In Memoriam

Jean PUGET (1946-2013)

Jean Puget completed his training in Toulouse between 1970 and 1985, before obtaining academic tenure in 1986 in the Division lead by Professor Guy Utheza, himself one of the pioneers of French orthopaedics, being one of the first in the region to implant hip arthroplasties. In 1998 Jean Puget took over the Department chairmanship until his retirement in 2011. As is customary in France, the Chairman remains in his Department another two years as a consultant and this mandate ended in 2013. Jean lived a full professional life and was active to his last day.

Jean was predestined for the practice of surgery and more specifically orthopaedic surgery. His father was a veterinary surgeon, Director of the Toulouse Veterinary School and had a specific interest in veterinary trauma surgery which was a novel interest for the times in the 1950’s. Also, another influential family member was his uncle, Paul Bessou, an academic neurophysiologist with a creative turn of mind. Immersed in this medical environment he naturally chose medicine as a career and more specifically orthopaedic surgery.

Probably due to his genetic constitution, Jean was endowed with an extraordinarily open and curious frame of mind. In an audacious move he solicited and obtained a competitive travelling fellowship, offered by the Figaro newspaper, to visit, of all places, the Campbell Clinic in Memphis, Tennessee. For a young resident, in France, in the Seventies, it was a courageous move indeed to leave the Alma Mater and to venture to America with Southern drawl being not the least of his many encountered obstacles. In the heady environment of “Campbell’s Operative Orthopaedics” fame and under the supervision of the renowned Harold Boyd, young Jean was introduced to the efficient and organized practices found in large American institutions. Thanks to his broadminded chief, Guy Utheza, after this fellowship experience, Jean was able to reintegrate his former Department and left with the freedom and support necessary to make rapid progress in his field of interest which was to become the hip.

Jean Puget contributed enormously to the management of complex hip problems involving large losses of acetabular bone. He understood that proximal femur allografts could be used to replace the acetabulum in cases of bone loss and defects due to oncological situations or to loosened cups surrounded by massive osteolysis. In France the operation became eponymous i.e. a “Puget”. He also developed a unique total hip system, the PP, with which he and his team were able to solve the difficult problems posed by hip revision procedures.

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Jean Puget published many books and research articles focused on the hip. He edited two detailed monographs in 2005 and in 2010, focused on hip arthroplasty. He was currently engaged with his colleague Jean Tricoire in the elaboration of a book celebrating the orthopaedic history of the South West of France. Since 1999, every two years he organized a major and very successful international meeting in Toulouse aptly named “Hip”. Colleagues worldwide attended this important and innovative congress.

Always generous with his time, Jean Puget devoted much of it to his students, trainees and colleagues. Not only researcher, developer and teacher, Professor Puget was also Chair of the Orthopaedic Division and Head of the Oncology Pole of his institution. In the later years of his career he was very much involved in ordaining the fusion between the two University Hospitals of Toulouse, Purpan and Rangueil, and in the design of a new large multi-room operative suite to accommodate both institutions.

He was also active on the national and international Orthopaedic scene. He was President of the French Society of Biomechanics in 1992 and sat on the executive committee of the Osteoporosis Research Group (GRIO) since 2000. Jean Puget served as President of the French College of Orthopaedic Surgery from 2001 to 2007. In 2008, he was elected as President of the French Orthopaedic Society (SOFCOT).

Due to his broad outlook and extensive medical and orthopaedic culture, Jean Puget was always interested in the Ethics of our profession. Because of this interest, EFORT approached Jean to become the Chairman of a new Ethics committee of EFORT along with M. Benson, L. Zagra and M. Szendroi. The Ethics Committee was approved as a standing committee of EFORT in Berlin in 2012 and Jean Puget gave its first official report in Istanbul during the General Assembly. He was a co-opted member of the Executive Committee of EFORT.

Jean Puget was an outstanding and innovative surgeon with an astute intellect and a great sense of humour. He will be remembered for his openness, broadminded world outlook and intellectual honesty.

Jean left us too early and he will be missed by many.

EFORT extends its condolences to Anne-Marie his wife, and to Anne and Bertrand his children and to all the members of his family.

Pierre Hoffmeyer MD
EFORT Immediate Past President