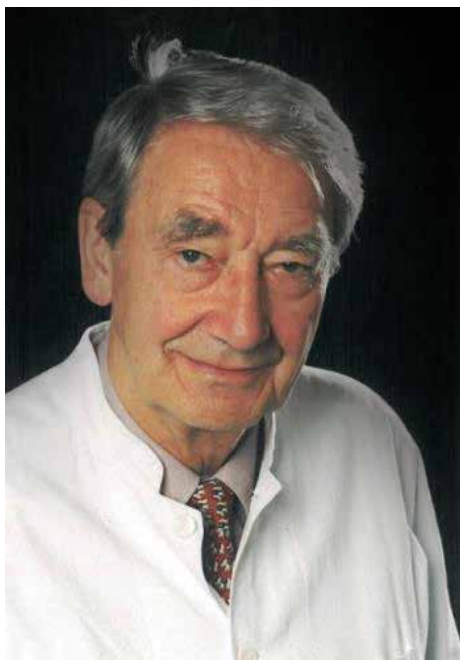




## Obituary

### In Memoriam: Mirko Tos



Mirko Tos, the second of two sons, was born on October 3, 1931, in Vitomarci, Slovenia (formerly the northern part of Yugoslavia). He attended school in a small village in which his father was mayor, but moved 16 kilometers with his older brother to Ptuj to attend high school. The German invasion during World War II forced the use of the German language on all pupils, as all the Slovenian teachers were replaced by German teachers with German becoming the taught language.

This later became advantageous for Mirko, because after the war, and during the holidays from his medical studies at The University of Ljubljana (the Capital City of Slovenia), he went to Germany to work at a steel mill. This, and instructing at anatomic dissection courses for younger medical students at the University, enabled him to support himself economically and even buy a BMW motorbike, making him one of only a few motorcyclists in Slovenia at that time. Some of his spare time was spent playing chess, and he reigned as the University Champion, ranking as one of the best players in Slovenia. He graduated from medical school in 1957, married his wife Nives, and immediately emigrated from Yugoslavia, which was now governed by the communists, to a place near Wuppertal in Germany, using a temporary tourist visa. The newlyweds stayed there for three months, Mirko working at the Verbandstation (nursery) at the steel mill, and Nives at the local chocolate factory. A colleague in Ljubljana told him about a city in Denmark called Vejle, stating that it was a nice place with friendly people. Mirko applied and secured a position as junior physician at the Department of Radiology at Vejle

County Hospital, where he stayed for two years, learning Danish along the way. During this time, two daughters were born, Miriam and Vivian. In order to pursue a career as a doctor in Denmark, he had to graduate from a Danish University, so the family moved to Copenhagen. While working full-time at the hospital in Hamlet's city of Elsinore and studying all the clinical specialties once again, he graduated from the University of Copenhagen in 1960. Ending his internship, he was appointed to the ENT Department at Glostrup County Hospital in Copenhagen. Rising quickly through the ranks, he was appointed consultant at the very young age of 36 in 1966, the same year he defended his thesis on "The development of the tracheal glands in man," at the University of Copenhagen. It was during these years his widespread research activities were founded, later covering diverse subjects as the epidemiology and histology of secretory otitis media, nasal polyp pathogenesis, and middle ear and acoustic neuroma surgery.

In 1972, he was appointed co-chairman of the ENT Department, Gentofte University of Copenhagen, and in 1973 was offered the position as chairman and professor at the University Hospital of Odense, but declined the offer, as this meant moving his family, which by now had been blessed with a third daughter, Tina.

In 1980 he was appointed professor and chairman in Gentofte, and established the Otopathologic Laboratory, from which a vast number of basic science papers on the normal tubotympanum, on acute and secretory otitis media, on nasal polyposis and on acoustic neuroma have been published in international journals. He has organized a number of clinical research groups, covering most aspects of the specialty, especially the epidemiology, pathology, and sequelae of otitis media, cholesteatoma, and reconstructive middle ear surgery, as well as acoustic neuroma surgery. His published papers total about seven hundred, with a number of physicians receiving PhD degrees based on these activities.

For many years after his retirement, Mirko Tos had been an extremely active participant at international meetings, workshops and conferences, in many of these as invited speaker and faculty member. He was chairman of four international conferences in Copenhagen: the III Conference on Cholesteatoma and Mastoid Surgery 1988, the First International Conference on Acoustic Neuroma 1991, the XV Congress of European Rhinological Society 1994, and the III Extraordinary International Symposium on Recent Advances in Otitis Media 1997.

During the sixties and seventies, Mirko pioneered the new principles of middle ear surgery in Denmark and established his reputation when he, in 1976, was the first surgeon in modern times to remove an acoustic neuroma through the translabyrinthine approach in Denmark.

He has been the organizer and chairman of a number of international, theoretical and instructional courses on middle ear and acoustic neuroma surgery, as well as courses on functional endoscopic sinus surgery.

Beginning in 1993, he published the book series “Manual of middle ear surgery, Vol. I-IV” and “Cartilage Tympanoplasty”, from Thieme Verlag. A number of other books feature his name as co-author and he has advised several international otolaryngological journals.

In 2001, at the age of 70, he retired from his professor- and chairmanship in Gentofte.

In 2002, he was appointed as the first professor of Oto-rhino-laryngology at the new University in Maribor, in his native country Slovenia – a position he maintained until 2011 while still living in Denmark, lecturing during spring and fall holidays in Slovenia, staying in the beautiful town Bled in the Julian Alps.

During times of leisure, Mirko have enjoyed tennis, downhill skiing and windsurfing, preferably in the Adriatic Sea during the summer holiday, surrounded by his family.

Mirko died on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018 and was buried on 27<sup>th</sup> January in Copenhagen. He leaves his wife Nives Tos, three daughters (Miriam, Vivian and Tina) and five grandchildren.

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