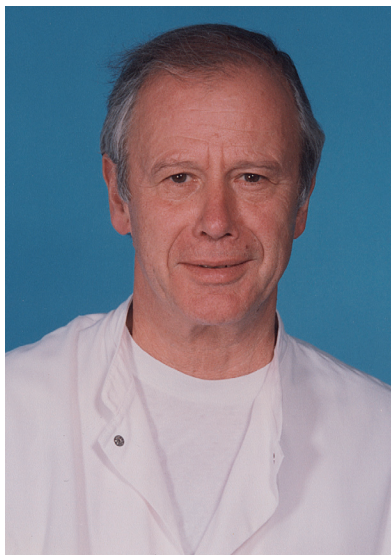


Hugh Zachariae 1925–2016



Hugh Zachariae has died 90 years old. He was born in Bangkok Nov 5, 1925, and died on Jan 27, 2016.

His father worked on the establishment of a railroad system in Thailand. His mother were from Puerto Rico. He once told she was an excellent cook and asked many times about recipes; but she never disclosed the exact recipe, so people could not just copy her.

Following family traditions he joined the Royal Danish Navy including its flight school. He had often landed at the small airstrip in Skejby just north of Aarhus – now the location of the new university hospital, a hospital where he had hope to move the department of dermatology. It is just recently that part of the department has moved there.

As he had difficulties in following orders, he left the military, had minor jobs in the radio as a speaker before entering the medical school of Copenhagen. There he met Eva Schack and they married. She became a rheumatologist, he a dermatologist. Following his dermatological education he became a consultant and associate professor at Rigshospitalet. He went to the head of the department, Gustav Asboe-Hansen, and expressed his willingness to participate in the administrative job of the then huge department. “Share – said Asboe-Hansen – never in my lifetime”.

Maybe this was one of the reasons he left Rigshospitalet for Aarhus, which had a small department of dermatology with only around 10–12 beds. Most patients with severe skin diseases were transferred to Rigshospitalet. He succeeded Prof. Esbern Lomholt who was much interested in the psychological elements especially in children with atopic eczema. A story tells that Lomholt could ask a mother of a child with severe

eczema: “Why don’t you love your child?” (I wonder if any of us today would pose such a question). Lomholt did the study, but could not prove there were significant psychological factors at play in children with eczema.

Then luck struck: The whole structure behind the Danish health system changed in 1970 through the establishment of “counties” or “amter”. Now the “amt” became responsible for the health system in their region. It meant that instead of sending patients to Rigshospitalet, which would now cost the “amt” money, the “amt” kept patients at local hospitals. Hugh Zachariae immediately saw the chance for establishing a strong dermatology department coupled with the already strong venereal outpatient clinic. More beds running up to 46, more consultants, junior doctors, nurses, secretaries and all patients from major areas of Jutland was taken care of. It became a busy department. Now, severe psoriasis, eczema, vasculitis, bullous diseases were admitted including mycosis fungoides and scleroderma, especially in collaboration with Eva Zachariae. Conferences on dermato-pathology became routine, where Helmer Søgaaard was an eminent pathologist. Helmer Søgaaard had a text on the wall in his office saying: “Nothing is impossible for the one, who do not have to do it” – partly inspired by Hugh so Helmer told. Socially, Hugh and Helmer played their morning tennis almost up to their age of 80 years.

He initiated a laser section in the department, which is now very active with several doctors involved.

Training in dermatology and venereology demanded that for 18 month the trainee had to work in a different department. When a young colleague from Copenhagen finished his stay in Aarhus, he left a note on the inside of the conference room door: “There is honour in victory, honour in defeat and hon-

our in just staying alive". Well, he is still in active practice in Copenhagen.

Hugh Zachariae knew that if the department had to come up to international standards, research had to be promoted. He actively invited youngsters to join the department and participate in establishing a research section. Looking back, a significant number of doctoral thesis, PhD thesis and many articles have been published from the department. He himself was especially interested in clinical research of which the most significant is the study of methotrexate and liver damages based on both the disease history and on consecutive liver histology performed by Helmer Søggaard. It is the largest material in the world with close to 1,000 patients included. Also, he briefly looked at HLA type in psoriatic patients.

He wrote a textbook on dermatology and venereology in Danish, a book now carried on by the younger generation in Denmark and used in Norway too. He participated in the political life of the university being chairman of the board of consultants. At that time a short confrontation between the hospital and junior doctors from all departments made him appear frequently on the TV news, something he "enjoyed". For a period he was the chair of the Danish Research Council.

He retired from the university chair following his 60 years birthday leaving room for younger colleagues, but stayed as administrative leader of the department until he retired 70 years old. His final 6–7 years were tragic to him. He lost his wife, Eva Zachariae, and slowly developed Alzheimer incapacitating him.

Eva and Hugh Zachariae leave 3 children, Robert Zachariae who is professor of psychology at the oncology department of the hospital in Aarhus, Claus Zachariae who is heading the department of dermatology at Gentofte hospital in Copenhagen, and Maria Zachariae who lives with her family in Zürich. They were fortunate to have grandchildren and even a great-grandchild.

Hugh Zachariae has left an impact on Danish dermatology as a leader, a good clinician and researcher with an impact on the education of students. We honour his achievements.

On behalf of the Department of Dermatology, Aarhus University

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