

Laudatio

Both the Psychiatric Centre, Prague, where Zdenek Klein worked, and the Faculty of Humanities and Faculty of Science, Charles University, where he lectured, welcomed with great pleasure the decision of the world renowned journal *Neuroendocrinology Letters* and its Editor-in-Chief to have established an International Prize in honour of Dr. Zdenek Klein for the best work published within the field of Human Ethology in the *Neuroendocrinology Letters*. The names of the first laureates confirm the importance and the great value of this award.

Moreover, we strongly and respectfully acknowledge the achievement of Professor Peter G. Fedor-Frebyergh, Editor-in-Chief of *Neuroendocrinology Letters* and Professor Karl Grammer and Mag. Bernhard Fink, the Editors of this Special Issue, integrating the expertise by selecting the most representative work in this field from distinguished and outstanding authors worldwide in order to honour the memory of Zdenek Klein. We welcome this initiative and are proud that the Charles University of Prague will be the host for bestowing the annual 'ZDENEK KLEIN AWARD FOR HUMAN ETHOLOGY' on successive Recipients.

We all spend a limited time of life on earth. Life's duration is less important than how we spend it, the deeds which will be remembered by those left behind, and what we bequeath to our successors. In all these respects, although the life of Dr. Zdenek Klein ended prematurely, it was amply filled with exceptional human commitment, creative activity and high moral principles. He clearly belongs to the good old tradition of the Czech cultural and humanistic milieu. As representatives of the institutes mentioned below we wish to render thanks for this acknowledgement of exceptional professional and human qualities of our co-worker and colleague. We remember him with reverence.

Dr. Zdenek Klein (13.6.1944–4.9.2000), a Czech and outstanding human ethologist and anthropologist, studied at the Faculty of Sciences, Charles University, Prague. After graduating, he began his professional life as a scientist at the Psychiatric Research Institute, Prague, but promising career was interrupted by the communist regime of that time. Secret police caught Dr. Klein with 'illegal literature'; he was apprehended, charged and duly imprisoned from 1972 to 1974. Prevented from continuing with his scientific profession after release from prison, he had to work manually but, in his everyday life he kept observing humans and informally carried on his studies into human non-verbal behaviour. As a private person, he also participated in various ethological and anthropological meetings, and maintained contacts with the academic world. With his fine qualifications in human ethology and his skills in observing humans, he became an outstanding authority in the field of non-verbal communication in the former Czechoslovakia and recent Czech Republic.

After the 1990 “Velvet revolution”, Dr. Klein could and did return to his research at the Psychiatric Centre, Prague (former Psychiatric Research Institute). In addition to his studies on human ethology, he started research of dermatoglyphes in psychotic patients and those suffering from Alzheimer disease. He developed an original system of markers which enabled dermatoglyphes to be used in the diagnostic process but, unfortunately, this research was unfinished due to his untimely death.

Dr. Klein devoted his time and energy not only to the research but also to teaching and publishing. He is author of several books such as ‘*Ecce Homo*’ (1993), ‘*Atlas of Semantic Gestures*’ (1998), a textbook on ethology (together with Professor Franková) (1997), and a number of scientific papers in local and international journals. He was a member of editorial board of ‘*Journal of Prenatal and Perinatal Psychology and Medicine*’, ‘*Psychiatrie*’ (Psychiatrics), and ‘*Živa*’ (Nature). He initiated and edited the first issue of ‘*Folia Ethologica*’, an irregular journal of Czech and Slovak ethologists. For a long period he edited also ‘*A Newsletter of the Czech and Slovak Ethological Society*’.

Dr. Klein was a talented and distinguished ethology teacher for students of medicine, natural science and humanistic studies: He lectured at the 3rd Faculty of Medicine, the Faculty of Sciences, and the Faculty of Humanities of the Charles University and at the Czech Postgraduate Institute of Medicine.

Dr. Klein was a long-standing member of several Czech and international societies. In parallel with his scientific activities, he was active in other bodies, such as membership organisation and structure of the ‘Society of Capek Brothers’. He founded the ‘*News*’ of this Society and performed the duties of Editor-in-Chief for a long time. He deeply admired Karel Capek, a Czech writer, and internationally-renowned novelist, playwright and essayist; reading Karel Capek’s books also helped him to survive the glooms of prison-life. During the last years of his life Dr. Klein took part in the ‘Child’s Brain Foundation’, a non-incremental institution dealing with disabled children.

Dr. Zdenek Klein was highly appreciated and beloved not only by his colleagues, but also by his students and friends for his moral qualities, kind approach, decency, generosity, attitudes to others, and permanent willingness to help. Wherever he appeared, he would soon become a respected member of any professional or special-interest group of people. He had a great talent to express himself with a special kind of gentility, which was appreciated by those who attended his lectures. At the same time this brought him respect, and helped him to solve various problems arising amongst people in a manner which was strifeless and diplomatic.

When he unexpectedly passed away after a short and serious disease, we all realised that we lost an unforgettable great person. We will miss him intensely.

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