

## Obituary

### Otakar Koldovský, M.D., Ph.D.



*Otakar Koldovský, M.D., Ph.D., 1930 - 1998*

Otakar Koldovský, M.D., Ph.D., Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Arizona, passed away suddenly on April 5, 1998, shortly after his last visit to Prague.

Dr. Koldovský was born on March 31, 1930 in Olomouc, a beautiful Moravian city of historical and architectural traditions, in a physician's family. The family soon moved to Prague where Otakar went through primary and secondary schools and became profoundly interested in medicine.

In 1949 he started his studies at Charles University in Prague, at the Faculty of Medicine. As a medical student he joined the working group of Professor

J. Křeček at the Institute of Physiology of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, studying developmental physiology. His first two papers were on the ontogenic development of the brain and on water metabolism. He graduated in 1955 and after practising as a physician in Karlovy Vary he started as a Ph.D. student under the guidance of Dr. P. Hahn at Professor J. Křeček's department. He examined the ontogenic development of the intestine in rats and human foetuses in close co-operation with the group of Dr. V. Melichar at the Institute of Mother and Child. For this work he was awarded a CIBA prize in London. Since then, his talent and diligence were concentrated on studying the

utilisation of nutrients during postnatal development. Dr. Koldovský, together with Dr. K. Kubát, were the first to show that plasma cholesterol in adult rats is conditioned by early nutrition. In the late sixties, he creatively participated in research of the late consequences of adaptation brought about at early stages of ontogenic development.

In the midst of his extremely fruitful research, in 1968, Czechoslovakia was occupied by Warsaw Pact armies. Dr. Koldovský was among many scientists who definitely left the country. He began his research work in pediatrics in Philadelphia where he introduced new aspects into digestion and succeeded in obtaining an American qualification as a physician.

Dr. Koldovský spent the last eighteen years of his life in Tucson, Arizona, where he was in charge of the Neonatal Research Unit of the Department of Pediatrics, University of Arizona. His most promising research interest was turned to the role of hormones and growth factors in milk. Dr. Koldovský authored many original articles, reviews, chapters in books and his own monographs. His book on „*Development of the Small Intestinal Functions in Mammals and Man*“ deserves special interest.

After the “velvet revolution” in 1989, when Czechoslovakia became again a democratic country after forty years, a great chance appeared for Dr. Koldovský to see his homeland. Since that time he had been returning

every year to visit his friends and former co-workers. There had been fine lectures, discussion and papers concerning the meeting „*Czech and Slovak Contributions to Perinatal Medicine*“, which he had helped to organise in Prague in 1994 (*Physiol. Res.* **44**: 339-360, 1995). He visited Drs. L. Macho and V. Štrbák several times at the Institute of Experimental Endocrinology, Slovak Academy of Sciences, in Bratislava to discuss common interests in milk-borne hormones. Close co-operation developed when Dr. B. Dvořák from the Institute of Microbiology, Czech Academy of Sciences, was offered to work with Dr. Koldovský at the University of Arizona in Tucson. They could follow then Dr. Koldovský's interest in transcription of the epidermal growth factor in the small intestine. In 1997, Dr. J. Kolínská from the Institute of Physiology, Czech Academy of Sciences, had the opportunity to participate in this work.

Dr. Koldovský's work was abruptly interrupted at a time when his experiments promised new important findings. His friends and associates in his old country shall always fondly remember him.

Jiřina Kolínská and Jiří Křeček