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Friedrich Paul Magerl



The staff members of Sytenko institute mourns the passing of Prof. Dr Friedrich Paul Magerl, a pioneer of spine surgery and orthopedics.

Vivacious, humble, warm, and dedicated to his patients and his profession, he passed away on November 14, 2020.

Known for developing tools and technologies to improve fracture treatment, Magerl made a significant contribution to AO education around the world as a faculty member. He played a particularly important role in the development of AO Spine as a clinical discipline within the AO.

Magerl graduated in medicine from the University of Graz. In 1970 he was appointed senior physician at St. Gallen Cantonal Hospital, where in 1987 he became chief of orthopedic surgery.

Throughout his career, he was constantly focused on developing improved tools and technologies for spine surgery: driven by a desire to improve patient treatment. Of particular note in this regard: the front Dens screw connection (1971), external fixators to treat unstable spine fractures (1976) and the internal fixator (1985). He invented the AO Spine fracture classification system which remains a fundamental in the discipline, and developed the «translaminar» spine fixation.

Magerl was awarded the Wissenschaftspreis des Dr Fritz Erler-Fonds by the Friedrich Alexander University in Erlangen for his extraordinary achievements in spine surgery in 2005. He was also the main editor of The External Fixator manual, published by Springer.

Prof. Dr Friedrich Paul Magerl made a lasting contribution to the work of the AO's innovation driver, the AO Technical Commission. He supported the Spine Expert Group from its creation in 1982 until 1993 and remained a central innovator in spinal fixation throughout his career and into his retirement.

He was also a co-founder and board member of icotec, which currently partners with the AO in the development of a new generation cervical screw fixation system for spine tumor indication. On hearing of his death, icotec issued the AO with the following statement: «Prof. Friedrich Magerl inspired many developments at icotec with his enormous knowledge and experience. He greatly influenced the whole young icotec team with his endless energy finding the optimal solution for patients and sharing his clinical experience with our young engineers. He was a visionary in seeing the advantages of BlackArmor® (Carbon/PEEK) implants for the benefit of the patient and the surgeon. He left a huge footprint in icotec's history.»

In addition, Roger Stadler, CEO icotec ag said «Fritz Magerl taught me everything I know about spine, he invented fundamental concepts of spine fixation devices such as the first external fixator for the spine. It was a lifetime lesson how dedicated & passionate Fritz Magerl was trying to innovate the next generation of spine implants even after retiring as chief surgeon in St. Gallen».

Peter Matter said he was «a good friend and an outstanding personality, who we will miss». AO Foundation President Robert McGuire (pictured with Magerl below left) said «Magerl's impact goes far beyond the impact factor of his publications, or even how his developments transformed spine surgery. He was a warm, humble person, fundamentally committed to the AO and our mission to improve patient outcomes, and there was an openness and deep-rooted optimism to him that one rarely meets».

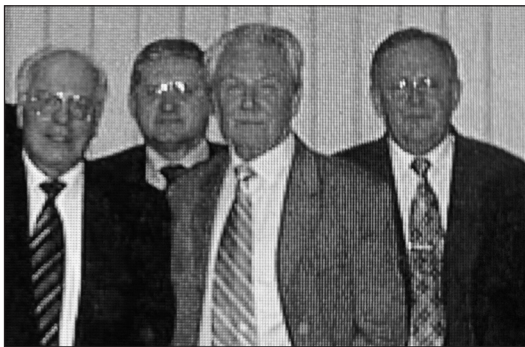


Foto. Prof. Friedrich Paul Magerl in Kharkiv

Claudio Lamartina, Orthopedic Spine Surgeon, Deputy Director of the European Spine Journal said: «Friedrich Magerl was a giant in spinal surgery, capable of making complex things simple. I will be eternally grateful to him for all he has taught me».

Interested in the early development of spinal fixation techniques, Jorrit-Jan Verlaan, spine surgeon and associate member of AO Spine Knowledge Forum Tumor, interviewed Prof. Magerl in 2003 as part of his academic thesis. Magerl graciously agreed and outlined how the fundamental principles of today's spine surgery were discovered and explored about 50 years ago.

Volodymyr Radchenko, Orthopedic Spine surgeon, president ISMISS 2014–2017: It's really hard to overestimate his impact regarding the spine surgery development in Ukraine. He always had the greatest interest for the changes in Ukraine. Prof. Magerl did his best for the establishment and development of Society of Minimal Invasive and Instrumented Spine Surgery in Ukraine, including his personal participation in this event in Kharkiv.

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