

John Nevil Insall

19 June 1930, Bournemouth, UK - 30 December 2000, New York, USA



It is difficult to talk about Dr. John N. Insall without some risks of being either redundant or banal. For me, after thirty years of friendship, it would be easier to remember the numerous personal or familiar events. I will try to be as close as possible to reality.

The academic career and the scientific achievements of Dr. John Insall are well known. He graduated in Cambridge (UK) in 1953. His first orthopaedic experiences took place in the UK and Canada, but soon he moved to New York at the Hospital for Special Surgery where he founded the Knee Clinic and became Professor at Cornell University. It was the time of osteotomies for knee osteoarthritis. At the beginning of the 1970s, he developed an interest in knee replacement and greatly contributed to the design of the total condylar, the first and really successful total knee replacement (with patella). On this basis, a new family of prostheses later developed as did the concept of posterior stability such as the Insall-Burnstein I and II. In the last ten years he moved to Beth Israel Hospital-North in Manhattan and became Professor at the Albert Einstein School of Medicine. His latest interests in knee replacement were devoted to meniscal bearing and hi-flexion.

John Insall has been a teacher of surgery of the knee. His scientific contributions, mainly in the *Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery*, were numerous; well-known the volumes of his book *Surgery of the Knee*, now at its third edition; countless his participations to meetings in the United States and all over the world, including Italy where he has

come many times. He was the founding member of the Knee Society (USA) and has educated a vast group of surgeons who have been his fellows in New York for various periods of time. They belong to the John Insall Club which has chapters in the United States, Europe and in the Orient. John Insall received the Laurea Honoris Causa in Medicine from the University of Genoa (Italy) in the year 1992.

Enough for the academic and scientific profile but in my opinion it is also important to remember him as a man. For years he had been well known all over the world and yet maintained a strong personality; at the same time he was respectful of others and simple like only the greatest can be. He loved nature and the tranquillity of the countryside and of the sea. I remember with nostalgia his educated manners, his elegance and calmness of conversation, his reserve and the consideration he gave to everybody including less important people. He knew how to listen and how to make good suggestions. Rarely was he irritated or above the lines. John loved many aspects of life, beautiful things, good table, beautiful cars and he also loved to travel, in Italy particularly.

His wife Mary, his son John and daughter Amanda mourn his death. John Insall will remain in our memories forever as teacher and friend to whom we owe a lot both professionally and personally.

Paolo Aglietti