

## Édouard Kieffer: A Master in Vascular Surgery



**Édouard Kieffer**

**21 October 1942 — 18 February 2014**

### A MASTER OF VASCULAR SURGERY

The EJVES records, with great sadness, the passing of Professor Édouard Kieffer at his home in Paris on February 18th 2014, aged 71 years. Paradoxically, he succumbed to the disease which he had fought against throughout his life and by which he had been physically debilitated for several years.

### SURGEON AND SCIENTIST

By the turn of the millennium, Édouard Kieffer was undeniably the foremost authority on vascular surgery in France and he has remained a key influential figure and worldwide opinion leader. Following the era of the early 'vascular pioneers', Kieffer was a recognized leader in expanding the frontiers of open vascular surgery. After promotion to the position of Chef de Clinique in the 1970s, he encouraged close collaboration with the School of Neurology at La Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris and developed a highly regarded reputation in carotid artery reconstruction. At the same time, he became a world-leader in developing techniques for vertebral artery reconstruction.

Given the relationships he had nurtured with colleagues from the French West Indies and North Africa, Kieffer cared for an incalculable number of patients with Takayasu's arteritis and helped to conduct one of the largest treatment campaigns in Europe with regard to this rare malady of unknown cause and unpredictable consequences. During the 1990s, and following in the footsteps of Ernest Stanley Crawford (1922–1992) whom he had visited in Houston, Kieffer developed a widely applied technique for open surgical reconstruction of thoracic-abdominal aortic aneurysms and acquired an international reputation in this challenging operation. Kieffer was undoubtedly a gifted and accomplished surgeon, always getting straight to the point and 'cutting to the chase' without a single superfluous

gesture. Seemingly tireless, he could carry on in the operating room for 10 hours or more, after which he would return to his office, where he would write and edit papers until the small hours of the morning.

Kieffer's academic career was nothing less than outstanding. A member of numerous scientific societies and the author of more than 300 papers in high-ranking journals, he served as organizer of the Paris-based Nikko's Congress for 22 years. This was a 'not-to-be-missed' event which was dedicated to vascular surgery and which attracted French vascular surgeons as well as colleagues from southern Europe and northern Africa. Each meeting was crowned by the editing and publishing of a high-quality textbook which updated existing knowledge on a given topic. This collection of textbooks became the 'bible' for French-speaking vascular surgeons.

In 1987, Kieffer and Ramon Berguer co-founded the *Annals of Vascular Surgery*, an international journal whose aim was to ensure a connection between European vascular specialists, especially the French, and the North American community. More than a quarter of a century later, the *Annals* remains an established and respected international journal. In 1992, and once again with Ramon Berguer, Kieffer published a textbook entitled 'Surgery of the Arteries to the Head', which remains a reference text in this field of practice.

### MAN AND FRIEND

Édouard Kieffer was also a man of great culture and taste. Alain Branchereau, one of his closest friends and co-author of this tribute, can attest to the breathtaking range of his interests and passions relating to music, literature and history. He maintained a keen interest in all aspects of human activity and had a rare knack for keeping an open mind. He was endowed with an acute sense of psychology and his judgment on people and critical situations was clear-cut, spot-on and unfailingly accurate. Édouard was cheerful, convivial and unstintingly generous. To share dinner with him was nothing but pure pleasure, a privileged moment suffused with humor, humanity and warmth. He leaves behind six children and four grandchildren who remain full of love and admiration for their father and grandfather.

Farewell, Édouard. Vascular surgery will miss you.

A. Branchereau

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