



In Memory of Professor M. Erol Turaçlı, MD

On October 5, 2020, Turkish ophthalmology lost Professor M. Erol Turaçlı MD, the doyen and honorary president of the Turkish Ophthalmology Association (TOA). Having reached the highest and most respected position in our association, he leaves behind an indelible legacy.

Prof. Turaçlı was born in 1939 in Niksar, Turkey. He completed his elementary, middle, and high school education in Ankara, graduated from Ankara University Faculty of Medicine in 1964, and started his specialty training in ophthalmology in the same year. He completed his specialization and became an ophthalmologist in 1967. From 1969 to 1971, he worked as a researcher at Glasgow University in Scotland and later at the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands. He became an associate professor in 1974 and achieved professorship in 1979. Our esteemed teacher expressed his pioneering status in the clinic with the following statement at his retirement ceremony in 2006: "In the new Ophthalmology Department and Eye Bank of Ankara University Faculty of Medicine, opened in 1963, and under the late Professor Cahit Örgen, I was his first resident, first specialist, first associate professor, and first professor." After retiring, Prof. Turaçlı worked until 2015 as a founding faculty member and head of the ophthalmology department of Ufuk University Faculty of Medicine. He is survived by his wife and two children.

Prof. Turaçlı was a leader in the advancement of glaucoma diagnosis and treatment in Turkey. While still a resident in 1966, he established the glaucoma unit in the Ankara Faculty of Medicine. During the creation of the TOA training subsocieties, he established the glaucoma society and became the chair of its first executive board. He would hold that office until 2006. With his numerous academic activities both in Turkey and abroad, he became a source of pride for our country

in this field. Prof. Turaçlı has more than 200 national and international publications, authored book chapters, and served as editor or advisory board member for many ophthalmology books and journals. In addition, he undertook the role of organizing as well as making major scientific contributions at numerous national and international congresses and meetings.

He was physician to our late President Süleyman Demirel and the late President of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev, whose ocular diseases he followed up and treated for many years.

His most important contributions to ophthalmology in our country were realized within the TOA. He served as TOA Ankara Regional Branch Chair for 5 terms and as TOA President for 3 terms. In 1981, while serving as the Ankara Branch Chair, he started the TOA Ankara Regional Branch National April courses, a tradition that will be held for the 40th time next year. Publishing the lectures presented at these courses in book form has also become a tradition and continues to have a substantial role in promoting ophthalmology education in our country.

Prof. Turaçlı is one of the key figures cultivated by the Republic of Turkey. He was a public-minded person. The aid he sent to earthquake-affected areas and the eponymous science high school he funded in his hometown of Niksar in the Tokat province also serve as examples of his philanthropic contributions to our country.

Turkish ophthalmology will not forget its revered teacher and honorary president, lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic while still professionally active. To keep the memory of Prof. M. Erol Turaçlı alive, the TOA Administrative Board has decided to hold a memorial conference in his name each year during the April courses he founded.

We offer our sincerest condolences to the entire community and to his colleagues and family. His contributions to our country, our association, and all ophthalmologists will never be forgotten.

**On behalf of the TOA,
Professor İzzet Can, MD
TOA President**

