

## In memory of Dr. Johannes Brodehl, born 20 October 1931 and died 2 September 2006

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Johannes Brodehl went to school in Berlin and finished with an Abitur degree in 1949. He studied medicine at the Free University Berlin and completed his studies in 1956. After obtaining his doctor's degree, he performed a rotating internship at the Deaconess Hospital in Buffalo, NY, USA from 1956 to 1957. This demonstrated a very early interest in international studies and cooperation that would continue throughout his personal and professional life.

After a basic research fellowship in pharmacology and pathology, he started his training in pediatrics at the University Children's Hospital in Bonn, Germany. He obtained his license to practice pediatrics in 1964 and presented his habilitation thesis on the topic that later became part of his scientific profiles: renal transport of amino acids in the developing period of infants and small children. His activity at the University Hospital in Bonn was illustrated by early contacts with the French Society of Pediatrics, with exchange visits on both sides. After senior residency from 1967 to 1970, he was the first chair in Pediatric Nephrology and Metabolic Disease at the new medical school in Hannover. He was the leading figure in pediatrics and pediatric nephrology at the Hannover University Children's Hospital. His scientific studies in amino acid transport and metabolic disturbances earned him international scientific recognition. He was the founder of the "Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Pädiatrische Nephrologie", which later performed prominent and internationally recognized studies on the treatment of nephrotic syndrome. Results of these studies appeared in international publications worldwide. He contributed more than 300 publica-



tions in international peer reviewed journals, and his success was based on superb and carefully performed studies. All his professional life he gave credit for scientific achievements to younger members of his team. This enabled them to develop their own reputation. This generous quality led to his being elected chair of numerous committees in pediatrics and nephrology. Finally, he was elected president of the German Society of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, a post he held from 1991 to 1994, and later Secretary General of the Academy of Pediatrics.

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As a scientist, Dr. Brodehl was a well-known and highly acknowledged speaker at international congresses and as a reviewer for the German Research Foundation and for numerous international journals. He was awarded several honors, including being elected a “Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians” in London, and was an honorary member of several international societies. He was given the prestigious Niko-Hallman lecture in Helsinki.

As president of the German Society of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, Dr. Brodehl felt responsible that Germany and its medical societies consider their own political past. It was his idea to pay tribute to the fate of the Jewish pediatricians in Germany who were killed or who emigrated during the years 1933–1945. He asked the committee on historical aspects of the German Society of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine to look into the history. His example of covering this topic for the first time influenced other medical societies, and this finally led to the publication of an internationally highly respected book that is now going to be printed in a second edition.

Johannes Brodehl was a prominent and important pediatric teacher for students and, in particular, for his team. His competence was based on his own training by Doerr in Kiel and Herken in Berlin. The methodical aspects of how to write a manuscript and present a talk were principles he passed on to his colleagues and students. His energy, discipline, reliability, and consistency were part of the stimulation for his students and team members, which resulted in a level of quality that his coworkers aspired to meet. These characteristics were part of the success of his Division of Pediatric Nephrology and Metabolic Disease at his Pediatric Hospital of the Medizinische Hochschule Hannover.

Dr. Brodehl’s goal was to teach his team members in diagnostic and therapeutic principles in order to improve patient care. Honesty and the proven justification were the fundamental goal, as was a broad spectrum of knowledge. Those who understood this from the very beginning took this message seriously. His scientific approach was, from the very beginning, based on questions that patients asked. Clinical relevance was a very important part of his professional life. His character was illustrated by his honest reliability, his fair attitude towards his colleagues, and his

ability to change his mind if it was proven necessary to do so. This was the framework by which he made friends and kept them.

His family—with his wife Karin and his four children—was a persistent retreat from his professional life. His holiday trips with his children together or individually were a great stimulation all his life, as in the later years were his growing number of grandchildren. His frequent and intensive contacts in his private life, together with his family, showed Johannes Brodehl as a highly motivated father. He is remembered as a soccer player, a person who loved mountain expeditions in the winter, and who also loved ship excursions on the Baltic Sea with his team from Travemünde to Helsinki. On these occasions, we remember humorous moments and a wonderful atmosphere.

Johannes Brodehl only slowly opened himself to other people. He was not a man of overwhelming emotions. All his close friends and contacts knew this. Each of his colleagues learned with time to understand his signs of criticism or positive comments. Knowing his way of thinking and respecting others made it possible for everybody to maintain their freedom and develop independence. His goals were high. Because of this guideline, everybody was driven to his clinical and academic life, and quite a few of his students and team colleagues continue to use these qualities.

After his retirement and stepping down from all professional responsibilities, his family, including his grandchildren, was his main enjoyment and interest. With the increasing distance for some of his team workers who took over their own responsible positions, the personal and emotional contact grew even closer. Johannes Brodehl was for many years a respected professional pediatrician and a pediatric nephrologist upon whose recommendations and consults many relied. The German Society of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, the German Society of Nephrology and Pediatric Nephrology, and the European and International Societies of Pediatric Nephrology have lost one of their most prominent and meaningful personalities. Their members will orientate themselves on his human being and professional life. We will commemorate him in reverence and friendship.