

IN MEMORIAM

Jules François
1907-1984



Professor Jules François, the great ophthalmologist and geneticist, a member of the Editorial Board of this journal since the early 1950s and a great friend, has left us. He died in Zermatt, during his summer holidays, on 14 August 1984. He was aged 77.

Born in Limbourg, Belgium, in 1907, he completed his medical studies at the age of 23, then specialized in ophthalmology and practiced in Charleroi, until he became, soon after World War II, Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of Gand Medical School, a position he was to keep for about thirty-five years.

Through his total devotion and unending energies he played a major role in the development of ophthalmology, while at the same time transforming his old clinic in a world renowned center. He also established there one of the first European laboratories of medical genetics and can in fact be considered among the founding fathers of this discipline. In this context, he and his collaborators were also extensively involved in twin research.

A very productive researcher, Jules François has directly or indirectly contributed to about one thousand papers and authored seventeen books. He dealt with a great variety of topics, from eye physiology to cataract, glaucoma, tapeto-retinal degeneration, optic nerve atrophy, etc.

He particularly contributed to the field of heredity in ophthalmology (which is, in fact, the title of one of his most famous monographs) and he also contributed original descriptions of hereditary syndromes in ophthalmology, such as the familial dermo-choroidal dystrophy that he described as early as 1949. In more recent years he also studied the ocular manifestations of chromosomal aberrations. And these are just a few examples of a production that has been impressive in terms of quality as well as quantity.

His many distinctions included a number of honorary degrees as well as merit orders. He was President of the European Ophthalmological Society, Secretary of the Working Group on Neuroophthalmology of the World Federation of Neurology, member of the International Council of Ophthalmology.

Jules François was a constant reference point as a member of the Editorial Board of this journal. He was a member of the International Society for Twin Studies since the beginning. He was a great friend to the Mendel Institute. Those of us who have known him for so many years feel a great sense of loss.

Luigi Gedda