

## *In Memoriam*



ARMAND LOWENTHAL  
(1919 – 2001)

Dr. Armand Lowenthal, a distinguished physician, neurochemist and neurologist, was born on September 7<sup>th</sup> 1919 in The Hague, the Netherlands, where his parents, Isidor and Régine (Berwald) were refugees during the first world war. He was of Belgian nationality. Early in life, he was a widower, his wife died in an accident, they had a son, a professor in psychology.

A brilliant high school student, he entered medical school in 1937 at the «Université Libre de Bruxelles» (ULB) and obtained from the start high distinctions and awards. His studies in Brussels were interrupted in 1941. He and his family fled the German occupation and persecution. After many hardships, they finally found refuge in Haute Savoie, France. Dr. Armand Lowenthal was hidden to escape deportation. His parents crossed the border to Switzerland, this through the abiding care of the family Golliet. Armand Lowenthal moved to Lyon and went to the University under the assumed name of Jean Louvret. The Germans and the French Militia were increasing their hunt for Jews. To escape, he crossed the Swiss border. He was immediately interned in a refugee camp. After many tribulations, he entered medical school at the University of Geneva, where he obtained his Medical Doctor (MD) cum laude in 1944. A year later, he obtained his PhD.

Returning to Belgium, he specialized in Neurology at the Bunge Institute under the leadership of Dr. Ludo van Bogaert. At the Institute Bunge, he founded the Neurochemistry laboratory, specializing in research of the central nervous system, focusing on proteins of the cerebrospinal fluid. In 1959, he obtained his PhD at the «Université Libre de Bruxelles».

He taught Biochemical Pathology of the central nervous system and held the chair of Neurology at the ULB, at the «Vrije Universiteit Brussel» (VUB) and later, at the «Universitaire Instelling Antwerpen» (UIA), he also had the chair of Neurochemistry at the ULB and UIA.

Dr. Armand Lowenthal led and trained post graduates to specialize in the field of Neurology or to acquire a PhD. He opened his laboratory to MD, biologists, biochemists from many European countries interested in Neurochemistry, specializing in the research of the central nervous system.

He headed the department of Neurology at the «Algemeen Ziekenhuis Middelheim», an Antwerp general hospital.

He worked as a neurologist in the city hospitals and in the Institute Bunge, later the Born-Bunge Foundation. He put much energy in providing «wieder gut machung» (German compensation for war persecutions) for prisoners, camp survivors, widows and

orphans of all nationalities. Open minded and generous, he never bore a grudge against his German contemporaries.

In the field of Neurology, he assumed numerous academic functions: consultant neurologist for the Belgian Ministry of Health; member of the Benelux and the Belgian Pharmaceutical Commission; president of the Belgian Commission of Neuropsychiatry; chairman of the Belgian Research Group on Parkinson Diseases; chairman of the Belgian Research Group on Multiple Sclerosis; coordinator of the European Stroke Prevention Study; founding member of the International and European Society of Neurochemistry; corresponding member of the American Neurological Association.

First elected: secretary of the Commission of Neurochemistry and member of the Research Council of the World Federation of Neurology (WFN) for his international activities in the field of neurological diseases, later, secretary of the Research Group on cerebrospinal fluid and secretary of the Research Council; secretary and joint Secretary Treasurer General, and finally vice-President of the World Federation of Neurology; member and honorary member of several Belgian and international societies and editorial boards.

His publications represent a body of more than 500 papers in major scientific journals, a set of books being the promotor. Numerous presentations at scientific meetings, symposia, workshops and congresses the world over, attest his interest for neurology and the high demand for his participation.

His major contributions to Neurology, proteins of the cerebrospinal fluid, the immunoglobulins, particularly in Multiple Sclerosis and the arginine me-

tabolism in Hyperargininemia, made him renowned in the field of Neurology and Neurochemistry.

Dr. Armand Lowenthal took an active part in Neurochemistry, in Neuroradiology and encouraged the development of new techniques. He always emphasized an important feature of research, namely that the physician and the research investigator had to be identical in order to deal with human pathology.

At all times, he put himself at the disposal of his friends. With a strong personality, he was a point of reference, he led by example by the relevance of this judgement and the radiance of his human values. His rigour, energy, devotion, pride and ambition shone through. Dr. Armand Lowenthal was really devoted to medicine, an exceptionally gifted and dedicated medical doctor, a humanist, a voracious reader with a prestigious memory. He was open to history, arts and all cultural media.

He considered the art of medicine closer to his heart than teaching. His experience, his observation, his knowledge, his evaluation, his know how, gave the art of medicine its real meaning.

He conveyed his enthusiasm to others and defended his collaborators, his students and his friends.

His philosophy, a convinced free thinker, armed with a brilliant intelligence, a critical mind, a gift for analysis and synthesis, a free mason and a rotarian. He was awarded many grants and honoured to the rank of Great Officer of the Order of Leopold II.

Dr. Armand Lowenthal died January 5<sup>th</sup> 2001 in Antwerp, Belgium, a great man, a faithful friend who lived up to the art of medicine.

*DENISE KARCHER*