

In Memoria Paul I. J. M. Wuisman

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Published online: 20 October 2007
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On the 25th of July 2007, entirely unexpected, our beloved Professor Dr. Paul I. J. M. Wuisman passed away. Although still overwhelmed by this tragedy, it required a lot of effort to write an “In memoria” in honor of this exceptional man. What facts could one possibly state in such a brief writing that does justice to the meaning and symbol that Paul was to the department of orthopaedic surgery? Paul Wuisman was our Head of Department, our good friend, our master and great teacher with an exceptional personal strategy.

His career in Amsterdam started in 1994 when he was appointed as professor and head of the department of orthopaedic surgery at a young age of 36. His office and secretariat of the one man department was then stationed at the “meander” complex, a rather worn out section of the

hospital building. Within a short time, Paul amassed a team of young orthopaedic staff, constituting a full grown department with its secretariat located on the third floor of the main hospital building. With his entire staff he succeeded in expanding the scope of clinical care and particularly in successfully taking up the challenge of complex surgical care and in doing so, brought fame to the department on both national and international level. Paul was very much aware that besides tertiary surgical care, his department should also be able to offer a variety of experimental and clinical research work as well as educational (instructional) opportunities to medical students, residents and Ph.D. students. To that effect he co-founded the Skeletal Tissue Engineering Group Amsterdam (STEGA) and initiated close working relationship with ACTA, the university (VU) and the university medical centre (VUmc).

Paul Wuisman radiates immense energy and commands an inexhaustible source of ideas. Consequently, he was quite resourceful in generating and acquiring research funds thus giving his students and residents a unique opportunity to expand their knowledge of the profession and perform research work. Despite his relatively short career a lot of Ph.D. candidates have successfully defended their thesis under his supervision. Clinical and experimental research work performed by the STEGA and within the orthopaedic department formed the basis of more than 150 papers and publications co-written by Paul and has earned him international fame and recognition in the fields of stem cell technology and bioresorbable polymers. He has frequently being invited to give lectures and present papers at several major congresses all over the world. He has been appointed as a visiting professor in China and yearly visits China, Egypt and India, amongst others, to give guest lectures. Paul Wuisman was a member of

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several national and international commissions. He was very proud when he recently passed through the first round of the 7th framework EU program for an enormous research project which he took on in association with an international consortium. He was working hard to make sure that his research proposal will successfully pass through the second round as well but unfortunately his untimely death has robbed him of this dream. In the almost “*creatio ex nihilo*” of the orthopaedic department, the role of Paul Wuisman was much more that of an inspirator rather than one of an organizer. He succeeded in building a personality that genuinely motivates everyone around him to help build a great department as he envisioned it. Paul Wuisman was a man of the people, who was openly accessible to all around him. He has a reputation for being truly honest in the expression of his feelings and emotions. He was a reliable and trustworthy leader upon whom one

could always reckon. He expressed an unconditional dedication to care his patients. The VU medical centre and the orthopaedic department in particular remain immensely indebted to Paul Wuisman and to his memory we shall continually express our profound gratitude.

Paul could not have achieved this exceptional status without the love and camaraderie of his wife Karin and their sons Paul Jr and Rick. We wish them lots of strength and courage in enduring this great loss.

On behalf of all staff members.

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