliant career, citing the numerous books you wrote, enumerating the number of prestigious learned societies and scholarly organisations that welcomed you, honoured you or that you yourself created. It would have, it is certain, taken a lesser emotional toll on me, only requiring a few clicks and ‘copy and paste’ here and there, using excerpts from your biographers who concomitantly are wonderful and renowned friends and colleagues. Amongst those, let us only name Professor Claude Manelfe and the late Doctor Kathlyn Marsot-Dupuch.

Well no! It is not what I will do, what I shall do. As my main justification, I could have argued that plagiarism is always a pale and dim representation of the original which always comes from the heart and mind being aligned, but the truth is elsewhere. I derive an immense pride and joy in having known you differently, from having been one of your students and then your colleague, confident and friend for nineteen long and beautiful years. I remember every single detail of our path: the moment when professor and student, we became friends; the moment when friends, we became trusted confidants and accomplices, how together we hummed to the tune of our personal lives intertwined with our professional one, a colourful, fantastic professional life, one that would delight us with the aroma of the rose and with the stench of manure alike.

As such, it is your friend who today is speaking, speaking to you Jacqueline; it is your friend who mourns and honours

you because, of honourability, you most certainly were the embodiment Jacqueline.

You were born in 1925, thirty years after the discovery of X-rays by Röntgen and eight years after the end of World War I when humanity realised the extraordinary contribution of radiology in curing and easing the suffering of the injured. It is indeed during this dramatic period of history that radiology became an authentic medical discipline. You were also born five years after Syria was placed under French mandate following the uprising of the Druses, an uprising which was bloodily repressed by the mandatory power of which you had just become the child. It is perhaps at that exact moment that of your very first cry, that your desire for peace took shape to encode and define your genome.

Today, it is 2017 and you leave us. Radiology, a medical discipline which you passionately fostered, and neuroradiology, a new scientific discipline whose creation and nurturing you actively and courageously participated in, have become full-blown, ever-blooming and booming sciences, bright and shining beacons of the medical discipline. But, let us look dispassionately at the facts, when I first met you in 1973, no one would have been so mad as to predict such a bloom and boom of those disciplines. Today, however, X-rays and ultrasounds vie for first place; ultrasounds battle it with protons, all of which can be measured by targeted interventions. O what a magnificent evolutionary dance of the brain we have waltzed together!

2016, the same year you leave us, the people of Syria reach the climax of their suffering. Geographically closer to us, but not emotionally closer to us, ninety-six people who are savagely assassinated on the Promenade des Anglais in Cannes also leave us. In the span of your ninety-one years of life, Syria drifted towards chaos, France towards insecurity, but, you Jacqueline, you finally incarnate the peace that was always your beam of light, your beacon of life. Ah peace! The word was the luminous philosophy of your life, a philosophy which I was immensely grateful for, sharing its joys and sorrows as I walked down the path of peace by your side. Peace was never just a word for you, it was the embodiment, the incarnation of life, all lives, all forms of life, an incarnation you sought above all, but not at any cost, dishonour being its honourable limit.

O how many times have I admired you, have I admired the mathematical constant of your peaceful behaviour. I admired you and it even when I disagreed with some of your decisions, decisions which sometimes appeared as weaknesses to me, but really that were frank successes as they took into consideration everyone's opinion and attempted to reconcile them all. Ah if there is one thing that you were not successful in transmitting to me is the wisdom of that institutional peace that inhabited you, that systemic peace that drove you. The fault is entirely mine and I regret it.

Jacqueline, you chose radiology and then neuroradiology, or they chose you, or both. All in all, in their names, we thank

you. Thanks to that inner peace that was always yours, you accepted at the onset of your career to be subjected to the 'Solomonic judgment', judgment ordered by the then great ordering power of the time, I have named Professor Hermann Fischgold. This is 1960, Professor Fischgold has two main spiritual children: Jean Metzger and you Jacqueline Vignaud and there are two positions to fill: Department Head at the Hôpital de la Pitié-Salpêtrière and Head of Radiology at the Fondation Ophtalmologique Adolphe de Rothschild. The spiritual child who shall obtain the first position will lead a renowned, prestigious large academic institution; the spiritual child who will obtain the second position will lead a small, relatively unknown, private institution then looking for strong directions. As history knows it, Mr. Metzger obtained the lead at the prestigious, large institution and you, Jacqueline, the lead at the then little-known, small institution, the FOR as you liked to call it.

What was the reason for that inequitable choice I wonder, that we shall never know for certain, but I cannot help but think that the future of French neuroradiology was decided right at the moment that decision was taken. Choosing peace, you never whispered a word of your disappointment, but when Mr. Fischgold passed away, almost in your arms, your unbridled emotion honoured him while also deeply thanking him for the pivotal decision he had taken twenty-two years prior. Was Mr. Fischgold an enlightened visionary knowing what was best for your professional life? Did he deem that an independent, autonomous, flexible, reactive and freer structure like the FOR corresponded best to your personality? Or did he know that every choice bringing with it its slice of pain, your inner peace would soften the blow of pain? The brilliance of Mr. Fischgold encourages me to lean towards the former rather than the latter, that of the choice of an enlightened visionary, because he was every bit right in the choice he made.

As you loved to say it, you would 'espouse, really marry' the FOR and, with it, the court and the courtesans that surrounded Monsieur le Baron Edmond de Rothschild, a humanist, an enlightened, benevolent, caring man. But, a court remains a court and, with it, come its capricious succession of charms and less charming disgraces. As such, it was inevitable that you would experience both, the most positive but also the most negative which a court can offer, although the negative was truly unfair to you. In a royal sanctuary, where the most exalting but also the most devastating lobbying rules as absolute monarchy, where initiative, audacity and innovation vie for the throne, you were right where you belonged because your desire for peace enabled you to disguise the negative with a beautiful royal cloth of velvet and, as such, only feel the vibration of exaltation.

