

FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF BIORHEOLOGY

POISEUILLE GOLD MEDAL AWARD CEREMONY

Laudatio: Poiseuille Awardee Hellmut Hartert

A.L. Copley

Laboratory of Biorheology, Polytechnic Institute of New York,  
Brooklyn, New York 11201, USA

President Witte kindly invited me to give the Laudatio here at the Poiseuille Award ceremony in honor of Professor Hellmut Hartert who is the seventh recipient of the Poiseuille Medal, the highest award of the International Society of Biorheology. Professor Witte's reason for choosing me as the Society's representative to honor both Hellmut Hartert and Jean-Léonard-Marie Poiseuille was that I have known our friend Hellmut for many years. There can be nothing more pleasing to me than to give this speech in his honor.

I met Hellmut Hartert for the first time during the International Congress of Hematology, held in 1950 at Cambridge, England. I was surprised to see in the section on scientific exhibitions at this Congress a presentation on thrombelastography by Hellmut Hartert. It was for the first time before an international medical public that his method of thrombelastography was shown together with his findings which were of clinical importance. As we all know, Hartert's thrombelastography is a method for the clinical laboratory. Since his exhibition in 1950, thrombelastography has become widely known and is being employed in numerous hospitals and clinical laboratories all over the globe as an aid to the practice of medicine and surgery. With thrombelastography, Hellmut Hartert handed to the medical profession a method and tool which has kept hemorheology alive in the minds of physicians and surgeons after the introduction of the erythrocyte sedimentation rate which was initiated, as we all know, by Robin Fåhræus in the early part of this century.

Hellmut H. Hartert was born in Tübingen, where his father was Professor of Surgery. In 1939, he began his studies of medicine and physics in Munich, which he had to discontinue because of the war in which he was wounded in 1940. In 1941 he continued his studies of medicine in Prague, Freiburg im Breisgau, Vienna, Berlin and Breslau. He thus went to six universities. This I have in common with him, as I also went to six universities for my studies of medicine and the natural sciences. I note also from Hellmut

Hartert's curriculum that we experienced at least one great teacher. He was the neurologist and clinician Victor von Weizsäcker of the University of Heidelberg, known as one of the Founders of Psycho-Somatic Medicine.

Hellmut Hartert graduated in Berlin in 1944 with distinction and subsequently he was an instructor teaching biochemistry at the Institute of Physiological Chemistry at the University of Berlin. From 1946-1962 he had a career in the Department of Medicine of the University of Heidelberg, where he became in 1959 Professor of Internal Medicine. In 1962, he was appointed Physician-in-Chief of the Department of Medicine at the Municipal Hospital, Kaiserslautern, where he also was Medical Director of the hospital. In 1968, he was Senior Lecturer at the Saar University and in 1976, Senior Lecturer of Biomedical Engineering at the University of Kaiserslautern. In 1970 he was also a prime mover in the foundation of the University of Kaiserslautern. In 1977, he accepted an additional Professorship at the University of Mainz in the Academic Teaching Hospital in Kaiserslautern.

He was visiting Professor in 1961 at Queens University, Kingston, Canada and in 1968 at Jikei University in Tokyo. In 1974 he was honored as a Fellow of the International College of Angiology in New York City.

I shall refrain from giving you details about the many teaching and research appointments he held. Indeed, he had a most active academic life. Besides, he has been an Editor or co-Editor or member of Editorial Advisory Boards of many scientific journals. I am particularly glad that he served in one of these capacities for BIORHEOLOGY since 1963, for THROMBOSIS RESEARCH, where he was an Editor from 1965-1978, and for CLINICAL HEMORHEOLOGY since its foundation in 1981. He had about 250 scientific publications and he contributed to quite a number of books, the list of which would be too long to present here.

Hellmut Hartert was a participant and prime mover in the foundation of several scientific societies and I should like to mention the following: Deutsche Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Blutgerinnungsforschung, founded in 1956. He was its President then and again in 1968. Since the foundation of the International Society of Biorheology in 1966, he remained as one of its Vice Presidents and, as you all know, he is the Honorary President of this our 5. International Congress of Biorheology. I should like to add that in 1969 he was President of the 2. International Conference on Hemorheology held at the University of Heidelberg. We both edited its proceedings, entitled 'Theoretical and Clinical Hemorheology', published by Springer Verlag. In 1975 he founded, at the University of Kaiserslautern, the research group MNI which is the abbreviation for medicine, natural and engineering sciences. He continues to be President of MNI. Two years ago, he became Founder of the German Society of Clinical Hemorheology, of which he is President.

As you see, he is very much at the origin of new directions in the biomedical sciences and as such I am very glad that he shared with me and several other colleagues the foundation of the International Society of Biorheology. This certainly is one of his major

contributions to our science. As he is an originator and also an inventor he has a history of many achievements, some of which were not known to me until I became acquainted with his curriculum. Here too, time does not permit me to list all his inventions. One of his main inventions is the Thrombelastograph, presented in 1947. In 1971, he introduced the so-called Rheosimulator, a device for simulation of blood flow including blood clotting processes, with continuous registration of blood coagulum elasticity. His latest instrument, named 'Resonance-Thrombograph' and introduced in 1976, uses the basic parameters of the Rheosimulator. It applies resonance effects of fibrin elasticity for continuous recording of the blood clotting process. The current development of the Resonance-Thrombograph permits also separate measurements of the viscosity of biological fluids.

Hellmut Hartert is a builder not merely of instruments, scientific societies, hospital and university departments but he is also a builder in another sense. He loves architecture and one of his great pleasures is to design and build houses as an architect. I had the good fortune of being frequently the guest in two of his houses, which he built for himself and his family. I was amazed that, besides doing an excellent professional job as an architect, he introduced a remarkable spaciousness in the design of these houses. Moreover, they give a feeling of warmth and coziness and the interior reflects the optimistic attitude of Hellmut and Elizabeth, his charming wife. His houses are most inviting, they mirror the hospitality of Hellmut and Elizabeth Hartert. Both love music, literature, the fine arts and, as this goes well together, the culinary pleasures, inducing what I like to call 'gastronomic smiling'. Any one of you, who has enjoyed their hospitality, as I, can never forget the warmth of these two extraordinary persons who say yes to human life and to its preservation. This is reflected as well in the great contributions Hellmut Hartert made to the practice of medicine and the pursuit of medical science, in particular, biorheology and to clinical hemorheology, one of its important fields.

It is in the sense of joy that I congratulate Hellmut Hartert who so very much deserves the Poiseuille Gold Medal Award. In a few moments the Poiseuille Medal Award will be bestowed on him by the International Society of Biorheology and by its sixth awardee, Alex Silberberg.