



Albert Schinzel

Professor Albert Schinzel was President of the Association from 1999 until September 2006. He has been an active member of the Society since its foundation and was involved in many of the developments. When he became President, cytogenetics was a flourishing and promising sector of medical genetics. He was very successful in not only maintaining but also increasing the expertise in this field thus enhancing the image of the Association.

Albert was born in Vienna and studied medicine in Innsbruck, Vienna and Berlin, before working in Oulu (Finland) and Seattle (USA) and moving to the Institute of Medical Genetics at the University of Zurich, becoming an associate professor in 1986 and a full professor and Director in 1996. Besides being President of the E.C.A., he has also been President of the European Society of Human Genetics and the Swiss Society of Medical Genetics.

His laboratory has been built around modern techniques applied with meticulous care to large numbers of cases. Albert's encyclopaedic knowledge has led to the discovery and documentation of many correlations between aberrant karyotypes and abnormal development. His earlier and ongoing work includes analysis of prenatal and postnatal cases involving mosaicism and triploidy as well as structural chromosome abnormalities. In the last decade, exploiting the strengths of molecular cytogenetics, he has discovered many microdeletions and cryptic aberrations, and has been involved in identifying complex cases of uniparental disomy. Among his many publications and achievements, the 1000-page "Catalog of Unbalanced Chromosome Aberrations in Man" and the Human Cytogenetics Database on CD with clinical and cytogenetic information on 1,200 chromosome aberrations have found a place in every human cytogenetic laboratory. Many of his papers are essential reading in courses on medical genetics. No less than five medical syndromes with developmental disorders are now associated with Schinzel, in particular the Schinzel-Giedion congenital neurodegenerative terminal syndrome.

To many members of E.C.A., Professor Schinzel is known as the Director, organizer and key contributor to teaching in the yearly 'Goldrain Course on Clinical Cytogenetics' which is organized with the support of the Association and was held for the fourth time in 2009. He has put together an outstanding programme ranging from classical and molecular cytogenetics to clinical findings associated with chromosomal imbalances. In 2009 Albert launched the first 'Goldrain Course on Prenatal Genetic Diagnosis' meant for obstetricians, clinical geneticists and (molecular) cytogeneticists.

Albert is among the world's foremost cytogeneticists. He is committed to the highest quality of research and diagnosis and to the writing and publication of key reference works in cytogenetics in which he integrates vast amounts of knowledge. He is devoted to teaching and development of the next generation of cytogeneticists and to developing the future of the subject, not least through E.C.A.