



## Kurt Benirschke

Dr. Benirschke was born in Germany. After his academic education in the Medical Schools of Hamburg and Berlin he attained his M.D. and internship position in 1948. He moved to the United States in 1949 and became professor of Pathology in Dartmouth Medical School (Hanover, N.H.) and the University of California, San Diego. He was Director of Research in San Diego Zoo from 1975 to 1986, and vice president of the Zoological Society of San Diego from 1994. In San Diego Zoo, Dr. Benirschke set up a laboratory for the study of chromosomes of mammalian species, particularly aspects relating to reproduction, systematics, and evolution. In collaboration with T.C. Hsu he published an Atlas of Mammalian Chromosomes. In its 8 volumes he presented the karyotype of 400 different

Mammalian Species. Together with Doris Wurster he described the karyotypes of many species and published an exhaustive list with the karyotypes of two systematic mammalian groups: Arthiodactyla and Carnivora.

Nowadays, the Cytogenetic Laboratory in San Diego Zoo has become a Centre of Reproduction of Endangered Species. The scientists of this Centre are working towards an integrated program which enhances the reproduction of animals and plants in the world. Dr. Oliver Ryder, head of the Genetics Division is an Animal Cytogeneticist specialized in chromosomes of horses. His cytogenetic staff are very active in chromosome analysis of many different mammalian species. They are preparing to publish together with Dr. Steven O'Brien of the National Cancer Institute, a G-banded atlas of Mammalian Species. An international group of Cytogenetics Laboratories will contribute to this atlas.

They also created a "Frozen Zoo" containing frozen cells from 6500 individual specimens belonging to more than 400 species and subspecies of different animal groups.

By 1996, Dr. Kurt Benirschke had published 27 books, 87 chapters and 453 scientific papers.