Eberhard Willich, 1919–2020

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Eberhard Willich, one of the founding members of the German-speaking Society of Pediatric Radiology (GPR), died Sept. 20, 2020, in Heidelberg at the age of 101. He lived at home with his wife, Hannelore, and spent only his last 2 days in hospital. He continued to be interested in the development of pediatric radiology right until the end.

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He was born in Stuttgart as the son of a military officer. His classical humanistic education included Latin and Greek. He graduated from several gymnasiums and, in 1943, from medical studies in Tübingen and Berlin. His doctoral thesis the same year dealt with “The Congenital Cyst of the Lung”. The Second World War precipitated his military service as a medical doctor and 4 years of captivity in the Soviet Union. After his release, he received training in internal medicine in Gießen, completed pediatric training in Stuttgart and Bremen, and completed radiologic training in Bremen. His principal mentor was Prof. Dr. Lutz Schall, director of the Children’s Hospital Bremen, whose predilection was pediatric radiology. He engaged Willich to create a pediatric radiology department in his hospital. In 1962, they jointly developed an additive piece of equipment for the X-ray investigation of children, the Paidoskop (Fa. Koch and Sterzel KG, X-ray works, Essen). In 1969, Willich was appointed head of the Department of Pediatric Radiology, Children’s Hospital, University Heidelberg. He wrote his post-doctoral thesis, “Function of Cardia in Children: Manometrical, Cinematographical and Pharmaceutical Investigations,” supported by the German Research Council. In 1973 he was awarded the title of professor, and in 1984 he retired.

His professional life reflected the development of pediatric radiology in the German-speaking part of Europe, from pediatrics to radiology. He realized that this interdisciplinary speciality needed a close relationship between pediatrics and radiology.

In 1963, Willich along with M.A. Lassrich, K.-D. Ebel and F. Schmid founded the study group for pediatric radiology. In 1970, the group’s name was changed to GPR. During Willich’s 10-year tenure as chairman of the GPR, he managed the preconditions for its recognition as a speciality in radiology.

In more than 300 publications, in textbooks and monographs, he influenced the advances in pediatric radiology. Teaching and further education were important for him to promote pediatric radiology. His teaching lectures and sessions were always stimulating. He was a convincing teacher.

He was a member of the editorial board of the journals *Radiologe*, *Zentralblatt für Kinderheilkunde* and *Pediatric*

Radiology. He compiled the literature in *Pediatric Radiology* from the beginning of 1973 for a period of 22 years.

Relationships among pediatric radiologists of Eastern European countries was important to Willich, especially before the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain. The European Society of Paediatric Radiology, GPR, German Society of Radiology, Polish Society of Radiology and Hungarian Society of Radiology awarded him honorary memberships.

His extensive education, his iron discipline and modesty, and his cryptic humor made up his personality.

Prof. Willich was a pioneer of pediatric radiology. We all remember him with deep respect and gratefulness.

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