

Georg Klingmüller, M.D.

1919–1987



On 11 October 1987, Professor Georg Klingmüller was killed in an air crash in Burma together with his beloved wife Angela. They left behind three adult children and innumerable friends. I consider myself to be one of them.

Georg Klingmüller was born at Kiel on 27 March 1919. He was educated at Kiel and studied medicine at Munich and Königsberg. After graduating from the Faculty of Medicine, Freiburg University, and after having received a Doctorate of Medicine from that university in 1944, he worked in the Medical Clinic of the University of Kiel as an assistant in the biochemical research laboratory. In June 1949, Georg Klingmüller started work as an assistant in the Dermatological Clinic of the University of Bonn, his main teacher being Professor Grütz who was much interested in the pathology of mycobacterioses. On 20 November 1959, Georg Klingmüller became a professor in the Faculty of Medicine, University of Bonn. With his chief, Professor Leinbrock, he moved to the University-Skin Clinic at Würzburg, where he remained until June of 1966. Thereafter he returned to the University of Bonn, where he continued his research activities in the fields of dermatology and biochemistry and, last but not least, in leprosy.

After his retirement in March of 1984, Prof. Klingmüller continued to work as a dermatologist in his own clinic in Bonn, without giving up his keen interest in leprosy.

He was one of the first European researchers who applied electron microscopy to the

bacteriology of leprosy, being in close contact with the late Mitsugu Nishiura and other Japanese scientists of the same area of interest. Georg Klingmüller succeeded in obtaining the multiplication of *Mycobacterium leprae* in hedgehogs as an alternative to the armadillo. The number of his scientific publications exceeds 200, and among them are numerous excellent studies on leprosy. Under his tutorship more than 100 theses were published, many of which dealt with leprosy problems. This is not surprising to those who knew his background. His father, Viktor Klingmüller, was a well-known Professor of Dermatology himself at the University of Kiel. He published (in German) the famous volume "Die Lepra" of Jaddasohn's Handbuch der Hautkrankheiten.

Georg Klingmüller never missed important congresses or conferences at which leprosy was one of the main topics. The last time we met was at the World Congress of Dermatology at Berlin in May 1987, where he made most valuable contributions. All over the world he had friends and he knew how to keep friendships. For this purpose and in order to exchange experiences among researchers, he traveled throughout the world. Tragically, his visit to Japan and Burma became his last trip.

Georg Klingmüller was an exceptional personality, a character all his own, full of ideas and visions. His scarce spare time was devoted to the fine arts, especially to classical music. His untimely death constitutes a great loss, not only for his numerous friends throughout the world but also to medical science including leprology. His memory will be kept alive by his friends who are saddened by his death. Georg Klingmüller will be missed by all of us.

—K. F. Schaller