

JUTTA SCHAPER, M.D., PH.D.

## 2012 RECIPIENT OF THE ISHR DISTINGUISHED LEADER AWARD

**I**N MAY 2012, I was delighted to receive the prestigious “Distinguished Leader Award” from the International Society for Heart Research. In his *laudatio*, the President-Elect of the ISHR, Dr Metin Avkiran, emphasized the importance of this Award that is designed as a reward for a scientist “who has made sustained outstanding contributions to accomplishing the mission and advancing the objectives of the ISHR” (cited from the website of the ISHR). I have been involved with the ISHR for many years, beginning in 1973 when I attended my first World Congress of the ISHR (then called the “International Study Group for Research in Cardiac Metabolism”) in Freiburg, Germany. At that time, it was decided to establish different regionally determined Sections, including the American and the European Section. Dr Peter Harris from London was the first Secretary General; the office of President was added much later. Dr Harris and his secretary, Molly White, maintained the European Section as a well functioning body with about 400 members from all over Western Europe, and a few people from Eastern Europe and Israel.

I was elected Secretary General in 1981 at the European Section meeting in Bologna, and I remained in that position until 1992. With the help of my secretary, Erika Gassig, we transferred the membership list to our computer (at that time a rather primitive apparatus), we transferred the bank account to a German Bank in Bad Nauheim, and we registered the ISHR as a “non profit organization” with the fiscal authorities in Germany. Dr Harris taught me how to lead an organization, which involved not only administrative efforts in maintaining or

increasing the membership, but also traveling and negotiating with future meeting organizers. Between 1981 and 1992, we initiated nine European Section meetings (Geneva, Stockholm, Reykjavik, Budapest, Oxford, Rotterdam, Glasgow, Leuven and Heidelberg). In preparation for these congresses, I visited at least once with the organizers about 2 years before the fixed date of the meeting, inspected the proposed locations and discussed problems such as the meeting dates, the amount

as members of a committee chosen by the Council, we designed a set of bylaws similar to those that were already published in the *JMCC* for the ISHR-Intl. Dr Dhalla from Winnipeg, who was Secretary General of the ISHR-Intl, supported these undertakings with good advice, for which I am still grateful. His primary motto, which then became mine as well, was: “Think first of the welfare of the members; only afterwards you may consider diplomatic or political aspects”. I have taken this counsel to heart and tried to do my best for all members.

At each meeting of the European Section, the Council gathered at least once (mostly twice) and discussed matters of importance to the Society, including the location and dates of future meetings, relationships with other professional organizations (especially the European Society of Car-



*This picture shows Jutta Schaper (left) and Ketty Schwartz; in the background are their friends, Marcel Borgers and Fabio di Lisa.*

of the registration fee, the scientific and social programs, travel expenses for young investigators and various other items. I soon realized that the European Section (ES) needed a democratic structure, and with the help of several scientists from all over Europe, in 1984 we established an ES Council (the parliament of the ES). Then,

diology), and sponsorship of stipends and travel awards for young investigators. One issue of great importance to me was the integration of Eastern European and Israeli scientists into the European Section, a problem we successfully solved by establishing the “Eastern European Subsection” and the “Israeli Subsection”

