

## Prof. Heinz Stammberger, MD (Hon. FRCS (Ed.), Hon. FRCS (Engl.), Hon. FACS) December 1st 1946–December 9th 2018

© Springer-Verlag GmbH Germany, part of Springer Nature 2019

Heinz Stammberger was born on December 1st 1946 in Hochstadt am Main in Germany. After graduating from highschool in Köln-Nippes in 1966, he studied medicine at Graz Medical University in Austria and earned his doctorate in 1973. After 2 years of basic medical training in Villach, he started his residency in July 1975 at the ENT University Clinic in Graz under guidance of Professor Dr. Walter Messerklinger. Prof. Messerklinger was interested in the physiology of the nose and sinuses and the mechanisms of ciliary transport within the sinuses. His pioneering research using stained mucus and micro- and endoscopes to follow the natural pathways of mucus transport within the sinuses towards the natural ostium led to the development of a new endoscopic surgical technique for the treatment of chronic sinusitis. In the years to follow, this technique should become the worldwide surgical standard of care known as functional endoscopic sinus surgery (FESS). The young resident Heinz Stammberger became Messerklingers closest coworker in his research and early development of endoscopic sinus surgery. At this time, Heinz Stammberger was engaged in Histopathology, Allergology and of course sinus surgery. His talent for photography led to perfect pictures, taken during these pioneering days of endoscopic surgery. Due to his great surgical skills and unexcelled elegance performing endoscopic surgery based on profound anatomical knowledge Heinz Stammberger furthered the endoscopic techniques of Messerklinger. The concept of minimally invasive surgery of the sinuses became increasingly acknowledged in the academic ENT world. His outstanding didactic and linguistic talents helped to spread this new technique in courses and lectures worldwide. In 1984, he habilitated at Graz Medical University, became *tit.a.o.* Professor in 1988, *a.o.* Professor of Graz Medical University in 1992 and *o.* Professor in 1994. In all these years, he was a charismatic teacher not only for his residents but also for more than 3000 visiting surgeons from all over the world spending some time at the ENT clinic in Graz to learn more about this technique. Knowing his pioneering spirit, it is not amazing

that after establishing routine endoscopic sinus surgery he started to exceed the borders of ENT and pushed them further to endoscopic anterior skull base surgery including the pituitary and clivus region and even further. Using a special self-designed drill, he started endoscopic decompression of the optic nerve and endoscopic orbital decompression in cases of severe Graves disease. During these years, he established Graz as a worldwide acknowledged center for rhinosurgery (Figs. 1, 2).

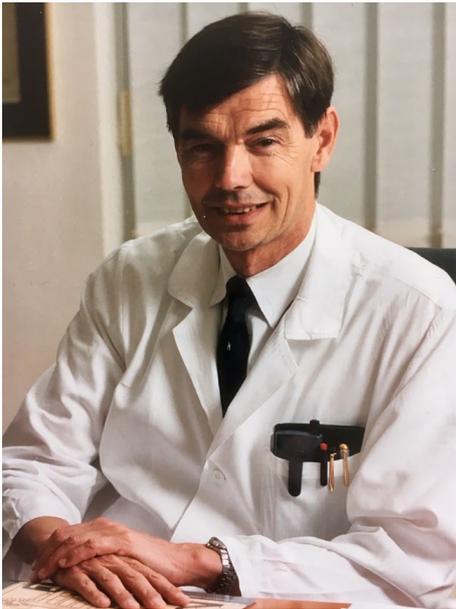
In the annual international FESS Courses for basic endoscopic sinus surgery and the course for advanced endoscopic applications including skull base, he demonstrated his exceptional rhetorical and didactic skills.

After retirement of Prof. Messerklinger in 1990, Heinz Stammberger became chair of the department of general ENT and later also chair of the whole ENT University Clinic in Graz. Even after his retirement in October 1st 2012 he kept being busy giving lectures and courses all over the globe, where frequently designated lecture halls turned out to be too small for all of the interested audience. He was also several times an examiner of the oral examination of the European Board Examination in ORL-HNS in Vienna (Fig. 3).

With Heinz Stammberger, we did not only lose Austrias probably most famous ENT surgeon, but also a fascinating academic person with sheer universal talents. His interests reached from photography to diving, he was traveling the deserts of Africa to visit archeological sites, which inscriptions he was able to translate, he was able to play the banjo as well as to fly an airplane. And above all this, his subtle sense of—almost English—humor (Fig. 4).

His lifework, his academic merits as well as his worldwide adventures would not have been possible without the sensitive support of his beloved wife Doloris, who was accompanying him to the most of his countless travels.

We all, his family, his friends and colleagues, we are happy and proud that we had the privilege to have known



**Fig. 1** Prof. Dr. Heinz Stammberger (Courtesy of Fotostudio Pachernegg, Graz)



**Fig. 3** Prof. Stammberger Instructional course (Courtesy of Foto Sulzer, Salzburg)



**Fig. 2** Prof. Stammberger at the last EUFOS Congress (Courtesy of Foto Sulzer, Salzburg)

this versatile, fascinating person Heinz Stammberger; we will treasure the moments we did spend together.

I think we all could agree with Valerie Lund, who wrote: "The world is a poorer place for his leaving it."

Klaus Albegger, Graz—Salzburg/Austria and Wolfgang Luxenberger Graz/Austria

(On this occasion, I want to thank for their support Miss Victoria Ward (Leeds/UK) and Cem Mecoc (Ankara/Turkey))



**Fig. 4** Prof. Stammberger, Namibia 2012 (© privat)