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## Obituary – Michael Freeman



Michael Alexander Reykers Freeman (Mike Freeman), one of the founding fathers of EFORT, passed away peacefully at his home on the 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at the age of 85. The EFORT Board was sitting at its Autumn meeting in Lisbon on the date of his death, and were greatly saddened by the news. A chapter on the technological advancement of Orthopaedic Surgery, and on International harmonization in the specialty, had been brought to a close.

Michael Freeman read Natural Sciences at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and graduated with a 1<sup>st</sup> Class degree, before reading medicine and moving to the London Hospital to complete his medical studies and commence his surgical training. He was appointed as a Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon at the London Hospital in 1968. However his thesis on ankle joints in cats had led to the development of a strong research partnership with Prof Alan Swanson at Imperial College, where he continued his academic enquiry. One of the world's first Biomechanics resulted and Mike Freeman's initial work focused on the development of foot and ankle joints. He realized that available biomaterials were unsuitable so changed his focus to the hip and knee, leading to the first implantation of a metal and plastic condylar knee replacement at the London Hospital in 1969. He went on to design successful knee prostheses, linked to his continuing pursuit of an understanding of the kinematics of the knee joint, something he would say he never fully achieved.

Mike became President of the International Hip Society (1989-1991) and it was at a meeting of that Society in New York, April 1989, that he first discussed the concept of a combined European Orthopaedic meeting with French surgeons attending. The idea took root and Mike was instrumental in pushing developments on two fronts – firstly to organize a combined meeting and secondly to put in place a structure to organize the meeting and coordinate academic activities in Orthopaedics and Traumatology across Europe. At a meeting of COCOMAC (Comité des Sociétés d'Orthopédie du Marché Commun) held in Paris, November 1991, it was decided to convene a meeting of the Presidents of the Orthopaedic Associations of the 12 European member states, which was then held in Marentino, Turin, later that month. The meeting agreed to form a Federation of the National Societies and set up a second meeting, held in Munich in April 1992, with Mike Freeman in the chair. At this meeting the statutes of EFORT were written and the first General Assembly was set up, to be held at the Palais des Congrès in Paris in November 1992, a date Mike Freeman chose to coincide with the date of the Single European Act. That meeting elected Jacques Duparc as the first President and Mike Freeman as the Vice President. Mike became President for 1994-1995 and remained on the Executive Committee afterwards as Editorial Secretary, developing a fruitful relationship with the publishers of the JBJS(B), who became EFORT's official publishers, which remains strong to this day.

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Mike was also founding President of the British Hip Society (1989-1991) and President of the British Orthopaedic Association (1992-1993). He was known for his gentle bedside manner in a Consultant career that continued at the London Hospital until 1996, after which he was appointed as an Honorary Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon to capture his wisdom in research and teaching activities.

In his personal life Mike had a network of friends that encompassed the globe. He was a warm and generous man. He married three times and his marriage to Patricia had almost reached its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary when he died. She survives him, as do 6 children and 11 grandchildren

Michael Alexander Reykers Freeman. Born November 17<sup>th</sup> 1931, passed away 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

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