Pierre Royer

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Pierre Royer died on January 20, 1995 at the age of 78. He was one of the major figures in French and international paediatrics in the widest sense of the term. His great interest was in paediatric endocrinology, which in the 1960s became an expanding area of paediatrics, with active interaction between basic and clinical research. This segment of paediatrics to which he contributed brilliantly, blossomed under the inspiration of Lawson Wilkins in the USA and Andrea Prader in Europe. Pierre Royer's background led him to promote its development in Europe. He was one of a small group of pioneers, some of whom had trained in the USA at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore with Lawson Wilkins, which founded the European Society for Paediatric Endocrinology (ESPE). Royer was also deeply involved in the profound changes that took place in French medicine and gave rise to the French research institutions. He understood the need to train future paediatric endocrinologists in the best laboratories, which were then in the USA. French paediatricians working in endocrinology and metabolism owe a great debt to Pierre Royer for the encouragement and help needed to undertake what then appeared to many to be a great adventure.

Pierre Royer became the leader at the Paris Hôpital des Enfants Malades where he developed specialised paediatric units and research laboratories. His many collaborators and fellows in Paris, in other French Universities, and abroad are greatly indebted to him. He held eminent positions of responsibility at the University and at INSERM. He directed the Council of the Institut Pasteur, and that of the Centre International de l'Enfance.

He was a member of the ESPE and followed its development, even though he could not attend all its meetings. Clearly he wanted to make way for younger members. He made significant contributions to original studies on hereditary hypoadosteronism, pseudohypoadosteronism, growth hormone deficiency, and metabolic disorders due to thyroid diseases. He had a major interest, together with his collaborators and P. Fourman in England, in skeletal

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metabolism and development. This approach led him to the biology of growth, calcium-phosphate homeostasis and nephrology. His universal spirit understood the importance of these interdisciplinary approaches under the heading of developmental biology.

As with others of his generation who were not comfortable expressing themselves in English, several of his studies did not immediately receive the general recognition they deserved.

Nevertheless, his influence was considerable. His fascinating personality was internationally

respected. Those who were fortunate to have worked with him found a wonderfully clear thinking. Prof. Royer considered the patient to be just as important as the disease. In the ongoing debate on medical and research practice in pediatrics he had rightfully claimed that advances in paediatrics should shape ethics. This was his way to highlight the importance and responsibility of research in paediatrics. His writings on this subject are still relevant today. He will be remembered as having contributed greatly to the progress of paediatrics, but also for his profound humanity in both his actions and his thoughts. He has left his imprint on all areas of paediatrics. Pediatric Endocrinology can be proud to count him among its leaders at a time when modern medicine was developing in France.

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Obituary