

## In Memorium: Professor Hizir Alp, 1933 – 2020

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With deep regret and sadness, we report the death of Professor Hizir Alp, founder of Neurosurgery Department of Gazi University (Figure 1). He was a passionate educator, entrepreneur, and neurosurgeon who has served in our field for over 40 years, passed away on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020.

Dr. Alp was born in Van, in 1933. He graduated from Ankara University Faculty of Medicine in 1959 as a military student. After completing a one-year internship at Gulhane Military Medical Academy, he worked as a flight physician at Diyarbakir 8<sup>th</sup> Main Jet Base Command Health Department between 1960 and 1963. He returned to Gulhane Military Medical Academy in 1963 and completed his majoring in general surgery in 1967. In that period, Professor Hamit Ziya Gokalp returned to Turkey after completing his education in United States, and Dr. Alp was appointed to the newly established neurosurgery department at Gulhane Military Medical Academy. Although there was no intensive care unit back then, Dr. Alp worked at an intense pace and healed many patients. He did many successful studies with Professor Hamit Ziya Gokalp and Bedii Sahin, MD in that period when even angiography, myelography and ventriculography were applied with difficulty. He was appointed to Eskisehir Military Hospital in 1970 and established an experimental laboratory with the permission of the hospital administration. He did ventriculography studies for two years, and assumed the title of Associate Professor in 1974. He left the military at his own request in 1977 and was appointed as the chief of neurosurgery clinic in Ankara Numune Hospital. He endeavored for the establishment of an academy in there. In 1979, Professor Onur Kumbaracibasi, the president of Ankara Economic and Commercial Sciences Academy, became aware of Dr. Alp's efforts. Professor



Figure 1: Professor Hizir Alp, MD.

Kumbaracibasi offered him a collaboration to establish a new medical faculty. According to the University Law numbered 1750, at least seven lecturers were required to establish a faculty. Thereupon, Dr. Alp chose seven of his colleagues and reported them to the academy. During these dates, some university rectors tried to stop Professor Kumbaracibasi and Dr. Alp's mission and applied to the Council of State. In fact, the attempts to destroy this establishment were published in newspapers as "illegal faculty". Although the inauguration of the faculty was stopped by the Council of State, Dr. Alp and his friends continued their efforts undauntedly to establish the faculty with the judgement of the Constitutional Court. For the hospital within the medical faculty, they made a deal

with Professor Ridvan Ege, the head of Ankara Traffic Hospital (known as Dr. Muhittin Ülker Emergency Aid and Traumatology Hospital) Foundation. Unlike the other medical schools, no financial support was received from the state budget. Despite all these, Dr. Alp and his friends' efforts paid off. In September 1979, the establishment of the faculty was completed under the name of Ankara Economic and Commercial Sciences Academy, Faculty of Medicine. Thus, Ankara's third and Turkey's eighteenth medical faculty was established. Dr. Alp resigned from Ankara Numune Hospital and took along Mustafa Kemal Baykaner, MD with whom he worked together at Numune Hospital and Necdet Ceviker, MD (from Sigorta Hospital) as a staff member and Sukru Aykol, Mustafa Cengel and Toygun Orbay, MD as a resident member (Figure 2). The bases of today's Gazi University Faculty of Medicine, Department of Neurosurgery were laid. Thus, the number of institutions providing neurosurgery training in Ankara rose to six. Dr. Alp participated in all the work done in the medical faculty, such like the establishment of laboratories for basic sciences and the student classrooms. He became professor in 1982. The faculty gained its legal identity within Gazi University with the new university law published in 1983. Afterwards, Dr. Ceviker to Germany, Dr. Baykaner to England, Dr. Orbay was sent to Switzerland to improve their training and enhance their knowledge and experience. Thus, Gazi University Department of Neurosurgery took its place in the Turkish neurosurgical community with stronger basis. Dr. Baykaner with pediatric neurosurgery, Dr. Aykol with stereotactic and functional neurosurgery, and Dr. Orbay was entrusted with vascular neurosurgery (Figure 3). Today, this team continues to work as one of Turkey's best neurosurgery clinic with its operating rooms where all the high-tech neuroradiological auxiliary methods and ultimate microsurgical methods are applied, well-equipped intensive care unit, gamma knife unit and Professor Hızir Alp microsurgery laboratory, which is suitable for all kinds of research.

Professor Hızir Alp retired from Gazi University in 2000 and continued to work at Guven Hospital until 2006. He was a loving father, a husband, and an esteemed colleague. We will never forget his tenacity, passion and all the ways he made us better. We will miss him greatly.



**Figure 2:** From left to right at the top; Hızir Alp, Mustafa Kemal Baykaner, Ali İhsan Baysal, Necdet Ceviker, Feriha Ozer. From left to right at the bottom; Sukru Aykol, Mustafa Cengel, Toygun Orbay.



**Figure 3:** From left to right; Mustafa Kemal Baykaner, Hızir Alp, Sukru Aykol.