

Memorial

Joseph Colin 'in memoriam'

Brittany 21st March 1949—Bordeaux 24th February 2013

When we undertake the commitment of writing an editorial memorial for one of our professional colleagues or, like in this case, a close colleague and friend, feelings appear. The aim is to transmit indeed our sorrow and frustration about the loss of somebody, still young, who disappears with a lot of things to do, in spite of the many done during a fruitful professional and academic career. We try to transmit the warmth of the friendship, the many moments that we have shared together during meetings and professional occasions and the mutual interest and passion that we place in our work. When all of this is put together, then you have to go through one of the very sad moments in your life in which to write this is to make the evidence that something so sad has happened. This is the case of the editorial which I am writing on behalf of the memory of Joseph Colin.



Joseph Colin was born in Brittany in 1949. A brilliant scholar, he received his MD in 1977 from Brest University where he also started his ophthalmology residency and fellowship later extended to the Nantes University.

His academic career was brilliant. When he was promoted to Professor of Ophthalmology in 1982, I met him in a symposium on anterior segment at the University of Salamanca, Spain, where I was an Assistant Professor at the very beginning of my academic career. His topic, at that moment, was corneal herpetic disease. This was one of the constants in his life, as corneal infections were one of his passions. He immediately attracted me because of his youth, active, energetic and elegant style, his charming personality and his, let me say this also, French style. Since that moment, we have maintained a longstanding friendship and it is impossible to count the number of meetings in which we have shared together sessions, discussions, papers, courses and also happy personal moments with other friends and their families. When he became chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology at Brest University Medical School in September 2000, he accomplished the goal of his career, creating in Brest one of the centers of attraction in ophthalmology in Europe. He participated in most of the European and international organizations of cornea and anterior segment, particularly at the European Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery and at the International Society of Refractive Surgery. He was also President of the French National University Council for Ophthalmology (1995-2003), President of the French Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery (SAFIR), 2009-2011, and the French Ophthalmological Society (SFO) 2005-2008. His topic was always cornea, but he was also investigator in phakic IOLs, and cataract surgery at secondary level. His passion, the cornea, was approached from two main research areas of interest: Infections and keratoconus. About the latter, he was the first to suggest the use of intracorneal segments in the correction of keratoconus, creating an enormous debate on the topic, putting on the basis of the modern corneoplastic surgery of keratoconus. His participation in editorial boards of peer-review scientific journals has been continuous, outstanding and remarkable. His activities as innovator and as educator at the French educational program for cataract and refractive surgery, in the French educational program for contact lenses, have served the community with many important decisions that have improved the life of our patients, particularly in France.

Finally, he arrived in Bordeaux University Medical School as Chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology in 2000. During his fruitful career, he has been the author and coauthor of over 157 international papers and an enormous number of invited lectures and participation in books and book chapters. He received the Honor Award of the American Academy of Ophthalmology (1998), Binkhorst Medal (1990) and Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur in December 2011 among other important international recognitions.

Joseph and I shared the time of our Presidencies at the Rotary Clubs of Bordeaux and Alicante. He was a true rotarian with an active interest in the promotion of friendship and alliances to promote a better society, being involved in humanitarian services promoted in Bordeaux. Little is known about this aspect of the outstanding personality of Joseph but indeed this was one more truth of his remarkable personality. Joseph was also blessed by the warmth of his lovely wife, Florence, and his daughters, Melany and Tiffany and his son Timothy. Florence frequently accompanied him at meetings and his family life was a support and a stimulus during all his life.

Nobody will forget Joseph Colin. His charming and warm personality always made memorable moments. The recognition of his role in European Ophthalmology and particularly in French Ophthalmology will be permanent. His premature death has left us an immense vacuum that will take time to recover, if ever. French Ophthalmology has lost one of its best representatives at international levels and we all have lost a colleague and some of us a dear friend. Rest in peace.