

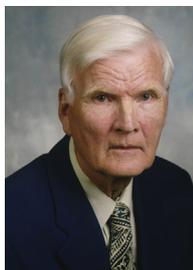


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Professor Tauno Palva 1925–2019



It is with deep sorrow that I have to inform you that Professor Tauno Palva passed away at the age of 93 on 27 April this year. This sad event took suddenly place while golfing in Helsinki, Finland.

Tauno Palva was born on 17 October 1925 to a farmer's family in the countryside, about a fifty kilometers north of Helsinki. At the age of 15, after his father's death he took over the responsibility for the fairly large family farm. Nevertheless, at the same time he continued his higher secondary school studies by himself in the evenings. At the age of 18 he participated as an infantry soldier of the Finnish army in the heavy battles of the Second World War. After the war, he decided to leave farming and started his medical studies at the University of Helsinki and graduated from the University of Turku, Finland in 1950. There, as early as 1952 he defended his doctoral thesis on „Finnish Speech Audiometry. Methods and clinical applications“, in which he studied and developed the Finnish language words and nomenclature for speech audiometry. In 1952–53 he spent a post-doctoral year in the United States, where he continued his audiological studies at the Washington University in St. Louis. He became docent in clinical audiology in 1955, specialist in otorhinolaryngology in 1954 and docent in otorhinolaryngology in 1958.

Tauno Palva was nominated the first professor of otorhinolaryngology at the new Faculty of Medicine at the University of Oulu in Finland in 1963, and kept his position as Chairman and Head of the ENT Department until 1974. During this period he turned an almost non-existent clinic to a modern academic department, which almost on its own served the whole northern Finland. Simultaneously Tauno Palva had also other administrative duties at the university and the university hospital, serving as Dean of the Faculty of Medicine in 1964–65 and Vice-Rector of the University in 1965–68 as well as Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors of the University Hospital in 1972–74.

During that time period Tauno Palva was, in addition to audiology, also interested in bronchology and otology. He published a thorough monography on mediastinoscopy in 1964 and on the human cochlear aqueduct in 1969. He became especially famous as an otosurgeon, the concept „the Palva flap“ has gained a lasting place in the world ENT

literature- and is well-known to all ear surgeons. As his pupil, I always remember his grand rounds in the clinic.

In 1974 Tauno Palva moved to Helsinki, where he was appointed Professor and Chairman of the Helsinki University Department of Otorhinolaryngology and Head of the Clinic, which positions he held until his retirement in 1990. He was also a member of the Board of Directors of the Helsinki University Hospital from 1975 to 1990. During this time, he developed this large department internationally renowned with top quality knowledge, skills and research. Tauno Palva was a highly esteemed teacher, scientist and doctor. His special interest in Helsinki was middle and inner ear diseases and skull base surgery. He also started co-operation with neurosurgeons, together with whom he performed all operations for acoustic neurinomas in Finland until his retirement.

Tauno Palva published more than 330 scientific papers in major international journals. He was author, co-author and editor in many international and national textbooks. He received many awards, honours and medals: amongst them the most distinguished otological prize, namely the Shambaugh Prize in Otology, awarded by the Collegium Oto-Rhino-Laryngologicum Amicitiae Sacrum in 1981. As early as in 1969 the President of Finland conferred on him the prestigious honour of Commander of the Order of the White Rose in Finland. He was a member of the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters since 1985. He was invited to hold numerous honorary lectures around the world, such as the James Yearsley Memorial Lecture in London in 1974, the Gunnar Holmgren Memorial Lecture in Stockholm in 1975, the William Wilde Memorial Lecture in Dublin in 1987, the Joseph Toynbee Memorial Lecture in London in 1988, the Carl-Axel Hamberger Memorial Lecture in Stockholm in 1990 and the Wilhelm Meyer Memorial Lecture in Copenhagen in 1992. He was an honorary member of seven different national ENT societies and Honorary President of the Corlas Meeting in Helsinki in 2003. He was skilled in six different languages. He was an editorial board member of numerous ENT journals- maybe the nearest of these to him was this journal, IJPORL, in which he served for decades in that position, and for the last 20 years also as an active Senior Editor.

After his retirement, he frequently mentioned that he had two hobbies, middle ear pathology and golf. Still devoted to his profession he continued teaching of young ENT doctors in ear microsurgery in the temporal bone laboratory of the department- only a few years ago he personally donated to the laboratory the funds to provide it with state-of-the-art equipment. Since then the laboratory bears his name.

But even in his other hobby, golf, he was passionate, and became a very skilled veteran player, winning numerous prizes.

I had the honour to be his pupil, colleague, successor in Helsinki and friend. I have pleasant memories of the visits by my family to his summer house, and of his and his wife's hospitality. He was left a widower in 2016, when his wife, Vuokko, with whom he was married for

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65 years, passed away. He is now missed by their two children Kirsti and Kimmo.

A great Finnish otolaryngologist and one of the veterans of the War has now left us – and I think that he himself would have regarded that as a fitting way to go.

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