



IN MEMORIAM

Bruce M. Achauer, M.D.
Professor of Surgery
Irvine
1943-2002

Born in the small town of Warrensburg, Missouri, Bruce Achauer rose to the top of his profession, becoming renowned worldwide as a brilliant surgeon, superb educator and exceptional researcher — all accomplished while continuing a full-time clinical practice in plastic and reconstructive surgery. No doubt influenced by working in his father's pharmacy, at age 13 Dr. Achauer decided on a career in medicine. After undergraduate education at Stanford University, he obtained his medical degree at Baylor College of Medicine, Houston in 1967. He applied successfully for the highly competitive rotating internship at San Francisco General Hospital, and then came to the University of California Irvine to complete residencies in general and plastic surgery between 1970 and 1976. To round out his clinical training, he traveled to the Queen Victoria Hospital in Sussex, United Kingdom as a Marks Fellow in Plastic Surgery. During the tumultuous years of the Vietnam conflict, Dr. Achauer served as a captain and flight surgeon in the United States Air Force based at the School of Aerospace Medicine in San Antonio between 1968 and 1970. On return from England, he was certified by both the American Board of Surgery and the American Board of Plastic Surgery and was appointed assistant professor of surgery at UC Irvine in 1977. He was promoted to adjunct professor in 1994, a position he held until his untimely death.

The milestones in his life, distinguished as they are, do not reveal the enormous impact Bruce Achauer had on the lives of his patients, fellow practitioners and family. His professional devotion was to reconstructive surgery and the Burn Unit at the UCI Medical Center. There he achieved well-deserved national acclaim for his treatment of a 6-year-old badly burned in a motel fire in 1983 and a teenage girl who had been burned severely with acid in 1984. He performed reconstructive surgery on countless numbers of burned patients at UCI Medical Center, and at the same time was widely considered a master of aesthetic plastic surgery. Dr. Achauer also had steady research support for 21 years with half a dozen active projects at the time of his death. He studied the use of cyclosporin in the prolongation of allografts, and developed non-invasive methods to accurately assess the depth of the burn wound. His curriculum vitae listed 151 peer-reviewed articles and 48 book chapters. Dr. Achauer edited and wrote four major textbooks in plastic surgery with the most recent five-volume text described as the "comprehensive bible of plastic surgery." Dr. Achauer's service to the University was unstinting, including work on most of the Hospital Committees. He was an administrative officer of the California Society of Plastic Surgeons and medical advisor to the Orange County Burn Association. Perhaps his most important service to the University was acting chief of the Plastic Surgery Division some four years ago during which time the Division began reorganization. International recognition came through many visiting professorships at universities in Ireland, Finland, Kuwait, Brazil and Mexico. At home, he had been a visiting professor at the University of Pittsburgh, Ohio State, the University of California, San Francisco, his alma mater Baylor College of Medicine, Indiana University and the University of Texas, Dallas. These many invitations and recognitions notwithstanding, Dr. Achauer made time to serve as a commencement speaker at Warrensburg High School. In his private life Dr. Achauer was an avid sailor who knew the marine charts of the coastal waters of Southern California as well as the anatomical charts for the structures of the face.

While serving as president of the board of directors of the Educational Foundation of the American Society of Plastic Surgery and a director of the American Board of Plastic Surgery, Dr. Achauer attended the National

American Society of Plastic Surgeons Annual Congress in San Antonio late in 2002. Tragically, he developed a gastrointestinal bacterial infection and succumbed to bloodstream infection within 48 hours. Plastic surgeons from across the country attended the family memorial service and an honor guard of firefighters, who knew best Dr. Achauer's challenges and triumphs, paid their respects at the Medical Center remembrance. Dr. Achauer is survived by his wife, Tamara, and two grown daughters, Allison and Hilary. He will be long remembered by the many patients he restored from disfigurement, by the faculty at University of California, Irvine and most of all by his family.

Samuel E. Wilson, M.D.
Gregory R.D. Evans, M.D.