

## HOMENAGEM

### Dear Reader

This Special Issue in your hand contains some of the papers presented to the HL7 Interoperability Conference 2011, which has happened from 13-14 May 2010 in Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil. It was the 11<sup>th</sup> event in the series of IHIC conferences started in 2000 in Dresden, Germany. The IHICs have been inaugurated by the first Affiliates Director of HL7's Board of Directors, Joachim Dudeck, MD, who experienced the beauty of this city during his childhood and youth. So, he was extremely proud to present Dresden, which has been heavily destroyed at the end of World War Two, to the international HL7 community, enabled by the fall of the wall and the German reunification.

Joachim Dudeck, Founder, Chair of the Board for ten years and Honorary Fellow of HL7 Germany, passed away on March 31<sup>st</sup> 2010.

The doyen of the German Medical Informatics discipline, also representing our speciality at European and global level, was born on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1932, in Breslau, Silesia. He went at school in Leipzig and studied medicine there. Following his understanding of freedom and democracy, he left East Germany and finished his studies in Heidelberg.

Here, he developed his favour to supporting and evaluating medical procedures and processes by formal methods. Always seeking for new approaches, he started to use computers for mathematically and statistically processing measurements and medical data. Becoming a professor for Medical Informatics at the University of Giessen in 1970, he first introduced the computer assisted ECG analysis in Germany. He was steadily focused on the improvement of patient care as well as to support the medical experts work by communications and cooperation.

He early started a close collaboration with persons and institution in the US, cooperated with Warner, Clayton, and Gardner in Salt Lake City and introduced the HELP system in Germany. Another working domain of Joachim Dudeck was the field of medical documentation, classification and evaluation for process optimization, and quality assurance as well as for deriving epidemiological knowledge and health policy decision. He was pushing cancer documentation and established the network of Cancer Registries in Germany. Also in this domain, he cooperated with US institutions, planned and performed in collaboration with the US Commission on a Cancer Patient Care Evaluation Study on thyroid cancer. Always being open to new ideas and revolutionary approaches, he pushed their distribution by an early engagement in Health Informatics standardization at CEN TC 251, and later on at ISO TC 215. Therefore, nobody was wondering that he launched the first HL7 Affiliate globally, pushed the use of XML in healthcare, and promoted SNOMED.

As already mentioned, Joachim Dudeck was the first Affiliates Director at the HL7 Board. He received the Ed Hammond Volunteer of the Year award in 1998 as the first non-US person. From 1992-1995, he chaired the Medical Informatics Chapter of the German Association for Medical Informatics, Biometry and Epidemiology. As the third German, in 2003 he became Fellow of the American College of Medical Informatics. His life achievements have been honoured with the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in 2004.

Joachim Dudeck strongly promoted medical informatics and the use of communication and interoperability standards internationally, especially in the countries of the former Eastern Block such as Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and the countries of the former Yugoslavia, but also Turkey and the Asia region.

Beside the important scientific engagement, Joachim was a great teacher and good friend. Having been my first scientific contact in West Germany after the German reunification, he was continuously supporting my personal integration in the new environment as excellent colleague and warm-hearted friend. I'm so

thankful for all the experiences, guidance, kind advices and great help I gained as his long-term Deputy Chair of HL7 Germany and his successor in many positions including the German HL7 chairmanship. And I'm sure that many members of our global HL7 family can similarly report about this extraordinary personality and important humanist.

We will miss him and we offer our condolences to his wife and his family. We will always treasure the memory of Joachim Dudeck in the IHIC context, at HL7 and beyond.

**Bernd Blobel**

**Chair, HL7 Germany**