

**Presentation of Professor Ihsan DOGRAMACI
(Prof. Ulrich Laaser, Vice President of WFPHA)**

Professor Ihsan Dogramaci was born 94 years ago in Erbil, which was then part of the Ottoman Empire. After completing Turkish primary school in Erbil he graduated from the Preparatory School of the American University of Beirut and the Faculty of Medicine of Istanbul University. He trained in pediatrics under Professor Albert Eckstein in Ankara, and in the United States at Harvard University and Washington University in St Louis. He and his wife and their two young children then settled in Ankara, Turkey, in 1947.

The young pediatrician rapidly advanced in the University of Ankara Faculty of Medicine becoming professor of pediatrics in 1955. Even in those early years he was envisioning non-profit private institutions of higher learning resembling those he had seen and worked at in the United States.

In 1955, in a slum area of Ankara, he established the Institute of Child Health attached to the University of Ankara and by 1961 the Institute included Turkey's first university-level schools of nursing, of nutrition and dietetics, of physical therapy and rehabilitation, and of medical technology. He then proceeded to establish the Hacettepe Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, which was a second faculty of medicine within the University of Ankara, and a School of Dentistry.

Professor Dogramaci became rector of the University of Ankara in 1963 for a two-year term followed by two years as President of the Board of Trustees of Middle East Technical University in Ankara. In 1967 the Hacettepe Faculty of Medicine and the other schools under the Institute of Child Health were chartered as a new university, Hacettepe University, today one of the leading institutions of higher learning in Turkey. Professor Dogramaci was its rector until 1975. When his term finished, he accepted an appointment as visiting Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Paris Descartes.

In 1980 Professor Dogramaci was invited by the Turkish Government to advise on the drafting of a new law governing higher education in the country. His recommendations for restructuring Turkish higher education included establishing a Council of Higher Education, with its president reporting directly to the President of the Republic. He was appointed to head the Council and served 12 years, until 1992. In 1980 only 6.3% of the tertiary education age group in Turkey was enrolled in higher education. At that time the rate in Western Europe was 32%, in neighboring Syria 14% and in Greece 22%. In the following 25 years the ratio in Turkey increased to 34.5%. In terms of research as reflected in publications in scientific journals, Turkey's ranking in the world rose in the same time period from 45th to 18th.

In 1982 an amendment to the Turkish Constitution allowed the establishment of non-profit institutions of higher learning by foundations. In 1984 Professor Dogramaci established the first of these, Bilkent University, and became President of its Board of Trustees. He continues today in that post. The second university to be established by a foundation followed eight years later. Today, of the 132 universities in Turkey, 94 have been established by the state and 38 by foundations as private institutions.

Let us now turn to our laureate's international activities. While a research fellow in pediatrics at Washington University, St Louis, in the United States he had the exciting opportunity to be a signatory to the Constitution of the World Health Organization. That was in 1946, and he is currently the only living signatory of that document. Once in Turkey, in addition to the time-consuming activities we have already heard about, he was called upon by WHO to visit and advise on the establishment of new schools of medicine and health sciences at the University of Sherbrooke in Quebec, Canada; at the University of Brasilia, in the newly created capital of Brazil in South America; in Ife, Nigeria, and Yaoundé, Cameroon, in Africa. He went to each of those places personally and helped establish educational health centers that included medical schools and facilities for training other health personnel.

He headed the Turkish delegation to the World Health Assembly for six years and was elected Chair of the European Region countries and served as Vice Chairman of the Assembly in 1976. Over the years he served as member of the WHO Executive Board, the Global Advisory Committee on Medical

Research, the Expert Advisory Panel on Health Manpower, the Consultative Group on Maternal and Young Child Nutrition, and the Programme Advisory Committee in Maternal and Child Health. In 1981 WHO awarded him the Léon Bernard Foundation Prize. In 1997 he received the WHO Health-for-All Gold Medal.

Professor Dogramaci also was active in UNICEF, serving on the Executive Board for several decades. He was elected chairman of the Programme Committee for three terms and of the Board for two. In 1995 UNICEF honored him with the Maurice Pate Award. In Turkey he was also active for UNICEF, serving as president of the Turkish National Committee from 1958 to 2003 and since then as honorary president.

In his own specialty, child health, Professor Dogramaci was chosen president of the International Pediatric Association in 1968 and proceeded to lead the IPA for a quarter of a century by turns as president and executive director. Since 1992 he has been honorary president.

While serving as chairman of the Executive Board of UNICEF Professor Dogramaci became a member of the Advisory Board of the International Children's Center in Paris, and he continued as a member of the board from 1970 to 1984. When the ICC in Paris was dissolved in 1999 after 50 years of existence, he re-established it in Ankara and served as president from 1999 to 2006. He is now its honorary president.

He has established five philanthropic foundations in Turkey which in turn have established hospitals and educational institutions, including Bilkent University as already mentioned. Another of his foundations is the Ihsan Dogramaci Foundation for Family Health endowed to the World Health Organization. It has been awarding prizes regularly since 1983, the last two to candidates from Azerbaijan and Mexico.

He is author of a large number of scientific articles, books, and chapters in books, mostly dealing with medicine and health sciences. Five books have been written about his life and accomplishments and published in different countries in seven languages.

Professor Ihsan Dogramaci was called on to be Minister of Foreign Affairs and also proposed as Prime Minister of Turkey. He excused himself on both occasions because he felt he should concentrate on his work in health and education.

Professor Dogramaci has received a large number of awards, medals and decorations. He holds honorary doctorates from 26 universities in 14 countries all around the world, including the United States, United Kingdom, France, Finland, Italy, Japan and Egypt. He is member of national academies in Germany, France, India, the United States and Azerbaijan and honorary member of 23 national pediatric societies across the globe.

Heads of state have honored him with their highest decorations: Azerbaijan, Iran, the Dominican Republic, Finland, Poland, Estonia and France.

The Parliament of Egypt and the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, as well as other national institutions, have given him their highest awards and medals. In addition, the Council of Europe, at a ceremony in Vienna in 1998, conferred on him its prize for Peace, Justice and Tolerance. Addresses were made by President Roman Herzog of Germany and President Thomas Klestil of Austria praising Professor Dogramaci's accomplishments.

In the light of his countless international contacts and activities, two things should come as no surprise: first, that Professor Dogramaci, in addition to his native Turkish, is fluent in Arabic, English, French and German; and second, that he has had the wholehearted support for 68 years of his charming wife Ayser Hanım, who married him in 1941 and has accompanied him ever since in his challenging and adventurous life.