IN MEMORIAM

David Klein
1908-1993

Christmas 1993 was not the same. In preparing my usual greetings list I was sadly obliged to omit, for the first time in over half a century, the name of a very dear friend - Professor David Klein. David had peacefully passed away on 9 December.

Born in Falkau, Germany, he studied at the University of Freiburg, but because of Nazi oppression moved to Switzerland, where he took his MD degree from the University of Basel in February 1934. His career spanned more than half a century of uninterrupted and devoted scientific work that enriched the development of human, medical and clinical genetics and genetic counselling. The three syndromes that bear his name, the Klein-Waardenburg syndrome, the Bamatter-Klein-Franceschetti syndrome and mandibulofacial dysostosis (known in Europe as Franceschetti-Klein-Zwahlen syndrome) are an impressive testimony to David's legacy to medicine.

In October 1934, David began working at the Cantonal Psychiatric Clinic in Zurich, where over the following eleven years he formed a life-long interest in human genetics. In 1945, he moved to join Professor A. Franceschetti, head of the University Eye Clinic in Geneva, and there carried out many notable studies in human genetics with particular reference to neuro-ophthalmological syndromes. It was his pioneering work on the genetic epidemiology of isolates and his studies of the numerous Swiss populations characterized by a high degree of local consanguinity, frequently with more than one genetic disorder present in the same kindred, that pushed back the frontiers of knowledge in this field.

In 1955, he was appointed to the first Chair in Human Genetics in Switzerland, at the University of Geneva, in 1970, became full Professor, and in 1978, Emeritus Professor of Medical Genetics at that university. David was also Visiting Professor to and lectured in many universities throughout the world, and his bibliography exceeds 300 publications. He was awarded the Alfred Vogt Prize (in 1942 and again in 1959) for his genetic research work in ophthalmology. His other accolades included a medal for scientific merit from the University of Liège (1964), an honorary doctorate honoris causa from the University of Lyon (1977), and honorary membership of the Swiss genetic and the French and Italian neurological Societies.

One of David's most important activites must surely be his long period of distinguished service to the World Federation of Neurology (WFN), as Chairman and Secre-

tary of the Research Group on Neurogenetics. Of equal note is his valuable work as a member of the Expert Commission of the WHO, where as co-founder he was the driving force behind the *Club européen de conseil génétique,* established in Lyon in 1971.

Founder of the *Journal de Génétique humaine,* and its Editor-in-Chief for nearly thirty years, David was also a long-serving member on the editorial board of this journal. Indeed, his association with *Acta Geneticae Medicae et Gemellologiae* dates back to 1952, when together with Franceschetti, he published "Oxycéphalie chez trois paires de jumeaux univitellins, associée dans un des cas à un cutis frontis gyrata" in the *Acta's* first issue (Acta Genet Med Gemellol 1:48-65).

In addition to his illustrious and sustained contribution to neurogenetics and neuro-ophthalmology, and his unfailingly high standards in clinical and research work, David will be particularly remembered for his modesty, his kindness, his generosity, his integrity, and above all for his warm humanity and care for his patients.

Luigi Gedda