

# Tribute to Dr. Guy Germain

By Jean-Luc Senécal, MD, FRCPC

**D**r. Guy Germain, a rheumatologist at Hôpital Notre-Dame of the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal (CHUM), passed away on December 24, 2016, at the age of 91. He was one of the founding fathers of rheumatology in Quebec and Canada.

Dr. Germain was appointed geographical full-time associate professor in the Faculty of Medicine of Université de Montréal in 1968, where he was Director of the Rheumatic Disease Unit. He was also Head of the Division of Rheumatology at Hôpital Notre-Dame. Dr. Germain played a major role in establishing rheumatology in Quebec and having it recognized as a medical specialty. With his colleagues, André Lussier (deceased) at the Université de Sherbrooke and Drs. Roger Demers, De Guise-Vaillancourt and Jacques Durivage at the Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal (deceased), as well as with Dr. Claude Blondin at Saint-Luc Hospital, and his colleagues, Jacques Gascon and Alain Prat at Hôpital Notre-Dame, Dr. Germain established bases of excellence in academic rheumatology, which allowed the next generations of rheumatologists to be trained and put French Canada, including the Université de Montréal, Hôpital Notre-Dame and the CHUM, on the rheumatology world stage.

Dr. Germain's professional merits were recognized on numerous occasions. In particular, in 1995, the Laurentian Conference of Rheumatology awarded him the *Marie-Thérèse Fortin Award* in recognition of his professional skills and compassion in the care of patients. At Hôpital Notre-Dame, the Guy Germain Conference Room on the 4th floor of Pavillon Mailloux keeps his memory alive.

Although Dr. Germain was not a researcher himself, he understood very well that, without research, rheumatology would not spread beyond our borders. "Every patient is a paper," he said to us time after time. Dr. Germain recruited several researchers. The Osteoarthritis Chair and the Scleroderma Chair, of which Dr. Germain was very proud,



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ensure that rheumatology research will continue at the Université de Montréal for decades to come.

Dr. Germain was an outstanding clinician with exceptional experience, from which countless patients, dozens of rheumatology residents and many residents in other specialties benefited. He taught the residents the importance of listening to and respecting the patient, as well as gentleness and finesse during the physical examination, and he was a role model for everyone. Guy Germain was a *magister*, a latin word meaning authority, leader, commander, caretaker, teacher, master,

adviser, guide and mentor all together. Toward his patients, he was generous with his time and his willingness to help; he provided them with an exceptional level of service and dedication. Many patients said he was a second father to them and that he had helped them personally, as well as medically.

Dr. Germain's exceptional generosity says a lot about his commitment in the service of academic rheumatology and his long-term vision for its development. Dr. Germain had two passions: his family and medicine. Hôpital Notre-Dame was his second home and he was one of its pillars.

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