In memoriam

Homage to Philippe Hardy

Philippe Hardy left us on September 2nd. Too fast, too soon, too unjustly. After fighting his illness with stunning courage and serenity.

His loss is a cataclysmic shock to the French and International orthopaedic community. The swell of public and private homages bears witness to the expertise of this magnificent surgeon who was also an able manager and a powerful force for education, research, and the vitality of many organisations. All the components of a great gentleman at the head of a great school. And always with ineradicable cheerfulness. Thank you, Mr Hardy, thanks Philippe!

Thomas Bauer, Nicolas Gravelleau, Alexandre Hardy, and Philippe Clavert give credit to his immense talents in this issue of our journal, in the name of the orthopaedic community, his students, and the French Arthroscopy Society. His career, his qualities, his huge presence are communicated with emotion by these long-lasting companions, friends, and son. Many thanks to you!

In turn, I wish to honour Philippe Hardy in the name of all those involved with the Revue de Chirurgie Orthopédique et Traumatologique and its English version Orthopaedics & Traumatology, Surgery & Research. From a personal perspective, I could also speak to his astonishing qualities, as we shared a long history (starting at the Ambroise-Paré hospital) and embarked together on the extraordinary adventure of the French Arthroscopy Society. Instead, I will give a voice here to our treasured journal.

Philippe joined our team in 1995, when Jean-Michel Thomine became editor-in-chief. From the outset we worked to the same beat. There were only a few of us around Jean-Michel Thomine, and a considerable output of enthusiasm was crucial to keep the journal alive with our scant resources. Philippe was a steadfast presence, first as editorial assistant then as editor.

Under the guidance of Jean-Michel Thomine, the journal, still available in French only, underwent a radical qualitative and organisational transformation. I remember the weekly meetings held on Mondays in the late afternoon, when the three of us put together projects, gradually fleshed out the organizational chart, and debated whether the journal should serve as a didactic tool. Those were satisfying times, when internet communication was not yet the norm and we had the benefits of face-to-face discussions. A characteristic that consistently impressed me in Philippe was the relevance and pragmatism of his approach: he went straight to the point, foregoing unnecessary frills, while giving attention to the constraints experienced by others, thereby avoiding sterile conflict. His wise advice was invaluable to us, and always delivered with good nature.

Then came the saga of the English version of the journal, which became a project of ours in 2005 and was first published in 2009. The result was a transmutation that professionalised our journal. Once again, Philippe gave decisive advice about the objectives, editorial line, and selection of the expanding number of contributors.

Setting objectives, however, is not the only task of an editor. Behind the scenes is a large amount of daily labour, both invisible and silent, yet of the utmost importance: each submission must be analysed, the comments of the reviewers gathered into a coherent whole, and a decision made. This weighty and time-consuming task can seem unrewarding. And Philippe, despite his massive professional responsibilities, and thanks to his amazing capacity for working long hours, always found the time needed, with unwavering dependability. He thus brought the publications on the shoulder to a very high level, covering this field alone at first, then successively with Philippe Clavert and Dominique Rouleau. He often said to me “Thank goodness for the hours in planes and trains so I can work on the journal…”

For all this, dear Philippe, together with everyone at the journal (editors and editorial assistants), the members of the APCORT and particularly its president Bernard Augereau, and Elsevier Publisher, I want you to know how deeply thankful we are and how profound was the joy of working with you.
The few lines below from the Sirens' song by Fréro Delavega are a nod to your love for the revitalization you found in your house in Arcachon!

“The wind threatens the sand castles my fingers built.
Time spares no one, alas!
The years slip by, the echo absconds over the dune at Pyla.
Swept along by the passing seasons recorded in the changing image of my face,
I surrender to these flickers of the past.
Swept along by seasons, by decisions, I surrender.
When memories join in, my tears well up,
And the song of the sirens
Hurls me back into winter.
Oh! cruel melancholia, meagre harmony, solitary euphoria…”

Our thoughts in this terribly difficult time are with his wife Marie-Hélène Hardy and their four children he was so proud of. To them, our deepest sympathy and most heartfelt condolences.

Editor-in-Chief of OTSR-RCOT
56, rue Boissonade, 75014 Paris, France
E-mail addresses: rco@sofcot.fr, rcot@elsevier.com