Gerhard Salomon: 15 November 1930–1 February 2007

Gerhard Salomon was born in Copenhagen and spent part of his adolescence as a Jewish refugee in Sweden from 1943 to 1945. He graduated in medicine in 1957 from the University of Copenhagen and obtained his specialization in ENT in 1968. In his early career he became interested in audiology and spent a year in London at Gray’s Inn Road under the tutelage of Professor Ronald Hinchcliffe.

At the Gentofte University Hospital his former chief Professor Niels Riskær was convinced of his talents and knowledge and he became head of the audiology section in 1969. He was also a teacher at the University of Copenhagen within both the medical and humanities faculties. His inspiration, engagement and insight in both acoustics and audiology, resulted in a number of dissertations written by the young ENT registrars.

The developing auditory electrophysiology during the 1970s became his main research interest, and in collaboration with the acoustic engineer Claus Elberling, he established clinical methods for hearing threshold measurements by late cortical response audiometry and electrocochleography. The measurements resulted in his own dissertation: ‘Electric response audiometry from the vertex in paedaudiology’, as well as numerous publications in international peer reviewed journals. Later, he concentrated on hearing in the elderly, and on new devices for neonatal hearing screening.

In 1989 he became advisor to the WHO on hearing issues. He was the president of the IERASG from 1979 to 1983, and President of the International Society of Audiology from 1992 to 1994. Along with his extensive international commitments he had numerous posts as president of various Danish associations related to acoustics and audiology, including President of the Danish Association of Physicians in Audiology. He was made an honorary member of the Italian Society of Audiology and received the Novo award in 1979, the Oticon honorary award in 1990 and Klein’s legat in 1996.

I first met him in 1971 at a time when his activities were manifold, building up the clinic and teaching the young registrars. He was a fantastic inspiration, a daily challenge to my intellect and very demanding in relation to the clinical work and research. In many ways he was very reserved as a person. However, when he discovered that you were loyal to him and with no prejudice against his Jewish religion, he revealed great warmth and understanding. His friendship was caring and loving and many were the evenings spent in his home in Copenhagen or summerhouse in Hornbæk learning about Jewish culture and having discussions on subjects of general interest in society. His intelligence and knowledge was legendary among his colleagues and he ferociously struggled through all conflicts he found unjust, not least on behalf of his patients and for better health services within audiology.

On his retirement in 1996, he settled in Tel Aviv, Israel with his wife Birgit and family. Fortunately he spent each summer in Hornbæk where we continued our mutual friendship and had many animated discussions. I shall miss his professional enthusiasm and engagement and I am grateful for the professional experiences he shared with me. Most of all I shall miss him as a loving friend, and my thoughts and condolences go to Birgit, Bo, Rolf, Maj and Lone and all the grandchildren.

Agnete Parving