

## Farewell to a Leader and Friend

A happy and healthy 2007 to our readers and contributors. The start of a new year, with its seasonal blend of optimism and good will, almost invariably elicits a strong sense of hope. I frequently catch myself recalling the lyrics from one of Rodgers and Hammerstein's enchanting songs:

*And I'm stuck like a dope  
With a thing called hope  
And I can't get it out of my heart*

I suspect this is a familiar refrain and sentiment among prosthodontic clinical teachers who also happen to be parents. The resonance is not far-fetched given the overlapping values of both "careers." Hope for a better world of caring and provision of care tend to be mutually inclusive and strengthen mutually reinforcing values. We undoubtedly encounter many obstacles and disappointments in these twin pursuits, beginning with the recognition that ours is just one of many influences on the character of our children and is even more limited in the case of our students.

It is therefore important to not permit this reality to become an affront or obstacle to our self-regard, particularly when as educators we encounter varying resistance to the egotistical joy we derive from our diverse clinical skills. And yet, we relish the challenges we originally embraced and seek to sustain our efforts to be the best role models possible for both those we raise and the many others we seek to guide in their academic career choices. The fostering and nurturing of clinical teachers can arguably be regarded as a major justification for the sacrifices and efforts we have all endured as we reached our present positions.

The *IJP* recently organized the first International Workshop for Early Career Clinical Prosthodontic Educators with the invaluable partnership of Michael Heners and Winfried Walther. It was held at the Institute for Advanced Dental Studies in Karlsruhe, Germany and was attended by 35 young prosthodontic scholars. A total of 22 countries were represented among the more than 50 tutors, presenters, and early career educators. The workshop was made possible by generous support from Quintessence Publishing, the International College of Prosthodontists, and Nobel Biocare—a compelling reflection of all 3 organizations' ongoing commitment to support prosthodontic clinical education in a global context. It was a much appreciated and intellectually provocative event. It also laid the groundwork for similar workshops that seek to encourage and nurture the specialty's future: its indispensable clinical educators. An issue of this journal, later this year, will include the presented papers and clinical case histories that underpinned the workshop's deliberations. They will hopefully

become the menu or script for "a moveable feast" educational scenario; one which can be similarly enjoyed by different workshop faculties and participants in many other locations around the world.

At the end of the workshop, and following many warm goodbyes and promises to keep in touch by faculty and attendees, Michael Heners and I retreated to his office for a "debriefing." We discussed the critical need for innovative efforts to prioritize the choice of clinical academic careers, as well as the danger to scholarship posed by the international failure to ensure the academic ascendancy of our discipline. In his enthusiastic and inimitably succinct way, he observed, "It is events like this workshop that offer real hope and encouragement for our young clinical teachers." Regrettably, Michael will not be here to enjoy the fulfillment of such a hope for either this or future workshops: he passed away in the late evening of December 3rd. All too suddenly, his distinguished legacy of enriching the prosthodontic discipline came to a premature end.

Michael Heners was the Professor and Head of the Institute for Advanced Dental Studies in Karlsruhe, Germany. His dental studies and doctorate degree were completed at the University of Freiburg and followed by appointments at the University of Kiel and Saarland. He was appointed to his current position in 1977. His dynamic personality and strong leadership skills led to the rapid development of the Academy as one of the premier European centers for advanced continuing education. He lectured all over the world on his predilected interests—biomechanics of oral tissues, long-term prosthodontic treatment outcomes, quality assurance, and treatment planning. He received numerous awards, notably Honorary Doctorates from the University of Sarajevo and Malmo, and the Gold Medal of the Federal Dental Association of Germany in 2004.

Michael's scholarship and leadership were internationally recognized, and they mirrored the passion and commitment he brought to his life's activities. He was an intrepid lover of Bach and gardening, deeply religious, and utterly dedicated to his family. All of us who were privileged to work with him and enjoy his warm friendship now feel bereft and deeply grieved by his death. The *IJP*'s editorial team extends its deepest sympathies to his wife Elisabeth and their children, Charlotte, Philip, and Nicolas.

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