

## Obituary for Professor Ivo Brosens



Ivo Brosens was born in Morkhoven on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1931, as the son of a general practitioner.

He grew up with one brother and four sisters, all of whom pursued careers in science and medicine. He was educated in a Jesuit school, studied philosophy and philology before pursuing medical studies at the age of 24. He graduated maxima cum laude at the Katholieke Universiteit of Leuven (KU Leuven), Belgium in 1961, embarked into research already from his first years in medical school. He eventually obtained his Ph.D. degree at the University of London, London (UK) in 1965. He became a specialist in Obstetrics and Gynaecology in 1966. He became full professor in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the KU Leuven in 1970. He was founder and director of the Division of Reproductive Medicine and the Centre for Surgical Technologies at the Faculty of Medicine at KU Leuven. He was awarded honorary membership in over 15 national and international societies, including the honorary fellowship of the RCOG, the first honorary membership of the World Endometriosis Society and the IFFS 30th Anniversary Recognition Award for significant contributions in infertility and reproductive medicine. After retirement from the University in 1996 he joined the Leuven Institute for Fertility and Embryology.

He made a very important contribution in several fields of reproductive medicine. His research started with the study of the placental bed vessels and resulted in the now classic concept of defective physiological remodeling of the spiral arteries in patients with hypertensive pregnancy disorders. He demonstrated that preeclampsia was not only a placental problem, yet a systemic inflammatory syndrome, affecting eventually multiple organs. This led also to the understanding of other obstetrical syndromes, such as fetal growth restriction, abruptio placentae, fetal death, and spontaneous preterm labor and membrane rupture.

His next fascination was the study of the pathophysiology, diagnosis, and medical and surgical treatment of ectopic endometrium. For that work on endometriosis/adenomyosis, the German Scientific Endometriosis Foundation awarded him in 2018 the Rokitansky Award.

As a visionary person he understood that in patients with infertility problems, operative procedures should be performed with minimal trauma. This resulted in the organization of an annual workshop in microsurgical techniques, attracting many gynecologists from all over the world during several years. He understood that this minimal invasive way of surgical interventions was of utmost important in patients with endometriosis and tubal infertility.

As a result of his continuous interest his center of reproductive medicine succeeded in the birth of the first Belgian IVF baby in 1983.

Following the introduction of video-endoscopy, he promoted teaching and training in laparoscopy, for which he established the Center for Surgical Technologies. His imagination was endless and that inspired his collaborators to explore new avenues in endoscopy, such as transvaginal hydrolaparoscopy and even fetal surgery.

On all these topics he published numerous papers and books; he was a welcomed participant and speaker in several national and international meetings leading to interesting discussions.

Professor Ivo Brosens was a globally respected and visionary leader during his professional career. Even when retired, his brightness and productivity remained impressive: he stayed scientifically involved in the fields of endometriosis and adenomyosis, and beyond.

We will further remember him as a humble person with great affection and warm interest for his co-workers; he had the incredible gift of inspiring the young and scientifically interested, engaging and promoting them in their research endeavors.

Ivo lost his wife in 2018; now his two sons and two daughters and their families mourn a loving father, a committed grandfather. We lose a giant in obstetrics and gynaecology, a great scientist, an inspiring mentor, a charming person, a friend.

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