You made the FOR, under the banner and pride of French neuroradiology, radiate around like the world like no one else did. Thanks to your incomparable talent, your hard-working

nature, your unbending ethics and your relentless desire to transmit knowledge to all, the quality of your teaching recognised around the world, you made French neuroradiology radiate around the world and you radiated with it. In such wave of radiation, you were helped by Mr. Gabriel Korach, your talented and trusted technician, Doctor Marie Louise Aubin, devoted to your cause for twenty-four years, and Professor Pierre Rabischon, flamboyant as ever.

Thanks to your fourfold radiation, the radiological anatomy and pathology of the rock and the orbit would soon become accessible, even luminous to all. Together, Jacqueline, we then embarked on a fantastic trip, a trip that first took us around the tomography of the rock and the orbital venography at the confines of the catheterisation of the cerebral blood vessel via the femoral artery, and back. The trip then took us on a breezy walk with the first steps of X-ray scanning before taking us surfing on its sweeping wave like the rest of the medical field. As the grand finale, our unforgettable trip took us to watch the magnificent sunrise of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). This trip we took together Jacqueline, what a trip it was!

Jacqueline, I know that you did not share the same enthusiasm and zeal for the unconventional direction your two ‘favourite’ students, Pierre Lasjaunias and myself, decided to take at the onset of their careers. You often warned us about the great uncertainty of the path we had chosen as young men, that path being that of the nascent Interventional Neuroradiology. Today, not only is its acronym NRI a symbol of joy and pride in our country, but it is also the case around the world as NRI travelled long distances becoming INR when sharing its knowledge with all.

Today I take the measure of how much Pierre and I owe you, how much we owe you in having become the men we have become today, men I hope you can be proud of. To understand the extent to which you were instrumental in our success, one must imagine a department led by Jacqueline Vignaud where Pierre Lasjaunias and Jacques Moret openly organised a new professional activity in parallel to the general orientation and activity of the department. Not only did you accept this highly unconventional situation Jacqueline, but you unconditionally embraced it, and that being despite your own personal convictions. You endorsed it despite your personal wishes, you argued for it at your own risks and perils with the administration; you never flinched including when, at the end of 1989, the forces of short-sightedness and close-mindedness took the decision to cease all interventional neuroradiology-related activities at the FOR. It is well-known that short-sightedness and close-mindedness have one instinct and one only, that instinct being fear, and, as such, only fear they serve. Fear, short-sightedness and close-mindedness could have won, but, thankfully, the then soon-to-be new director made the practice of NRI a condition of its acceptance of the

leadership position at the foundation. This ordeal most certainly hurt you, but your inner peace healed you.

All this, you did because your beautiful spirit forbade any negative assumption and projection. Like the supporter of an athletic team, you cheered every single one of Pierre and I’s steps forward, every success of ours, every external recognition of our work, no matter how small. Jealousy was always absent, pride and happiness for our achievements always answering present instead. This is truly exceptional Jacqueline. It is almost unheard of from a leader. You were Jacqueline what we call a rare, marvellous breed of leader whose personal success equals the well-being of all, you were what a true leader is, what a true leader should be at least. Every leader should derive inspiration from the luminous strength you had Jacqueline, a light which inspired everyone around you, a light which transported and thus helped every single one of your students, no matter their predicament. This light defined your career because it defined you Jacqueline.

I tried to follow your example Jacqueline. I tried to follow in the footsteps of your light. I fiercely tried. I poured all my heart in this endeavour, I put all my strength in it, and, most of all, I put in it all my admiration for you Jacqueline, but I think I lacked the inner peace that informed and gave shape to that light of yours and every action you lit up to be successful.

With my students, I humbly believe that I was successful in following in your footsteps, but where I failed to emulate you, no matter how hard I tried, Jacqueline was in keeping my peace when nefarious lobbies tried to humiliate you towards the end of your leadership. At the end of a breathtakingly shining international career, your accomplishments recognised by scientists around the world, odious lobbies tried to shadow your light. At that moment, once more, your inner peace prevailed and outshined the vilipending, shadowing behaviour of the lobbies. In the obscurity, you were dignity lighting up turpitude.

I know you forgave them because you told me. How could you not because light can never and will never be tarnished by obscurantism, by any moral, intellectual, spiritual disappointment. Dignified and proud, this is how you left the FOR, despite the sad, disparaging winds of vileness sweeping its doorstep during the last years of your mandate. They still swept on the date you left, but honour and dignity were yours to be kept, unsuccessful of your light their theft. Dignified and proud you departed, your colleagues and friends from the Hôpital du Val de Grace welcoming you, your immense knowledge and incandescent peace a gift to them, and here I am mostly thinking of and thanking Professor Yves Cordoliani.

Jacqueline, this homage as an ode to your image, to the magnificent person you were, to the magical essence you embodied is the truth. A truth admittedly simple it is, but, in meaning, strong often is the simple truth. It is a truth from which I hope those who hear it can derive motivation,

imagination and innovation to keep the beautiful flame of French neuroradiology burning because that flame is a special one: it was a flame kindled by the spark of the light of a truly enlightened woman, the kind we too little encounter in history. The country has honoured Jacqueline, Jacqueline became Knight and Officer of the National Order of the Legion of Honour in 1998, but today it is her spiritual son that has the

privilege to honour her to tell you about her inner peace that was legion across and beyond the nation.

Jacqueline, I miss you and I love you like a son.

Professor Jacques MORET

March 22, 2017