

## OBITUARY



*Anto Matković, M.D., Ph.D.  
(1943-2001)*

*Address at Memorial Service for Anto Matković, M.D., Ph.D. Eulogy given by his colleague, Ranko Broz, M.D., M.S.*

On September 28, 2001, the noble and generous heart of Dr. Anto Matković, our friend, colleague, capable physician and neurosurgeon, humanist and patriot, stopped forever. Cruel and premature death deprived his family of their father and husband, grandfather, brother and uncle, and Croatian medicine from a caring and consoling doctor.

As the saying goes, the news on his death was 'like a bolt from the blue'. All of us, his colleagues, friends and patients were caught breathless, unprepared and confused with the news on sudden death of our dear Anto. The distressing event only confirmed that death is not at all selective but, rephrasing our great poet Ivan Gundulić, sweeps carelessly away the old and the young, the slave and the king. Dr. Anto Matković was an outstanding personality and strong character, a superior, understanding and sympathetic professional who helped many give despair away to hope. He was a man of a kind heart unsparingly

displayed to all, to the little man and to the sick in particular. He was especially compassionate with the banished who were turning to him not only for the treatment but also for comfort and encouragement to go on.

Dr. Anto Matković was born in Novo Selo near Bosanski Brod on November 7, 1943. He attended elementary school in his birthplace and completed general-program secondary school in Slavonski Brod in 1963. Then he enrolled in the Zagreb University School of Medicine, where he graduated from in 1969. He completed his internship at the Zagreb University Hospital Center in Zagreb, and after military service he was appointed assistant physician at Health Center in Glina, first at the Pediatric, and then at Medical Ward. From 1972, he worked at the University Hospital for Tumors, then Central Institute for Tumors and Allied Diseases. Then he served residency in neurosurgery, first under tutorship of Professor Guido Ledinsky, then of Professor Ivan Jeličić, from whom he acquired his diagnostic and surgical skills. Upon completion of his residency in 1977, he became a neurosurgeon who was also engaged in scientific research. Occasionally, he held lectures at the Zagreb University School of Medicine. He received additional training at neurosurgery centers in Vienna, Munich and Hannover, where he was introduced in the experimental work in neurosurgery, acquired experience in microsurgery procedures, and went to the very root of the problems of neurosurgery. Together with Professor Lucijan Negovetić, he was the first to introduce extracranial-intracranial arterial anastomosis, a preventive procedure for occlusive diseases of brain vessels, in the region. In 1975, he attended postgraduate studies in neurology at the Zagreb University School of Medicine. In 1977, he received his master's degree having defended the thesis entitled "Site-adjusted clinical course of glioblastoma of the cerebrum", and in 1980 doctor's degree with his doctoral dissertation "The role of lenticular striatal arteries in diagnostics and neurosurgery". During his productive active life, Dr. Matković published scores of scientific and professional papers, among them a textbook on neurosurgery for medi-

cal students. He was member of the Croatian Medical Association, European and World Neurosurgery Associations, and was one of the founders and renowned members of the Croatian Society of Neurosurgery.

Besides his professional dedication, Anto was a devoted patriot. Born and brought up in the Croatian family of Catholics in the presently Croat-banished Bosanska Posavina, he had always been opposed to the Communist regime. It therefore comes as no surprise that, in the earliest beginnings of the creation of the Croatian independent state, we saw him in the company of Dr. Franjo Tuđman. He was the one among us who took part in the famous meeting in Plješivica in spring 1989, where the foundations of today's multi-party democratic Croatia were laid. During the Croatian War of Independence, Dr. Anto Matković acted director of the Dubrava University Hospital and kept its door wide open to all wounded Croats, irrespective of where they came from. He pulled strings abroad and organized medical supplies for our soldiers at frontlines. In the modest premises of the Department of Neurosurgery of the University Hospital for Tumors, managed by Dr. Matković, hang a number of certificates of merit he received for his valuable contribution to the Croatian War of Independence. Taking no

account of any possible repercussion, he was often bursting to help the wounded Croatia, bleeding all over up to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The banishment of almost 200 thousands of Croats from his native Bosanska Posavina he took as a personal tragedy. These people knew it and came to him for motivation and consolation.

Few love their homeland as Dr. Anto Matković loved our Croatia. Croatia had always been on his mind and in his heart, and no spiritual, political, economic and moral 'tumors' our nation suffers from could have escaped his tongue, as often as not sharp as a scalpel.

We express our grief over Dr. Anto Matković with our genuine gratitude for all his good deeds. Premature and unexpected death took him while he should still have been producing and enjoying fruits of his constructive and prosperous life.

On behalf of the University Hospital for Tumors, we express Dr. Anto Matković our sincerest and heartiest appreciation!

We mourn his loss and honor his life.

We now bid him farewell, but the memory of Dr. Anto Matković, a fine expert, caregiver, humanist and devoted patriot, will long outlive his life.

*Ranko Broz*