



Dr. Gunnar Ryge: *in memoriam*

Gunnar Ryge died peacefully in his sleep on May 30, 1991, after a several months long determined fight for his life against cancer.

Humanity in general, and in particular the dental profession, scientists and teachers of Dental Materials, his family, his students and protégés, and his friends have lost a great leader, a loving father and husband, an insightful teacher and most of all a wonderful human being. Every one touched by Gunnar Ryge will suffer these losses and more. Gunnar left a mark in the mind of every person he met through his caring attention to that person and to whatever cares or concerns that individual may have had. Gunnar's great strength was his ability to find solutions to difficult problems. In so doing he was a perfect role model for young people. This characteristic made him an ideal teacher and mentor for budding scientists, graduate students and faculty.

Gunnar's accomplishments were so numerous that it is with difficulty that selections must be made. Those accomplishments chosen are hopefully those for which he might have wished to be remembered.

The Ryge Criteria for Clinical Evaluation of Restorative Materials provided a scientific method for clinical studies for evaluation of restorative materials. This methodology has provided a basis for quality evaluations of materials for more than two decades and is widely used in either its original form or some modification suitable for the material in question. He gave generously of his time to train and calibrate clinical examiners in order to establish some degree of uniformity in evaluations between different studies. His method forms the basis for student self-evaluation, evaluations of student by dental faculty, and for peer evaluation in professional organizations. This accomplishment gained Gunnar recognition throughout the world and may well be the one accomplishment of which he was most proud.

Dr. Ryge's career began in 1939 in private practice and as an Instructor at the Royal Danish Dental School. Ten years later found him as a guest worker at the Dental Materials Section of the National Bureau of Standards in Washington, DC. In 1950 he accepted a position as Instructor at Marquette University. It was here that he established himself as the leading authority on the structure and setting reaction of dental amalgam. He instituted training programs that produced many scientists prominent today. He also found time to obtain a Master of Science in physics. In 1964 he left Marquette to assume the position of Branch Chief of the Dental Health Center, U.S.P.H.S., N.I.H., in San Francisco. In 1972 he became Assistant Dean for Research and Professor, School of Dentistry University of the Pacific.

Dr. Ryge received many awards and considerable recognition. Among these were the election to Presidency of the I.A.D.R., the Souder Award, the Hollenback Award and finally the Michinosuka Nakayama Memorial Award. The nomination to this latter award was made several months before his death. The award was to be given in September 1991 and he expressed a strong desire to be able to go to Japan to receive this most prestigious award. Characteristically, he was a realist and knew that there was a good chance he might not live long enough for that to happen, so he asked his son Svend to accept the award if in fact he could not.

In Svend's closing words in his acceptance remarks at the award ceremony he said: "As I have said, my father felt that no higher honor could be bestowed upon him. As I write these words and as I say them I feel his presence. He thanks you most deeply."

Protégé and Friend,
Carl W. Fairhurst