ISHR MEETINGS CALENDAR

- **October 25-26, 2012.** **XIX Annual Meeting of the Latin American Section.** Santiago, Chile. **Inquiries:** Dr Paulina Donoso, President ISHR-LAT ([pdonos@med.uchile.cl](mailto:pdonos@med.uchile.cl))
- **October 26-27, 2012.** **XXIX Annual Meeting of the Japanese Section.** Fukuoka, Japan. **Inquiries:** Dr Kenji Sunagawa ([sunagawa@cardiol.med.kyushu-u.ac.jp](mailto:sunagawa@cardiol.med.kyushu-u.ac.jp))
- **November 20-24, 2012.** **XI Congress of the Chinese Section: "Today's Science, Tomorrow's Medicine".** Guangzhou Pearl River Hotel, Guangzhou, China. **Inquiries:** E-mail: [ishrchina2012@yahoo.cn](mailto:ishrchina2012@yahoo.cn); Website: [www.isrchina.org](http://www.isrchina.org); Fax: +8620 83769487.
- **June 29, 2013.** **XXX Annual Meeting of the Japanese Section: "Inflammation and Regeneration in the Cardiovascular System".** La Valencia Hotel, San Diego, California. **Inquiries:** Dr Keiichi Fukuda (President). E-mail: [ishr2013-japan@congre.co.jp](mailto:ishr2013-japan@congre.co.jp); Website: [www.congre.co.jp/ishr2013/eng/](http://www.congre.co.jp/ishr2013/eng/)
- **June 30 - July 4, 2013.** **XXI World Congress of the ISHR.** San Diego, California. **See page 10-11.**

as independent organizations under the umbrella of the European Section. In 1991, the number of members had significantly increased and meetings took place regularly. After 11 years of service to the ISHR I stepped down, and Ketty Schwartz was elected Secretary General (1992-2003). She was an excellent leader and continued to develop the European Section into a very active Basic Science organization. She died in 2008, and we still miss Ketty. The photograph taken in 2003 shows you that we were, indeed, dear friends.

In 1992, at the World Congress of the ISHR in Kobe organized by the Japanese Section under the leadership of Drs Ito, Nagano and Tada, I was elected President-Elect of the ISHR-Intl and I became President from 1995-1998 at the World meeting in Prague organized by Drs B. Ostadal, F. Kolar, and

others. At that time, the structure of the ISHR-Intl was already determined by by-laws as published in 1981, but other problems remained to be solved, such as the location of World Congresses, sponsorships, interrelation with other sections, honorary memberships and the establishment of a new logo. During my Presidency, negotiating with the publishers of the *Journal of Molecular and Cellular Cardiology* was the most important task. Dr David Hearse, President Elect, and myself succeeded in designating the *JMCC* as the official Journal of the Society. In addition, we were able to obtain a much more favorable financial arrangement, which still helps greatly in financing the obligations of the Society.

I always considered it very important to establish a feeling of "belonging" to the

ISHR. Therefore, I initiated ISHR dinners, at the American Heart Association Congresses and at other convenient occasions (e.g. at the World Congress of Cardiology in Rio de Janeiro). These social initiatives were warmly welcomed and annual ISHR dinners are now an established event.

Finally, I would like to thank all the people who worked with me for the benefit and the prosperity of the ISHR; there are many and it is impossible to name them all. A big "THANK YOU" TO ALL OF YOU! My hope is that the ISHR will continue to be a unique scientific organization unifying cardiovascular scientists worldwide.

*Jutta Schaper, M.D., Ph.D.*  
*Bad Nauheim, Germany* ■

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the ISHR-ES took place. The Presidency passed from Thomas Eschenhagen to Péter Ferdinandy (Szeged, Hungary), who presented plans and strategies for the ISHR in the coming years. The formerly combined office ISHR-ES Secretary/Treasurer was passed by Barbara McDermott (Belfast, IR) to Denise Hilfiker-Kleiner (Secretary; Hannover, Germany) and Jolanda van der Velden (Treasurer, Amsterdam, The Netherlands). She also presented the annual report in which one of the key messages to the members was to actively

promote ISHR membership in their respective home institutions and countries. Afterwards, we met at the traditional Serbian restaurant Sindjelic. The evening started when we were handed impressive bottles of hard liquor and huge glasses. The food – basically lots of grilled meat – was great and the evening very entertaining.

Needless to say that Tuesday saw even more outstanding sessions, including a session on highlights of the Congress in which the ISHR sessions had a prominent

and substantial part.

Altogether Belgrade easily lived up to the motto with which the Congress started: It is not about the size of a city but about the size of its heart. And Belgrade seems to have quite a huge heart when it comes to excellent science – and excellent hospitality.

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