

History of Medicine

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Prof Constantin Caloghera PhD, Doctor of Science

(02.03.1925 – 19.02.2015)

Head of the Surgical Clinic II from 1967 to 1992

Head of Discipline, Head of Department,

Vice-Chancellor of the Institute of Medicine of Timisoara

F. Lazăr

“Victor Babeş” University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Timișoara, Romania

Prof Constantin Caloghera, PhD., was a prominent personality of Timisoara's medical life, follower and artisan of the surgical school of Banat.

He was born in Tulcea, and after high school he became a student at the Sibiu School of Cavalry Officers (1943-1944). He then attended the classes of the newly founded (1945) Faculty of Medicine of Timisoara, which he subsequently graduated in 1951.

He started his training at the 2nd Surgical Clinic, Bega Hospital, in 1952 under the supervision of Prof I. Muresan, PhD. of Science. He was eventually trained as physician, surgeon and future teacher. He assisted Prof I. Muresan in his clinical practice, inheriting his interest in thyroid surgery, gastrointestinal tract surgery, and emergency surgery. In his spare time, he also accompanied Prof I. Muresan on two long hiking trips in Fagaras Mountains, in 1955 and 1956.

He became the head of the 2nd Surgical Clinic in 1967 when Prof I. Muresan retired until 1992, when he retired too.

Prof C Caloghera, PhD, Doctor of Science, was an excellent organizer, a fantastic team player as well as leader. He knew how to set up his teams priorities, and to plan the professional and academic development. He had high expectations and was setting high standards for himself firstly, but for his collaborators too, providing them with a strong education. This led to the formation of a united team of well-trained

professionals. He put a special emphasis on both "teamwork", and on individual professional development, stimulating competition. Professional behaviour and outfit, a strict clinical program with regular handover meetings, in the morning and in the afternoon, were key features of the way he was training new generations.

Thus, under his leadership, the 2nd Surgical Clinic became a ground for surgical academic personalities. His collaborators became professors and heads of surgical clinics: Prof N. Bucsa, Prof G. Crisan and Prof N. Traila at the Surgical Oncological Service, Prof M. Teodorescu at the 1st Surgical Clinic, Prof C. Nica and Prof D. Valceanu at the Emergency Surgical Clinic, Prof D. Bordos and Prof F. Lazar at the 2nd Surgical Clinic. The list of academic personalities and heads of departments from the Western part of Romania, and who trained in the surgical clinic led by Prof C. Caloghera PhD is impressive.

He was a calm and level headed surgeon, and he operated by approved classical methods, precisely and efficiently, without compromising any surgical principles, showing an impressive care for patient's safety. The weekly assessments of his team's activity represented both professional and life lessons, in view of strengthening the surgical responsibility. The students had a great admiration for him, however kind of a fear too due to his proverbial exigency at the examinations, and an immense correctness.

The continuous personal development was his dominant feature. He was constantly interested in studying and acquiring new surgical techniques. The weekly Journal Club in the department was mandatory.

In 1968 he introduced the retrosternal colo-esophagoplasty using the transverse colon for the esophageal stenosis. He also

Corresponding author:

Prof. dr. Fulger Lazăr
“Victor Babeş” University of Medicine
and Pharmacy, Timișoara, Romania
E-mail: lazarfulger@yahoo.com

improved the technique for thyroid surgery, continuing the work of his mentor Prof Ion Muresan, PhD. He supported the development of the vascular reconstruction surgery and organ transplantation, and in view of these he facilitated that Dr D. Bodos went on a training program in the USA (1973).

He was an active presence at the medical scientific meetings both in Romania and abroad, as well as those of the Romanian Societies of Surgery, Gastroenterology, and Endocrinology. In 1984 he organized the National Conference of the RSS with the topic "Obstructive Jaundice".

After 1990 he actively supported the introduction of laparoscopy at the 2nd Surgical Clinic, facilitating the training of Dr F. Lazar in Sweden and Germany (1992).

As a PhD coordinator he demonstrated maximum exigency regarding the written information; he would proofread his personal papers as well as those of his collaborators 2-3 times prior to accepting the final draft.

He was informed and interested not only in his specialty,

but also in other areas outside the medical field, such as both Romanian and Universal history, the history of religions, connoisseur of classic literature.

He coordinated the production of 8 didactic medical movies together with a team of surgeons from his Clinic, as well as the elaboration of 11 textbooks and specialized monographs. The followings are considered benchmarks: Surgery of the Thyroid and Parathyroids (1976); 2nd edition (1996); Emergency surgery (1980); 2nd edition (2003); Abdominal Trauma (1983); Abdominal Wall Surgery (1987); Therapeutic Protocols in Digestive Disorders (1994). In 1971 he published the surgical pathology course book for students, reissued in 1977 and 1984.

He had quite an impact on several generations of surgeons whom he trained, and I am most proud to be one of them. He was a remarkable personality who remained in our memories despite his retirement and his death. It is an element of honour and pride to have been a student of Professor Caloghera.