Obituary: Daniel Fritschy (1947–2021)

Pierre J. Hoffmeyer

Dear EFORT Members, Colleagues and Friends,

With profound sadness we announce the passing of Professor Daniel Fritschy. He unexpectedly died on 2nd August 2021, while vacationing in Sweden. He was 74 years of age.

Daniel Fritschy was born on 12th May 1947, in St Imier, a town located in the Swiss Jura. Enthused by sports at an early age, especially soccer, he naturally focused on the musculoskeletal system. After medical school in Geneva, he embraced orthopaedics. Daniel accomplished his training at the University Hospital of Geneva, obtained a doctorate in 1977 and completed two fellowships, the first in 1978 in Paris, at the Cochin and Trousseau Hospitals and the second, later on in 1990, in San Diego with Dale Daniel at the Kaiser Permanente. The latter was a sports medicine research fellowship awarded to Daniel by the Swiss Society of Orthopaedics. Upon his return in 1985, he joined the staff in the Orthopaedic Department in Geneva, obtained a Privat-Docent in 1990 and began his 23-year career as a faculty member of the Department of Surgery of the University Hospital of Geneva where he rose to the rank of Associate Professor in 1999 and Chief of the Surgical Outpatient Department.

Starting from a general training in orthopaedic and trauma surgery, including a year in neurosurgery, he belonged to the first generation of surgeons who embraced a specialization focussing on surgery of the knee. His research efforts focused on tendinopathy, meniscal repair, tissue healing, ACL injury and later on TKA. During his academic career, he wrote and co-signed numerous book chapters and scientific articles. He notably co-edited a real bestseller entitled: "Traumatologie de l'appareil moteur: Stratégie pour le médecin de premier recours" awarded the Swiss Orthopaedic Society's Debrunner Prize.

Having been active in the AO Foundation since the seventies, Daniel was a precursor and proponent of non-operative functional treatment which he successfully applied to tibial fractures of skiers and to the management of ankle sprains. He participated and organized many courses and seminars for francophone surgeons and trainees throughout the years in Davos and around the world, inviting many of the leading trauma surgeons of the French speaking world including Emile Letournel, Henri Dejour, Gilbert Goullang and Daniel Goutallier to name but a few.

Daniel Fritschy was amongst the forerunners of sports medicine in this part of the world. A pioneer of operative arthroscopic surgery in Western Switzerland, Daniel excelled in the field in which he was renowned and sought after. A superb surgeon, he described a surgical technique for the treatment of patellar insertional tendinopathy that we still use today. Appalled by the results of closed wedge high tibial osteotomy, he introduced the open wedge technique to our area. He was also one of the developers of a contemporary knee prosthesis.

Daniel Fritschy was amongst the first to recognize the importance of early rehabilitation after surgery. Later in his career, his humanitarian interests led him to participate in many missions, particularly in Burkina Faso, where he applied his surgical expertise to solving sequelae of complex trauma and devastating orthopaedic conditions.

In this part of the world, he was one of the first, if not the first, orthopaedic surgeon to embrace a career as a sports medicine doctor, not hesitating to be out in the field. He served for years as medical director of the Swiss Alpine Ski team and physician of the Swiss Winter Olympic Games delegation in Calgary, Albertville, Lillehammer and Nagano, and locally of the Geneva Servette Hockey Club. His enthusiasm and charisma led to the spawning of a dynasty of sports medicine fellows specializing in the care of injured athletes and sports practitioners at home and abroad.

Daniel Fritschy devoted a good part of his professional life to associations, notably ESSKA where he was treasurer and general secretary, before becoming President from 2006 to 2008. This, to mention in passing, facilitated negotiations between EFORT and ESSKA, Daniel possessing strong diplomatic talents. Daniel was also a member of the Board of the Swiss Sports Medicine Society which bestowed upon him the title of Honorary Member in 2015, and he served as a Trustee of the AO Foundation from 1996 to 2003.

Daniel served on the editorial boards of many journals and was currently an Associate Editor of *EFORT Open Reviews*. His judgment was accurate and sound, based on his profound knowledge and vast experience of the world of sports and the musculoskeletal pathologies generated by athletic activities ranging from competitive swimming to high altitude mountaineering and of course Olympic-level skiing. His involvement and enthusiasm contributed in no small way to the success of our Journal.

His passion for music, art, and nature developed early in life and was a constant source of enlightenment and intense interest. He showed us how important it was to have the mind nourished by something different than our overwhelming specialty. Besides being generous, joyful, luminous and humble, he was endowed with a genuine sense of humour and a charismatic personality. This was a constant inspiration to his colleagues, a role model for his students, interns and fellows, and a source of comfort for his patients. Beyond being a talented and experienced surgeon and researcher, a highly appreciated teacher and a dedicated mentor, Daniel was a humanist gentleman demonstrating exemplary openness, unlimited generosity and such elegance.

Professor Daniel Fritschy's passing is a great loss for the EFORT family and for EOR. We send our sincere condolences to his wife Marika, to his children Géraldine, Pernelle, Justine, Margaux and Joachim, as well as to his eleven grandchildren and extended family.

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