IN MEMORIAM

Professor Jean Pierre Soulier

P. Rouger

Paris, France

Professor Soulier, founder member and past president of International Society of Blood Transfusion (ISBT) died at home in Paris on 16th January 2003. Jean Pierre Soulier was born on 14 September 1915 in Etretat in Normandy. He came from a family of surgeons and industrialists. His medical studies in Paris led him to specialize in paediatrics under the guidance of Professor Robert Debré. His thesis on prothrombin and vitamin K (1943) introduced him to the field of haemostasis. At the end of the Second World War, he spent a year in the haemostasis laboratory of the Boston-based Thorndike Memorial Laboratory. Upon his return to France, he supervised a laboratory at the National Centre for Blood Transfusion, gradually moving up to the post of General Director in 1954, a position which he held until his retirement in 1984. He also served as Professor of Haematology at the Paris Necker-Enfants-Malades medical school. During his career, he was the founder, cofounder or president of many prominent national and international organizations, such as the National Blood Transfusion Society, the French Haemophiliac Association, the ISBT and the International Haemostasis and Thrombosis Committee. His internationally recognized research in haematology, coagulation and blood transfusion led him to the identification of the two types of haemophilia: Haemophilia A and Haemophilia B (1953). His work led to the discovery of the Bernard–Soulier syndrome, and of the first therapeutic tools against haemophilia B (PPSB, in 1959). As one of the first investigators to work on the epidemic of the recently discovered Hepatitis B virus, he worked on improving transfusion safety. He contributed to the use of Hepatitis B specific immunoglobulins and to the creation of a framework governing their use. His last fields of research were parvovirus B19, quantification of decarboxyprothrombin and the first monoclonal antibodies.

He was an advocate for justice and human rights and in 1980, together with the Belgian Professor A. André, he produced a Code of Ethics for blood transfusion. This code, which laid down good ethical practice and principles for Blood Transfusion Services and Blood Transfusion Medicine was adopted by the ISBT and then by the International Red Cross at the General Meeting in Manila (Philippines) in 1981.

Throughout his life, Jean-Pierre Soulier was as passionate about literature and the humanities as he was about medicine. Upon retirement, he published several works on ethics and the dignity of mankind in the face of suffering, illness and death. He died, aged 87. He leaves a wife, three sons and four daughters.

Professor Philippe Rouger, Paris 2003