

Henry N. Neufeld: The art of politics in cardiology

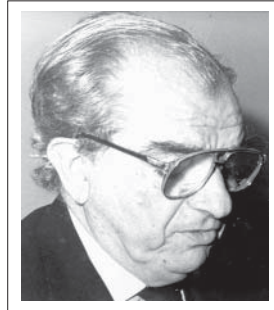
The progress of cardiology depends on the research invested in this important branch of medicine, and the results of that research.

Dr. Henry Neufeld undoubtedly shared numerous successes in cardiovascular research. However, the highlights of Dr. Neufeld's life were his constant efforts in promoting the organizational aspects of cardiology and strengthening its structure. Such ceaseless efforts resulted in his achieving increased respect and recognition for international cardiology.

Dr. Neufeld came from a Holocaust survivor family, hiding from the Nazis in Lwowek, Poland, much of the time behind a closet, and escaping when the Russian army took the city. He reached Vienna under fortuitous circumstances, where he married his love Julia, studied medicine, and completed his residency in cardiology. Upon arriving in Israel in 1951, already the father of two children, he found employment at the Tel Hashomer Government Hospital. He quickly became head of cardiology there, a position he held until his death in 1986, at the early age of 63.

In his professional life, success followed success. His cardiology institute became one of the leaders in Israel and he himself became a distinguished Professor of Cardiology at Tel-Aviv University. He is the only person ever to have been elected twice as President of the Israel Society, a tribute to his brilliant achievement in bringing this virtually unknown association to national and international fame. He was awarded the Israel Prize in 1985.

In describing the life and work of the late Henry Neufeld, only half of the story would be told without stressing his endeavors in the international professional organization of cardiology. He became what could be called a 'politician of cardiology'. The



role Henry Neufeld played on the international scene of cardiology is unprecedented, and not only for an Israeli cardiologist. He became a member of numerous committees of the World Health Organization, was elected President of the Asian Pacific Society of Cardiology (the writer of these lines served under him as Vice-President), followed

soon after by the Presidency of the International Society of Cardiology, plus numerous other appointments which demonstrated the international appreciation of his activities.

A special event was in 1982 when during the coldest years of the Cold War he presided in Moscow at the World Congress of Cardiology. Many in the auditorium, including the writer of these lines, had tears in their eyes during the opening ceremony of this meeting, seeing Henry Neufeld sitting in the President's chair.

However, the aim of this tribute is not to list all his international appointments and duties. The extraordinary aspect of his life and his 'political' activities were the warm not only professional but also personal relationships he was able to create throughout his lifetime.

In crisscrossing the globe with all his international duties and tasks, everywhere he went he left behind him people full of admiration, who were proud to announce: „Henry Neufeld is my friend". This worldwide recognition of him as an especially warm person, ready to open personal channels in his professional life, seems to be unparalleled.

His family life was the happiest. When I asked his children what were their father's hobbies, they said: „His family and cardiology".

Henry found great joy in playing with his five grandchildren.

Henry Neufeld's life was all too short, but he left an indelible mark on international cardiology.

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