

Obituary

In Memorium: Professor M. Kemali Baykaner, December 15, 1949 – September 21, 2016

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Mustafa Kemali Baykaner (Figure 1), a pediatric neurosurgeon who has served the field for over 35 years, a loving father, a husband, an esteemed colleague, a friend and a mentor, passed away on September 21st, 2016, after an aggressive course of cancer. He died at peace, surrounded by his family, friends, his colleagues, nurses and staff.

He was born in December 15th, 1949 in Ankara, to a family of physicians. He earned his medical degree from Ankara University Medical School in 1973 and completed neurosurgery training in 1979 at Numune Hospital. He then started his academic post at Gazi University as an associate professor in 1982, where he remained throughout the rest of his career. His additional subspecialty training took him to London, Toronto and Zurich for over 2 years.

During his early tenure at Gazi University, his main clinical interests included vasospasm and pharmacologic interventions, as well as correction of craniofacial anomalies. He was the recipient of numerous early career research awards during his junior years at Gazi University, where he then founded the Division of Pediatric Neurosurgery in 1993, and served as the division head of Pediatric Neurosurgery throughout his career. He was elected as the president of the Turkish Neurosurgical Society between 1997-1998, in addition to participating in the organizational committees of many national and international meetings and symposia over the past 30 years (Figures 2,3,4). He received career achievement awards by the Turkish Neurosurgical Society in 2006 and by the Nervous System Surgery Society in 2009 for his contributions to the societies and the field of neurosurgery. He served as the president of the Turkish Board of Neurosurgery between 2009-2010, and remained as the program director of neurosurgery residency training program at Gazi University. With his great efforts, Department of Neurosurgery received full Joint Residency Advisory and Accreditation Committee



Figure 1: Prof. Dr. M. Kemali Baykaner in Turkish Neurosurgical Society Scientific Meeting.

of European Association of Neurosurgical Societies (EANS/JRAAC) accreditation, honored as a center meeting European standards of excellence for training in neurosurgery in 2015. He introduced intraoperative magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to the operating rooms, among his many other contributions to the department. He was honored with two prestigious lifetime achievement awards by the Nervous System Surgery Society in 2015 and Turkish Neurosurgical Society in 2016.

He contributed to the field of neurosurgery with more than 350 scientific publications, served as the editor of 5 books and authored numerous book chapters. He served in the editorial board of journals including The Child's Nervous System and Turkish Neurosurgery Journal. In addition to his academic contributions, he also played an important role in founding and developing the professional establishment of pediatric



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neurosurgery in Turkey, along with his colleagues Drs Saffet Mutluer, Yusuf Ersahin and Memet Ozek in the early 1990s. He played part in having the Pediatric Neurosurgery Study Group, as the first accepted subspecialty group of the Turkish Neurosurgical Society and serves as the main training and collaboration organization for pediatric neurosurgeons locally and internationally. His contribution to this group has been invaluable.

M. Kemali Baykaner was dedicated to his career as a neurosurgeon, taking pride in caring for patients, educating

trainees, and advancing the field. He was a good mentor, and inspired many of us in the field of medicine to become better physicians, to work harder, and beyond all, to love what we do (Figure 5). He was a real hard worker and dedicated surgeon. Despite severe surgical interventions related to his disease, he was always on duty and never compromised his surgical and teaching responsibilities. He was married to Hulya (nee Akbay) who is a pharmacist in Ankara, and had one daughter, Tuna, who is a cardiac electrophysiology fellow in Palo Alto, CA, USA. He will always live in the hearts of his family, friends and his patients.



Figure 2: Prof. Dr. M. Kemali Baykaner and Prof. Dr. James Rutka.



Figure 4: Prof. Dr. Saffet Mutluer, Prof. Dr. Harold Louis Rekate and Prof. Dr. M. Kemali Baykaner.

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Figure 3: Prof. Dr. M. Gazi Yaşargil with his colleagues in a heated debate including Dr. Baykaner.



Figure 5: Prof. Dr. Baykaner with his students discussing a pediatric patient with craniosynostosis.