

IN MEMORIAM
RUDOLF FREY



RUDOLF FREY, M.D., F.F.A.R.C.S.

Born August 22, 1917 Died December 23, 1981

Heidelberg Mainz
Germany

to the memory of the Founder of the *Club of Mainz* for Emergency and Disaster Medicine Worldwide

In Memoriam

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August 22, 1917 — December 23, 1981

Rudolf Frey, known as "Rolf" in Europe and "Rudi" in America—a leading star of anesthesiology, emergency medicine and disaster medicine—has ended his life's struggles. He influenced many lives positively. His years were rich with experiences and contributions.

Surgery and anesthesiology were his base specialties. Alone, these fields would have been too narrow for him. He initiated the first professorship of anesthesiology in Germany at the University of Heidelberg in the 1950's; the first autonomous university department of anesthesiology in Germany at the Gutenberg University of Mainz in 1960; the journal *Der Anaesthetist*, the first textbook of anesthesiology in German; one of the first physician-staffed advanced life support ambulance and ambulance helicopter services in Europe; numerous training programs, symposia and congresses; and the *Club of Mainz* and its associated monograph series *Disaster Medicine*, originally published by Springer-Verlag.

Frey talked about the history of mankind having been a history of catastrophes. Whenever he presented the senseless suffering on Earth he also presented hope for it to be diminished or abolished. This mix of warning and hope is inherent in the goals of his *Club of Mainz*, which intends to use implementation mechanisms of the Club of Rome.

Dr. Frey developed numerous new programs which made the University of Mainz known in the fields of anesthesiology, resuscitation, intensive care, emergency medicine, disaster medicine, pain control, and medical ethics. He was a frequent traveler and lecturer, a consultant for many European and international organizations, and a member of many professional and scientific societies. He

authored, co-authored or edited over 300 papers, chapters and books.

At the time of his death he was Professor and Chairman of the Department of Anesthesiology at the Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz, and its hospitals; Visiting Professor of Anesthesiology/Critical Care Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh, member of the Society of Critical Care Medicine of America, Chairman of the Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Committee of the World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists, and Founding President of the Club of Mainz for Emergency and Disaster Medicine Worldwide. We, as members of these and other organizations he belonged to cannot imagine that from now on Rudolf will not meet with us anymore to host, plan, lead, and catalyze.

Frey received many honors. The last one before his death was conveyed in conjunction with the Second World Congress on Emergency and Disaster Medicine in Pittsburgh, USA, in June 1981. He received from the Dean of the School of Medicine and the Chancellor of the University the Certificate of Recognition "for his dedicated initiating contributions as first Chairman of a University Department of Anesthesiology in Germany, and for having co-pioneered Emergency Medical Services Systems and Disaster Medicine worldwide and conceived and developed the *Club of Mainz*. His influence and exchange of ideas with the Acute Medicine Programs of the University of Pittsburgh helped catalyze Emergency Medical Services in the United States and abroad."

More important than the facts in his curriculum vitae were his human qualities. Outwardly, Frey was always positive, cheerful, and exuberant. Inwardly, he was a complex personality. He was generous, broadminded and liberal. Generous as a host, he gave help, money and compassion to anybody in need and asylum to refugees. He was generous with money for his department and his family; broadminded in medicine, by concentrating on important practical topics; liberal in political matters, where he stood up to principles. He functioned with a sensitive cordiality. He had the ability to listen to people and to recognize their needs.

He had courage and assumed responsibility for his own life and creativity. It took courage and foresight to embark on large-scale planning like the Club of Mainz. In his program developments he was an activist and organizationally a "workaholic," but at the same time a diplomat, who could charm people. He showed sincerity and loyalty toward his collaborators and friends. Rudolf was a unique friend for those who loved him for the person he was. In the development of friendships and collaborations he always assumed first that a person is good and reliable.

When some later turned out to be the contrary, disappointment followed.

These and other superior human qualities helped Rudolf Frey to become one of the first German professors after World War II who broke out of the confines of his homeland, spread abroad the goodness of Germany by example, and became internationally recognized. His experiences as an anesthetist at the front in Russia in World War II and with emergency medicine after the war naturally led him toward pacifism and world citizenship. He became an apostle of humanism.

Frey had two sons, three daughters (all working in medicine) and six grandchildren, all of whom he deeply loved. When he suffered the worst possible personal tragedy, the accidental death of his son Martin, a young anesthesiologist, Rudolf insisted on maintaining "self control" and without interruption continued living, working and striving.

Immortality comes from the fact that every human life, no matter how brief, somehow influences its surroundings. Rudolf Frey lives on through his ideas and his achievements, as well as through his children, pupils, friends and colleagues. Rudolf Frey has become a vital link in many chains, the biological as well as the professional and the personal ones.

As Frey's legacy, we who remain behind should now try to close or strengthen those links in the chains which he started but are still incomplete. Students and colleagues whose lives he touched will always remember him.

Rudolf Frey died on December 23, 1981. We must regard this end of his creative life as positive. We admire him for his courageous control of his life and appreciate what he has done for us and mankind.

Professionally, Rudolf Frey's star will shine forever. All who appreciated and loved him, as well as those who did not understand him, should try to follow his star, while continuing to work, strive and care on this earth.

One of Thornton Wilder's thoughts is appropriate for this occasion: "There is a land of the living and a land of the dead and the bridge is love, the only survival, the only meaning." The bridge which Rudolf Frey built between himself and us is made of all types of love, including friendship.

*Peter Safar
Pittsburgh, USA
December, 1981*

Auf Wiedersehen
Rudolf Frey

*If we're sad for this day, it is for our loss
And not our friend who is gone,
So we cry for we know he'll not see again
The beauty of earth's dawn.*

*At times like this, it's human to cry,
But it's mostly a selfish whim.
And the season of tears is more for us.
We should not be crying for him.*

*Thinking of him, we'd be singing now,
With just an occasional sigh,
Since Rudi has found the peace he sought
And we're left to ponder why.*

*It seems his happy moments
Were far outweighed by strife.
The fact that gives some comfort now
Is that he controlled his life.*

*So many never take the path
Of absolute control.
They let the whims of fate and man
Dictate and lead their soul.*

*So Rudi chose a path to tread
That's known by very few.
We wish you well, goodbye, dear friend
"Und schlaf in himmlischer Ruh."*

— Nancy Kirimli
Pittsburgh
December, 1981



Requiem

*Under the wide and starry sky
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live, and gladly die.
And I lay me down with a will.*

*This be the verse you grave for me:
"Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from the sea
And the hunter home from the hill."*

— Robert Louis Stevenson
(1850-1895)