



IN MEMORIAM

In memoriam Romain Pauwels

J. Bousquet*, L. Fabbri[#], P. O'Byrne[†] and P. Van Cauwenberge⁺

Romain Pauwels passed away peacefully on January 3, 2005, at his home in Sint-Denijs-Westrem (Ghent, Belgium), after a long fight against his own disease and after having devoted his entire life to fighting the diseases of others.

In particular, we would like to remember his efforts in the fight against asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). In addition to performing pivotal basic and clinical research in the fields of asthma and COPD, Professor Pauwels played a fundamental role as Chairman of both the Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA) and the Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Diseases (GOLD). These international initiatives were sponsored by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute US and the World Health Organization, both of which have had an important impact in attracting attention to these two devastating diseases around the world.

Born on June 13, 1943, Professor Pauwels obtained his MD degree at the University of Ghent in 1969. From 1969 to 1974, he was an assistant in the Dept of Internal Medicine, University Hospital Ghent, and became a Specialist in Internal/Pulmonary Medicine in 1974. In 1978, he obtained his PhD degree at the University of Ghent. From 1974 to 1981, he was a Clinical Assistant in the Dept of Respiratory Diseases at the University Hospital of Ghent, and, from 1976 to 1978, was based in the Dept of Experimental Pathology, University of Birmingham, UK, with Dr Stanworth. In 1981, he became Associate Professor and, in 1989, Professor of Medicine and Head of the Dept of Respiratory Diseases at the University Hospital of Ghent.

He received several scientific awards during his career: the Prize of the Belgian League against Tuberculosis (1976), the Derscheid Prize (1976), the Boehringer Prize (1978), the J.F. Heymans Prize from the Royal Academy of Medicine of Belgium (1978), and the K. Verleysen Prize from the Royal Academy of Medicine of Belgium (1999). In addition, he was awarded an Honorary Degree in Medicine and Surgery by the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia. He was a Member of the Royal Academy of Medicine of Belgium and also held important positions within several scientific societies and initiatives, *i.e.* President of the Belgian Society of Allergology and Clinical Immunology, and of the Belgian Society of Pneumology. He was President of the European Academy of Allergology and Clinical Immunology (EAACI) Annual Meeting in Belgium in 1987, and was also a member of the

Global Allergy and Asthma European Network (GA²LEN), as a senior scientist of partner 1, at the University of Ghent.

His main research interests were the pathogenesis and pharmacology of asthma, as well as the pathogenesis and pharmacology of COPD. He produced more than 400 publications relating to different aspects of pulmonary diseases. Professor Pauwels was the mentor of several prominent members of the pulmonary scientific community, including Guy Joos (his successor in Ghent), Johan Kips, Renaat Peleman, Eric Derom, Guy Brusselle, Paul Germonpré, Bart Lambrecht and Kurt Tournoy.

We should highlight the unique ability of Professor Pauwels to unite the three most important qualities of an academic clinician in one person: to be a global-scale scientist, to be a devoted and extremely skilful physician, and to be an extraordinary teacher. Romain was also a scholar who knew how to combine his medical and scientific skills with politics, literature and art. His colleagues, students and patients will miss him deeply.

Romain was a devoted husband to his wife Christine, a loving and caring father to his four children and a proud grandfather. Christine spent every minute of the last months with Romain, and it was in her arms that he said his final goodbye to life.

We really do think that the epitaph of Romain represents the words that suit him so well: "So much love for your fellow



*Service des Maladies Respiratoires, Hôpital Arnaud de Villeneuve, Montpellier, France. [#]Dept of Respiratory Medicine, University of Modena & Reggio Emilia, Modena, Italy. [†]McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. ⁺Dept of Otorhinolaryngology, Ghent University Hospital, Ghent, Belgium.

man, so much drive to contribute to mankind, so much vision and wisdom in life, so much strength and courage till the end." In all capacities, he was always an extremely unique, special person and a good man.

On behalf of all members of the GINA and GOLD Initiatives, and of all members of the respiratory and allergy communities,

we present our most sincere condolences to his beloved wife Christine, his children Peter, Veronique, Frank and Katia, all of his family, and to his Colleagues at the University of Ghent.

We will never forget him...