A Tribute to Gerhard Giebisch

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Gerhard Giebisch, the grand master of renal physiology, celebrates his 70th birthday, a good occasion to highlight his achievements and personality.

Gerhard Giebisch was born in 1927 in Vienna, Austria, where he received his medical degree in 1951. After an internship in Milwaukee from 1952 to 1953, he joined the Department of Physiology at Cornell University until 1968, when he took the chair of the Department of Physiology at Yale University. Under his patronage the department became a Mecca for scientists throughout the world interested in the study of renal and transport physiology. Gerhard Giebisch has contributed 350 important articles covering all aspects of renal physiology and many general aspects of transport physiology. His interest did focus, though, on the renal transport of electrolytes, most importantly of K^+ . To unravel transport he has employed all the techniques possibly available, ranging from clearance and micro-puncture to patch clamp, molecular biology and atomic force microscopy.

In appreciation of his achievements, Gerhard Giebisch has received as many as 35 awards, including memberships to the National Academy of Science, the Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher Leopoldina and the Austrian Academy of Sciences, the Homer Smith Award, the Volhard Medal, the Johannes Müller Medal, the Ernst Jung-Preis, the A.N. Richards Award, the R. Berliner Award, and honorary doctorates from the Universities of Uppsala, Berne, Lausanne and Vienna.

The achievements and success of Gerhard Giebisch are the result of his outstanding personality. Most importantly, Gerhard Giebisch is always prepared to listen, learn and explore. The new information gathered in conversations is then dissected by his exquisitely sharp mind without the faintest pretention. It is due to his deep respect towards anyone struggling for the truth of life that scientists of any age and provenience enjoy sharing their ideas with him and participating in his wisdom. Beyond his contributions to scientific knowledge, it is his influence on the culture of scientific communication which renders Gerhard Giebisch an invaluable member of our scientific community for hopefully many more years to come.

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