

PROF. DR. KLAUS ALBEGGER OBITUARY



Prof. Klaus Albegger, MD

August 24th 1941 – June 22nd 2022

Klaus Albegger was born August 24th 1941 in Graz, Austria. After graduating from Highschool in Graz in 1959 he studied medicine at the Medical University Graz, passed with distinction and earned his doctorate in 1965. He commenced his basic medical training at the general hospital in Leoben and later became resident at the University ENT Clinic in Graz /Austria in 1966 under Prof. Dr. Walter Messerklinger. He finished his residency in 1972 and worked as an ENT surgeon at the University ENT Clinic in Graz until 1979. In 1976 the Medical University Graz conferred on him the "Venia Docendi" for ENT.

On April 1st 1979 he became Head of the ENT University Clinic in Salzburg Austria. He formed a team with excellent colleagues, pioneered otologic surgery and established one of the first leading cochlear implant centres at his clinic in Salzburg. In 1981 the Austrian ministry of science granted him the title "a.o. Univ. Professor" and in 1996 he was awarded the "golden medal of honour for merits for the Austrian Republic" by the President of Austria.

Klaus Albegger was an open-minded man with excellent communication skills and a pioneering spirit, over decades he was tirelessly active in the scientific ENT community in Europe and worldwide. Together with his friend and colleague Heinz Stammberger he advanced to one of Austria's figureheads in the international scientific ENT community.

From 1995 – 2008 he served as general secretary of the Austrian ENT society, three times during these years he also acted as president of the society. He had the honour to become a member and in 1995 also president of the "Kollegium Otorhinolaryngologicom amicitiae sacrum". In 2007 he served as president of EUFOS, the European ENT society and presided over the EUFOS Congress in Vienna.

His friendly and unprejudiced charismatic nature led to numerous friendships and a huge network of colleagues among the academic ENT community worldwide. As a result he was awarded a number of honorary memberships:

*Honorary member of the Austrian ENT society
Honorary member of the German ENT society
Honorary member of the Hungarian ENT society
Honorary member of the Czech ENT society
Honorary member of the Rumanian ENT society*

In 2008 he retired as head of the University ENT clinic Salzburg and moved back to his hometown Graz. Since 2004 he was the Austrian delegate to the UEMS ENT section, where together with Prof. Karl Hörmann from Mannheim/Germany the idea of an European board exam in ENT was developed. Similarly at that time the Confederation of European Otolaryngological Societies (CEORL) as an umbrella for all European ENT societies was formed, the EBEORL (European Board Exam in ORL) under its first president Klaus Albegger was founded and in 2009 the first written exam took place in Mannheim at the first CEORL congress. The first oral exam of the EBEORL was organized by Klaus in Vienna one year later in 2010. From that time Klaus worked continuously and with great enthusiasm and energy to further develop the quality and size of this exam project until his retreat in 2019.

Only a man like Klaus was able to motivate the EBEORL team to spend a lot of time and effort for an idealistic idea such as the development of a fair, Europe wide ENT exam in exchange for friendship, fun and good food. But this was Klaus, a motivator, an introducer, a creator, an optimistic enabler unlike the pessimistic obstructors as so many others in leading position were at that time. We traveled a lot together; he was never angry or impolite, even when things didn't go well, always had a friendly word for the taxi driver even when exhausted after a long flight. As mentioned, Klaus was the optimistic driver, but the successful development of this examination project would not have been possible without the support of a number of honorary volunteers acting as board members, reviewers and examiners, a hard working secretary but above all, the unconditional support of his loving wife Astrid.

Even in his last few months, confronted with a shattering diagnosis, he never lost his spirit and maintained his interest and continued to be informed about the development of the EBEORL.

Klaus Albegger passed away peacefully at home, amongst his loving family on June 22nd 2022.

We, the board members, friends and coworkers are grateful, to have experienced the friendship of a truly extraordinary man of wit, inspiration and vision!