

Laudatio dr. J.P. Horder

door prof.dr. J.C. Van Es

Doctor Horder, you have been awarded a honorary degree of the Free University because of the prominent part you play in the field of general practice in the United Kingdom and in Europe. The foundation for this important role was laid in general practice, it is there that you started with your work in the first decade after World War-II. At that time the esteem for the general practitioner in the western world was very low; general practice seemed to make for an extremely doubtful future, medicine becoming increasingly hospital oriented. Under these difficult circumstances, in which low expectations about general practice were dominant, you were confident that general practice had - as it still has - a central function in medical cure and medical care.

Your conviction was based upon your day to day experience in general practice. It was fostered by your previously already existing interest in human nature and in study in that particular field. This combination of interest and experience included two aims: to ensure consideration for psychological and social factors in a medicine which was predominately physical in orientation, and secondly, to promote vocational training for future general practitioners.

With these aims as a starting point you became one of the founders of the - now Royal - College of General Practitioners, a very authoritative body in the medical society. Between that inspired and inspiring start and your presidency of the same college lies a period of thirty years of continuing work to realise the goals you had defined. Meanwhile, you have on your account a long list of publications, number one on this list being an article on 'Illness in general practice', written together with your wife Elisabeth; this paper, published under the name of Horder and Horder, belongs to the classics of general practice all over the world.

Your publications and your activities in commissions, committees and other organisations have resulted in the realisation of vocational training in general practice, optional in the first period, today compulsory and with a duration of three years. As for the undergraduate training, eyes were opened for the comprehensive aspects of medical cure and care.

Your personal influence was not limited to the borders of the United Kingdom. You became the first general practitioner consultant in a WHO-expert committee. By us in Europe this appointment was experienced as a break-through: it symbolised that general practice had become an authorized partner in discussions on medical and medico-political subjects. Later on you initiated a European Working Group on General Practice, which produced influential documents.

You were not satisfied with the mere realisation of vocational training: you wanted to take initiatives to improve the quality of this training and of general practice as a whole. Thus, you became involved in performance review, and besides that, in the promotion of preventive activities by general practitioners.

These activities, you undertook them all in a characteristic way, representing the rare combination of being very practical as well as possessing the ability to con-