Editorial

E.A.	Ernst A.	Scharrer
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(1905–1965)

On April 29, 1965, accidental drowning claimed the life of one of the pioneers in neuroendocrine investigation and thinking, Dr. ERNST ALBERT SCHARRER. He will be remembered, not only for his important scientific contributions to neuroendocrinology, as an eminent research worker, as an inspiring teacher and as an able administrator and organizer, but equally for his fine personal attributes—a calm, simple philosophy of life combined with the strength of character that enabled him to live in accordance with that philosophy. The journal of Neuroendocrinology is especially indebted to SCHARRER for the active and enthusiastic support he lent to its founding. ERNST A. SCHARRER, born 1905 in Munich, Germany, received his M.D. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Munich. He held posts at the University of Vienna, the Research Institute for Psychiatry in Munich, and was Director of the Neurological Institute of the University of Frankfurt just prior to coming to the United States of America as a Rockefeller Fellow in the late nineteen thirties. From 1940 to 1946, he was Assistant Professor of Anatomy at Western Reserve University School of Medicine, Cleveland, Ohio and, then, Associate Professor of Anatomy at the School of Medicine, University of Colorado, Denver. From there, in 1954, he moved to New York and became Professor and Chairman of the Department of Anatomy, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, a post he held until his recent, tragic death. The ninety-two scientific papers published by E. SCHARRER are permanent sources of information and inspiration for the investigator interested in the development of neuroendocrinologic thought and the reading of them evokes the meditation of all those who like to proceed along new paths of research. Historically, neuroendocrinology developed in the shadow of endocrinology and neurology and remained subordinate to them for a long time. To a large extent, SCHARRER’S work helped in the complete emancipation of neuroendo-

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crinology from the borderline disciplines so that it has become an experimental and clinical science. He made important contributions to many different subjects in neuroendocrinology, but the one with which his name is perhaps most generally associated is his extensive and interesting studies on neurosecretion, the results of which are summarized in his paper in Recent Progress in Hormone Research, 1954. E. SCHARRER’S philosophical mind enabled him to envisage generalizations and to conceive correlative concepts that, in turn, furnished new tools for further research. The most revolutionary of his concepts—formulated on the basis of co-operative investigations with Professor W. Bargmann and Dr. Berta Scharre—is that of ‘the origin of neurohypophyseal hormones in neurosecretory cells of hypo-thalamic nuclei’, now fully confirmed and generally accepted. Something of the idealism and sincerity of his character is indicated by his establishment of ‘Bibliographia Neuroendocrinologica’, a basis for the brotherhood of neuroendocrinologists, for the furtherance of international understanding.

Much of E. SCHARRER’S research was conducted in collaboration with his wife, Dr. Berta Scharrer, and the excellent volume entitled ‘Neuroendocrinology’, written jointly by them in 1963, is really indispensable to those interested in this rapidly developing field of biology and medicine as well. I sincerely believe that fortunate indeed are those young investigators and physicians who have a summary of progress such as this at their disposal during their postgraduate training.

I specially recall the emphasis that ERNST SCHARRER placed upon the importance of neuroendocrinology as a correlative way of thinking and an interdisciplinary mode of research. In a letter written to me early this year he said: ‘Unfortunately, there is a group of investigators who more or less equate neuroendocrinology with the hypo-thalamus of mammals. This might appear to you as an exaggerated statement, but a survey of recent symposia shows that it is not too far from the truth. Now, there is another group of neuroendocrinologists, to which I belong, who feel that the problem must be attacked on a broad front. We must first understand the general principles, which can only be accomplished by a comparative exploration of neuroendocrine systems at all phylogenetic levels, ranging from invertebrates to man’. His effort and thinking in this respect merit universal appreciation.

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Therefore, let this journal—for the foundation of which he so wholeheartedly worked, yet which he never saw published—serve as a tribute to his memory and as a stimulus to others to carry on the work that our great, departed colleague inspired.

C. Cambridge, Mass. 1965 Eörs Bajusz