A Tribute to Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Rudolf Speich January 3, 1954 to February 1, 2016

With great sadness we have learned of the recent unexpected death of Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Rudolf Speich, who had been working at the Department of Internal Medicine and Pulmonary Division, University Hospital Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland, since 1987. After completing his specialty training in internal medicine, pulmonary medicine and critical care at the University Hospital Zurich, Prof. Speich spent fellowships at the Papworth Hospital in Cambridge, UK, and the Barnes Jewish Hospital in St. Louis, Mo., USA. He was particularly interested in respiratory infections in the immunocompromised host, which was the topic of his habilitation thesis. A number of his research papers were dedicated to the role of bronchial lavage in the diagnosis of respiratory infections. Based on these grounds and his broad general medical knowledge, Prof. Speich was assigned to found the Zurich Lung Transplantation Program as its first medical director together with his surgical counterpart. Many patients, national and international colleagues as well as students could thereafter profit from his profound knowledge of immunosuppression, infections, general internal medicine and pulmonology.

Pulmonary hypertension was another area of interest in which Prof. Speich was recognized as a leading Swiss and international expert. He established the pulmonary hypertension clinic at the University Hospital Zurich, introduced several novel treatment modalities for pulmonary hypertension, including inhaled iloprost, and, in a landmark paper, he described the association between pulmonary hypertension and HIV infection. He partici-

Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Rudolf Speich

pated in key international trials in this field and was an expert to the clinical round on the evaluation of pulmonary hypertension at the WHO symposium in 2004. Together with his research group, Prof. Speich has recently established quality of life as the major endpoint in pulmonary hypertension research.

Prof. Speich had an excellent reputation as a clinician in internal and pulmonary medicine, and his students, assistant doctors and even seniors valued his educational skills, his profound and broad knowledge and his way to look in depth into diseases as well as into the patients' psychosocial environment. His office was frequently visited by many colleagues who sought his advice; he was always there to provide it. He helped to build many careers, he had a big and open heart for people, their sorrows and their needs. In recent years, he assisted in developing pulmonary medicine in Varna, Bulgaria, where his help and work was recognized by an honorary doctorate. Rudolf Speich was a person with strong atti-

tudes and a great sense of justice. Even if it might have exposed himself to criticism, he was always proud of expressing his convictions frankly. This was well appreciated by his friends, who were well aware of his huge heart, his benevolent personality and his outstanding merits.

Ruedi, we will miss you.

In the name of his team at the University Hospital of Zurich and the Swiss Society of Pulmonary Hypertension

PD Dr. Silvia Ulrich

In the name of the Swiss Society of Pulmonology

Prof. Paola Gache-Soccal, President