IN MEMORIAM

Homage to Jean Puget

Jean Puget was first a teaching-hospital resident in Toulouse, France (1970), then a clinical fellow (1975–1981) and a full-time attending physician (1981–1985) before becoming a university professor and staff surgeon in the department of his mentor G. Utheza in the Toulouse Teaching Hospital network.

In 1998, he followed G. Utheza as head of the orthopaedic surgery department of the Toulouse Rangueil Teaching Hospital. He held this position until 2011, when he became a consultant. During the past 2 years, he continued his clinical activity, chiefly as a consultant, and he was in charge of using his expertise as a skillful communicator to enhance the restructuring of the Toulouse teaching hospitals, with special attention to the oncology research and clinical-management network.

During his career as a hospital physician and university faculty member, Jean Puget excelled in all the fields of orthopaedic and trauma surgery, while exhibiting a special interest for hip surgery. The orthopaedic community is well aware of his original technique for the reconstruction of tumour-related acetabular bony defects using a proximal femoral autologous bone graft followed by the implantation of a total massive prosthesis, as described in a 1987 article published in the Revue de Chirurgie Orthopédique. Jean Puget also designed a cementless modular femoral stem anchored in the metaphysis and diaphysis for use in revision hip surgery, as well as a number of other innovations.

His considerable expertise in hip surgery led him to supervise the writing of two instructional course lectures for the Société française de chirurgie orthopédique et traumatologique (SOFCOT), both of which were widely circulated: 'Total Hip Prostheses: Available Options' in 2005 and 'Total Hip Prosthesis Revision' in 2010. Starting in 1999, he regularly organised 'The Hip' meetings in Toulouse. He was of course a tenured member of the French Society for the Hip and Knee.

His research activities focussed chiefly on biomechanics and osteoporosis. He was president of the Society for Biomechanics in 1992 and a member of the GRID (a research and information group on osteoporosis) since 2000.

He was deeply committed to teaching orthopaedic surgery via the French College of Orthopaedic and Trauma Surgeons, of which he was the president from 2001 to 2007, as well as via the SOFCOT, whose annual meeting obtained recognition as a continuing medical education activity during his term as president of this society.

Jean Puget became aware at a very early stage of the crucial importance of sharing knowledge on the international level. Immediately after becoming a resident, he left on a grant from the Figaro to spend a year at the Campbell Hospital in Memphis, TN. In addition to travelling frequently abroad, he did his utmost to attend the annual AAOS meeting on a regular basis.

Unanimous agreement about his exceptional professional and human qualities led to his election as president of the SOFCOT in 2008. During his year as president, one of his key objectives — which, he told me, raised considerable challenges — was to strengthen the ethical principles governing our profession by developing good practice rules for interactions between orthopaedic surgeons and the industry. Integrity in this area was so important to him that he asked P. Hoffmeyer, then president of EFORT, to set up an ad hoc committee. This European committee composed of five members from different cultures developed a charter that Jean Puget presented in early June 2013 at the EFORT meeting in Istanbul.

To continue along the same line, when I started my term as SOFCOT president in December 2012, I asked him to set up and chair a similar committee within the SOFCOT. He accepted this new responsibility with enthusiasm. During a meeting in Paris in July 2013, we discussed our plan of action in the light of the work already accomplished within EFORT.

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We aimed to define the role for the SOFCOT expert in the light of the requirements set forth by the French National Authority for Health (Haute Autorité de Santé, HAS), French Drug Safety Agency, and other organisations; and we planned to develop a charter governing our relationships with the industry. Our promise to each other as we parted was to attend diligently to our ‘summer homework’.

Although he had no official duties within the SOFCOT for the last 4½ years, Jean Puget remained a major presence within the organisation. During the inaugural session of the 2013 SOFCOT meeting, Ph Merloz and I were to present him with the SOFCOT medal of honour, which he largely deserved.

My ties with Jean Puget developed not only through orthopaedic surgery, but also through golf, his favourite sport. He started this activity late in life but with diligence, telling me that Rangueil was ideally located just a few tee-shots away from a practice field. We played together several times in Morocco. During this activity, which requires considerable humility, he always used humour to put his companions at ease. We had decided to create an organisation of retired orthopaedic surgeons and golfers, together with B. Moyen and J.P. Levai, and Jean was to write the statutes…

Jean Puget was a humanist filled with enthusiasm, whose straightforward words and accent were reverberations of his native south-western France. He was also an excellent mentor for his students, who have often told me how grateful they are to him.

He will remain a major landmark in the memory of our orthopaedic community.

All the SOFCOT members offer their heartfelt condolences to his wife and children.

B. Augereau

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