

Obituary

Petr Zelníček, M.D., PhD.

On December 26th, 2005, Petr Zelnicek, our 2002-2004 President of the European Trauma Society, succumbed to a short, but severe illness. During his period of leadership, the 6th European Trauma Congress in Prague, Czech Republic, was organized. This is still in our recent memory. Before this, he was responsible for integrating the Czech Trauma Society into the European Trauma structure.

Dr. Zelníček was born on November 2nd, 1938, in Olomouc, the wonderful historic town in the middle of Moravia. He studied in Brno, where he has spend his life since returning from a short period of voluntary service in Central Africa. He lived nearby Brno in a beautiful family house with his wife Dana, a teacher, and with his son, two daughters, and a big, friendly, family dog.

He graduated in general surgery and in 1990, at a time when traumatology in the Czech Republic had also just become specialized, additionally with qualification in Traumatology. He received his PhD. in 1990 on the topic of humerus shaft fractures. In the early 1980's, he began organizing the Czech Trauma Team for Medicine for Catastrophies, and led its humanitarian operations in Nicaragua, Romania, Iran, and Afghanistan. In 1991 he became the director of the Trauma Hospital in Brno (Úrazová nemocnice v Brně). From the beginning in this function, he devoted his entire energy to the creation of a network of trauma centers in the Czech Republic which covered the whole country with a high quality of trauma service. The Brno Trauma Hospital developed into one of the leading centers for pre- and postgraduate education. He never did ignore the importance of teaching and as a result, in 2002, the hospital achieved the status of the trauma department of the Masaryk University at Brno.

Since we opened the Spinal Injury unit in 1992, the first one in the Czech Republic, he always supported the importance of comprehensive care in paraplegics. He welcomed the development of endoscopic surgery in traumatology. He supported a modern department of endoprosthetic and reconstructive traumatology and never forgot, that traumatology is not only bone surgery. He fully supported a well-organized prehospital and emergency system with modern diagnostic and therapeutic equipment. He was an unconditional spokesman for

traumatology care, which came from solid general surgical training. He was interested in Disaster Medicine, especially in management of surgical care and ethics under these conditions. Between 1994 and 2002 he became a member of the World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine and member of the International Society of Disaster Medicine. He was the President of the Czech Trauma Society from 1996 through 2004. His enthusiasm endured during his last difficult weeks with work on the problems of traffic injuries, organization of polytrauma care, and organization of trauma services in the Czech republic.

In the summer of 2005 he was retired, but on these topics he continued studying in his office. None of us suspected his impending end.

Dear Petr

We all, your colleagues in Brno and in the Trauma Centers of the Czech Republic, the national representatives of European Trauma societies, and the Board of the European Trauma Society thank you for your contributions to the process of unification of European Traumatology and for your support of the European Trauma Society as its President and later as Past President. In memory, rest in peace.

In the name of all members

Peter Wendsche MD. PhD.

Professor

Czech delegate of the European Trauma Society