

APPRECIATION

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IN 1947, when I came back from hostilities, my medical interest was concentrated on patients with spinal cord injuries, and those who had had amputations. It was the natural decision of that doctor who in Poland during World War II, and immediately afterwards, was required to treat several thousand amputees because of gas gangrene, and spinal cord injuries resulting from war. When preparing myself for this task, I became acquainted with Sir Ludwig Guttmann's work, the creator of the modern school of treatment and rehabilitation of spinal injured people.

In 1957, I had the opportunity of personal contact with Sir Ludwig Guttmann for the first time in Stoke Mandeville—the centre created by him as a unique treatment and scientific department. For me, Sir Ludwig Guttmann was, and still is, a teacher who not only strengthened in me the conviction of a proper choice of a professional specialty, but was also an example of a scientist whose only passion was to work for the most seriously damaged individuals.

I was very pleased to know that Sir Ludwig was born in Poland, where he worked and studied medicine. Two years ago we organised a visit to Poland for him and he, with true emotion, recognised places which he remembered from this early period of his life.

My clinical investigations, which are connected with my orthopaedic and surgical training, have always referred to principles taught by Sir Ludwig Guttmann.

In this period, when we are celebrating the eightieth birthday of this great doctor and scientist, I myself and my co-workers, and also all Polish doctors engaged in the treatment of spinal injured patients, greatly appreciate his magnificent work, and we salute his wonderful deeds.

Sir Ludwig, pioneering and developing the method of the complex treatment of severe injuries of the central nervous system, gave the example of a full, comprehensive approach to rehabilitation. He united into an efficient, logical organisation, medical, social and vocational rehabilitation, which became the model also for the Polish system.

Sir Ludwig Guttmann's merits in sports development for the disabled are enormous. He gave to this movement a logical and constructive approach, and he knew how to attract and to mobilise many people throughout the world to this work.

Uniting now with all friends in this Jubilee year, I would like to offer Sir Ludwig, especially from myself and Polish doctors, specialists in rehabilitation of spinal injured people, our best wishes for many more fruitful and creative years of work.