

**Professor Erwin Walter MORSCHER**  
**1929-2008**  
**EFORT President 1996-1997**



Born on the 25th of December 1929, Erwin Morscher was a true citizen of Basel. From the beginning he was educated in this multicultural and multilingual city nestled on the shores of the Rhine and it was from the University of Basel that he obtained his MD degree in 1955. Early on in his career he developed a strong interest in orthopaedics and true to his origins embarked on his career in the University Hospital of Basel. His first job was that of a house officer in the Paediatric surgery service and then he moved on Orthopaedics. His horizons needed broadening so he set off to the reputed Karolinska Hospital in Stockholm where he honed his specialty skills. Back to Switzerland, he obtained a senior position at the Balgrist Orthopaedic Hospital of the University of Zurich, then under the direction of Professor Francillon. In 1966, he was habilitated Privat Dozent of the University of Basel. He then joined the staff of the orthopaedic service then headed, up to 1970 by Professor Chapchal, in the newly built Felix-Platter Hospital. In 1971, Erwin Morscher was elected to the rank of full professor and chairman of the Orthopaedic Department at the Felix-Platter Hospital of the University of Basel. Erwin Morscher held this position until 1995, at which time he had reached the mandatory retirement age. In 1990 with the help of a private foundation he established the "Laboratory for Orthopaedic Biomechanics" to ensure that scientific principles would continue to be taught as part of clinical training, and that new science-based technologies for clinical use would continue to be developed.

During his tenure in Basel, he was very active not only clinically but also scientifically as is witnessed by the 200 peer reviewed journal articles listed under his name. Erwin touched on practically all aspects of orthopaedics, but all his life his main interests were paediatrics, spine and of course hip surgery. He fathered many original patents and more than one hip component bears his name.

Erwin was a charismatic personality and he occupied many important posts in the world of academic and professional orthopaedics. During 1976 and 1977 Erwin Morscher served as Dean of the Medical School in Basel. He was elected President of the German Orthopaedic Society for the 1978-1979 term (a rare

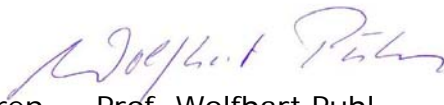
occurrence indeed for a non-German!) and he was chosen as President of the Swiss Society of Orthopaedics between 1982 to 1984. Erwin was a Trustee of the AO Foundation and a National delegate for SICOT. Many honours were bestowed onto him during his productive career. In 1986 he was admitted as a member of German Academy of Sciences Leopoldina. In 2002 Erwin Morscher received the Friedrich Pauwels Gold Medal for his achievements in orthopaedic biomechanics. He was a corresponding and honorary member of many national and international orthopaedic societies.

His major interest, however, was the development of EFORT where he is present at the executive level since 1994 when first elected to the executive board as Vice-President. He then served as President for the 1996-1997 term. Erwin understood immediately the importance of a strong and unified orthopaedic field throughout Europe and using his charisma and diplomatic skills he worked tirelessly towards that goal during the latter part of his career.

The EFORT community extends to Ruth and to the family their heartfelt condolences and will remember Erwin as a dedicated surgeon, an original researcher, an outstanding teacher and an esteemed colleague.



Prof. Karl-Göran Thörngren  
EFORT President



Prof. Wolfhart Puhl  
EFORT Past President



Prof. Pierre Hoffmeyer  
EFORT Member at Large