

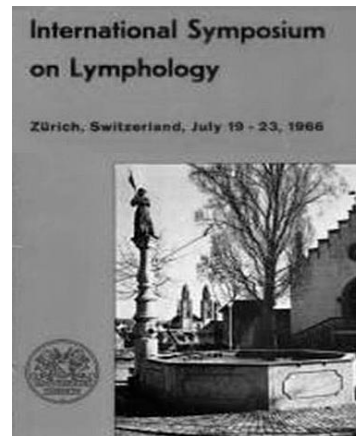
**ALOIS RÜTTIMANN, MD (1922-2011)**  
**FOUNDER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF LYMPHOLOGY**



*Fig. 1.*



*Fig. 2.*  
*Winning the Golden Lymph Node  
 Trophy at the 1<sup>st</sup> ICL.*



*Fig. 3.*  
*1<sup>st</sup> International Congress of  
 Lymphology Brochure, 1966.*

On September 18, 2011, just 2 days before his 89<sup>th</sup> birthday, we lost a wonderful man whose friendship was treasured by many who had the privilege of enjoying him.

I met Alois in the early 60's and he introduced me to his talented wife and to his two bright children.

Alois was a dedicated family man. He was non-pretentious and nature-loving. He was an excellent skier and visited yearly the slopes of Flums and Davos, Switzerland. He liked to play tennis with many friends, particularly with Jacques Gruwez, a surgeon from Belgium and 3<sup>rd</sup> ISL President, who attended every Diagnostic Radiology Course held in Davos.

He devoted most of his early professional years, as head of Diagnostic Radiology at the Kantonspital, Zurich under professor Joseph Wellauer. It was there where we met. At this time, I was a research fellow (Swiss Award).

Alois later moved to the Rontgendiagnostisches Zentralinstitut Stadspital, Triembli Zurich, where he became the Director of Radiology.

In the 60's we became intensely interested in the new field of Lymphology. In 1966, he created the International Society of Lymphology which gathered international scientists of different background and clinical expertise, all who had in common an interest in the lymphatic system.

After more than 10 years of preparation, we published in 1980 the first comprehensive *Atlas of Lymphography*. There were 15 contributors to the 456 page atlas, which provided a basic review of anatomy and histology of the lymphatic system, the technique of lymphography, a survey of different diseases of lymph vessels and nodes, and presented the experience of several outstanding lymphologists (or as we were called "Lymphomaniacs").

While we were developing this project, Alois and several close friends decided that the best way to gather and attract multidisciplinary scientists interested in lymphology, was to create an international society, celebrate international congresses in Europe, America and in all countries of the World and create a Journal of *Lymphology*. All of these objectives were met. Alois became the first president of the International Society of Lymphology.

Attracted to a wonderful ski resort with excellent convention facilities, Alois asked Dr. Peter Braun, who lived in Davos, to establish a yearly International Diagnostic Radiology Course. With the invaluable help of Ms. Brigit Läubli, these courses became so popular that the themes and faculty were repeated two years in a row. For 25 consecutive years I participated as faculty member and joined Alois and some friends in memorable conversations about science and philosophy.

Alois was approaching the winter years of his life, and he decided to pass on the baton of Co-Director of these courses and the Directorship of Radiology at Triemli.

He told us of his desire to go back to the University as a student of Philosophy.

Alois, in a quiet way, enjoyed every aspect of his life. As a family man, a superb scientist, original thinker, dynamic physician, and excellent friend, he will be remembered. This is another way to attain immortality.

Few people have left a legacy of accomplishment as Alois Rüttimann.

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Alois Rüttimann was born on September 20, 1922, in Hitzkirch, Switzerland, where his father was a veterinary doctor and where he spent his years of childhood and youth. He studied medicine at the University of Zurich from where he graduated. He was married and had 2 children. He was a Colonel in the Swiss Army.

His professional career included, among others, a position at the Research Institute in Davos and as Diagnostic Consultant at the Alpine Clinic in Davos-Clavadel. He served as Oberarzt at the Department of Radiology at the University Hospital of Zurich and in 1961 he became Associate Professor.

In 1972 he was elected Head of the Department of Radiology at the City Hospital Triemli in Zurich, a position he held until his retirement in 1987.

Alois Rüttimann was the father of lymphography. In 1966 he initiated the first International Congress of Lymphology in Zurich. During this event, he founded the International Society of Lymphology (ISL), with meetings held bi-annually worldwide. He acted as first Secretary-General of the Society and opened the Central Office in Zurich, where the ISL was also registered.

Three years later, he created the first course in lymphography, which was held at the Alpine Clinic of Davos-Clavadel and later at the Convention Hall Davos.

Alois Rüttimann was always visionary and very far-sighted. He realized the limited future of lymphography. Therefore, the topic of the next course was angiography and future courses encompassed the other main organs of the body: heart and chest; abdomen and pelvis; brain, head neck & spine and the musculoskeletal system .

This was the beginning of the Diagnostic Courses Davos, which were held annually and soon became famous as IDKD, International Diagnostic Courses Davos. The main goals of these Courses were to introduce formal continuing medical

education in Radiology in Switzerland and also Europe by inviting the most famous and prestigious teachers and leaders of American and European Radiology. The unique format of workshop-like interactive courses gave the possibility for the participants to get into direct contact with the mainly American authors of leading textbooks. Alois Rüttimann herewith contributed significantly to the development of increasingly close relations between European and American radiologists and establishing CME in Europe. The IDKD is now in its 44<sup>th</sup> year and visited

every year by over 1000 participants. Meanwhile, courses are also run in Greece and Hong Kong.

Another important accomplishment of Alois Rüttimann: as one of the most prominent radiologists in Switzerland he initiated the Swiss Board Exams in radiology in 1977. These were among the first medical specialty board exams to become effective in Switzerland.

**Brigit Läubli**  
**Society Historian**