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In memoriam: Prof. em. Dr. med. Antonios Valavanis



The Swiss Society of Neuroradiology (SSNR) has the deep regret to announce the death of its founding member, honorary member and past president, Anton Valavanis. Besides initiating its foundation in 1988, he was President of our Society for two periods, from 1993 to 1999 and from 2001 to 2010. In 1994 he was nominated titular professor at the University of Zurich as well as head of the clinic of neuroradiology at Zurich University Hospital (USZ), this would be an important event and thereafter Neuroradiological Units and centers started to spread across Switzerland, both in the university hospitals and regional centers. Together with Peter Huber he was one of the founding fathers of Neuroradiology and the leader of one of its two historical branches.

He was born in Athens in Greece and after graduating from medical school, he performed his training in Radiology and Neuroradiology at the University Hospital of Zurich where he became assistant professor in 1984 and full professor in 1994. He was chairman of the Institute for Neuroradiology at the University Hospital of Zurich until his retirement. He came into Neuroradiology at a time of dramatic methodological changes, when methods such as pneumoencephalography were being replaced by CT and MRI and when catheter techniques were starting to allow selective angiography and treatment of cerebrovascular diseases. Under his leadership Neuroradiology became a full specialty with two branches, diagnostic and interventional. While his main focus was interventional Neuroradiology, he still held Diagnostic Neuroradiology in high regard, having published the book “clinical imaging of the cerebello-pontine angle” with O Schubiger and T Naidich. His main focus would remain the study of complex cerebro-vascular diseases such as Arterio-venous Malformations, to whose understanding he contributed immensely. On this topic he published the book “interventional Neuroradiology”.

His scientific output has been wide and he has published 200 papers publications covering the whole field of neuroradiology. Together with world-renowned specialists such as Profs Gazi Yasargil and U Fisch he established Zurich as one of the leading centers in interventional neuroradiology in the world. In the early 80's he was among the first world-wide to initiate the use of interventional techniques for lesions of the central nervous system. This would contribute to establish neuroradiology as a fully clinically based specialty. He had been the recipient of many honours, at the national and international level: In 1983 he won the scientific Prize of the ESNR; he was the President of the 17th Congress of the European Society of Neuroradiology in Zurich in 1991 and he was secretary general of the ESNR from; he also established the long-running Zurich Course on Interventional Neuroradiology, to which attendees would come from all over the world. In 2018 he was named honorary member of the Swiss Society for Neuroradiology. He served on the board of the journal Neuroradiology



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from 1988 to 2004 and served on multiple committees. He then went on to found the Clinical Neurocenter in Zurich and also to co-found and preside the Swiss Federation of Clinical Neuro Sciences (SFCNS). The Swiss Society for Neuroradiology established the Anton Valavanis Medal in his honour, the first two recipients who have been L Picard and G Rodesch (both France), both highly ranked neuroradiologists. The Newly opened angio-room at the USZ was also named in his honour in October 2021.

He has been a leader and a pioneer in making Neuroradiology a central part of the clinical Neurosciences. His legacy in Switzerland has been immense and he will be missed by all his direct and indirect scholars. We extend our condolences to his friends and family.

For the Swiss Society of Neuroradiology SSNR

Prof. Isabel Wanke

President of the SSNR

Prof. Karl Olof Lövblad

Past-President of the SSNR