

# The Last Word

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The right to the last word is a great privilege. In my case, it provides the opportunity to thank all those who have helped me, and worked with me, over the past 17 years to create and maintain *The Journal of Heart Valve Disease*. The bi-monthly Journal was launched in September 1992 by ICR Publishers Ltd. This is the 93rd issue, and the last that bears my name as editor in chief.

My editorial board has always had two surgeons and two cardiologists, one each from Europe and America. The starting team was Dieter Horstkotte, and Pravin M. Shah representing cardiology, Eric G. Butchart and Robert W. M. Frater representing cardiac surgery. Currently Dieter Horstkotte and Pravin M. Shah are still the cardiologists, Daniel Loisanca and Tirone E. David the cardiac surgeons on the board. Eric G. Butchart left the Journal in 1997 and was replaced by Daniel Loisanca. Robert W. M. Frater accepted the position of medical director at St. Jude Medical and tendered his resignation as editor for this reason in 1999. His place was taken by W. Randolph Chitwood followed by Tirone E. David. John Chambers stepped in as the European cardiologist 1996-2004. I am indebted to all these seven friends for their significant contribution to the Journal and the help, which they always gave readily to me. Our Scientific Advisory Board consists of surgeons, cardiologists, pathologists and basic scientists from five continents, representing our basic goal, i.e. to create a multidisciplinary and world-wide forum that addresses all relevant issues of heart valve disease. My gratitude is due to each member, past and present, of our Scientific Advisory Board.

The Journal was created with the vision of bringing together the various branches of the medical profession which had hitherto all too often acted as though they were in conflict, and with the clear policy of recognizing the value of medical research wherever it might be undertaken. The medical profession has changed much over the last 17 years, almost beyond recognition, and those sometimes warring branches of the profession have learned to act together as a team, just as our Editorial and Scientific Advisory Boards have always done. The Journal also pioneered the inclusion of industry as fully fledged members of our scientific community, not just suppliers to it.

The extent to which this approach has struck a chord can be seen from some figures: Last year, we had subscribers from 74 countries world-wide, and the website received more than 0.5 million hits during the year. The search engine Google returns about 127,000 relevant entries if one searches "heart valve disease", and the Journal is ranked number one among the professional sites. Manuscripts are submitted from all five continents, which is clear evidence of the international nature and global presence of the Journal. As far as volume is concerned, we published 862 pages in 2005 and 843 pages in 2006.

In 1999, we organized an international symposium on heart valve disease in London. The success was such that a new society, *The Society for Heart Valve Disease* was formed to provide continuity for this kind of meeting, i.e. an international and multidisciplinary forum like the Journal. Since then, the Society has had four biennial meetings in London, Paris, Vancouver and New York, each highly successful. It appears to be without precedent in medical history that a journal created a society rather than that a society, after some years in existence, launched a journal. As a sign of its firm support, the Journal was made the official journal of the Society.

The future is bright. Robert W. Emery MD has accepted the invitation to be my successor. We are all convinced that he is an excellent choice. Bob takes his new responsibilities very seriously, is committed to continue the Journal's original mission, and has already started outlining his concept regarding the expansion of the editorial contents and organizational aspects of the Journal. He comes at a time when all branches of the profession are developing rapidly, with innovations revolutionizing the way we prevent and treat heart valve disease. He is in the vanguard of that revolution. Good luck, Bob.

It would be good to continue the last word for the next 17 years, but one must come to an end. My summing up is simple. Editors, Board members, reviewers and authors, **thank all of you very much.**

*Endre Bodnar*