

Kristian Thestrup-Pedersen 1943–2016



Born July 6, 1943
Died October 17, 2016

A great man is no longer among us

Kristian graduated from Aarhus University in 1971. The first year of medicine he used to improve his skills in immunology at the University of Aarhus and this interest followed him for life. In 1975, he received a one-year research scholarship at Yale University in New Haven, USA. After the theoretical studies, he was employed for a period of Department of Infectious Diseases and later Dermatology and Venereology at Marselisborg Hospital in Aarhus, and he obtained the medical doctorate in 1978. Dermatology won his interest and heart, and after employment at Marselisborg Hospital and Finsen Institute in Copenhagen, he became a specialist in 1982.

Kristian became a consultant at the Department of Dermatology, Marselisborg Hospital in 1984, and in 1987 he was appointed Professor and remained in that position until 2003. In two periods: 1998–2000 and 2003–2005 Kristian was Visiting Professor at King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, while he was still at Aarhus University as a professor in the first period and adjunct professor in the final period. The last 10 years of his working life he established himself as a practicing specialist in dermatology in Nykøbing 2005–2015.

Kristian had an amazing ability to believe in young people and their skills while giving them a loving nudge forward. It was expected that they were diligent, but if the experiments in the laboratory did not go so well for a period, you could always seek encouragement and inspiration.

Patients also had great confidence in him, and they were always listened to and treated carefully and professionally competent.

Kristian was known for his international outlook and had many foreign contacts. This is underlined by the fact that he was a member of the Danish, Finnish, Swedish, Polish, French and German Dermatological Societies and an honorary member of the Japanese Dermatological Society. He was also a board member of the International League of Dermatological Societies (ILDS) in the period 1997–2011. In 2000, Kristian was appointed Knight of Dannebrog for his great professional efforts.

Kristian was a “lighthouse” in Danish dermatology. He was the prime mover as a writer and editor for the Danish textbook “Clinical Dermatology and Venereology” until 2012.

Kristian’s primary academic interests were atopic eczema, contact dermatitis and cutaneous lymphomas. Within these areas, he has contributed ground-breaking clinical and experimental research and has authored more than 240 scientific articles. He was incredibly diligent and member of the editorial boards of several scientific journals.

In the late 1990ies, Kristian became one of the Section Editors of ActaDV and served as such for almost 15 years. During this time he was of invaluable help for the journal, writing many editorials and commentaries in addition to peer-reviewing a great number of scientific papers.

Kristian was a great friend of Nordic collaboration. Among many things he took the initiative to jointly propose the Nordic countries as hosts for a World Congress of Dermatology in 2002 with Bella Center in Copenhagen as congress site; the so called "Nordic Bid for WCD". Kristian, with his great experience in networking all over the world, worked very hard on this project and came up with the wonderful idea that at least 1/3 of the expected profit from a WCD in Copenhagen would be donated to the International Dermatology Foundation in support of the ILDS-sponsored teaching unit in Tanzania. This "forced" the organisers of the Paris bid to add a similar promise into their bid when presented in Sydney 1997 before the election of the next congress site was made. In the end, however, Paris was a too strong competitor and they organized a wonderful WCD in 2002.

As a most distinguished researcher in the field of dermato-venereology with a great knowledge also in basic immunology, Kristian was already in the 1980ies appointed as a board member of the ESDR and eventually elected as the President of the society. For this and his continued engagement in ESDR and other international collaborations, he was later awarded Honorary Membership of the society.

He was a very generous man, and everyone who met him, remember this.

Kristian is survived by his beloved wife Grethe, children Thomas and Louise and their families.

All of us who knew him will always feel we have lost a very special friend and motivator, and our thoughts are with Grethe and the family.

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