

In Memoriam – A Tribute to Alexander Meisels (1926–2014)

Dr. Alexander Meisels died peacefully in September 2014 at the age of 88 years. His service to the International Academy of Cytology is legendary as he was a member of the Executive Council of the IAC for 39 years. He served as Secretary-Treasurer from 1971 to 1986 and continued subsequently as President, Treasurer and Member until 2010. He was responsible as Secretary or President for six International Congresses of Cytology organized by the IAC (Miami 1974, Tokyo 1977, Munich 1980, Montreal 1983, Brussels 1986 and Buenos Aires 1989).

His contributions to the field of cytopathology were decisive and manifold. He considered his discovery of the relationship between the infection by human papillomavirus and the development of cervical carcinoma to be his most significant contribution, of which he was understandably proud. In 1976, he postulated that the koilocytotic changes in cervical epithelial cells represent an expression of viral infection and the initial step of carcinogenesis [1], a hypothesis which was then controversially debated and is now common knowledge.

Born in Berlin, he had to flee Germany with his parents and received his early schooling in Paris, France. He later attended the National University of Mexico, where he obtained his BSc and MD in 1951. In 1960 he moved to Quebec, Canada, where he worked until his retirement at the St. Sacrement Hospital and Laval University as Director of the Department of Pathology and the School of Cytopathology. He educated numerous cytotechnologists, residents of pathology and foreign guests, who subsequently spread around the world. He was fluent in four languages, was an eloquent and gifted speaker, and travelled widely. He was particularly interested in the Spanish-speaking world and spread the cytologic gospel throughout Latin America. He received numerous



Alexander Meisels bids farewell to the Executive Council of the IAC in 2010 at the Edinburgh Congress after 39 years of service.

awards, among them the Goldblatt Award of the IAC (1975), the Papanicolaou Award of the ASC (1982) and the membership in the Order of Canada (2000).

All members of the Executive Council and the entire membership of the IAC pay tribute to this great man and express their feelings of loss and sadness. Alex will be sadly missed.

Volker Schneider, Freiburg i.B.

Reference

- 1 Meisels A, Fortin R: Condylomatous lesions of the cervix and vagina. I. Cytologic patterns. *Acta Cytol* 1976;20:505–509.