

Professor Rudolf Geigy on his 80th birthday

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Professor Rudolf Geigy on his 80th birthday



Photo Fred Hufschmid

It is with the keenest pleasure that former colleagues, collaborators and students will honour Professor Rudolf Geigy on his 80th birthday later this year. *Acta Tropica* being one among his numerous creations, the Editorial Board could not let pass this opportunity of expressing deep appreciation and sincere gratitude to its former head.

Volume 1 of *Acta Tropica* was published as the Second World War was drawing to its close, in 1944. At a time when the world was still in flames and the future unknown, it was an act of daring and imagination to found a Swiss-made international “Review of Tropical Science and Tropical Medicine”. In launching the journal Rudolf Geigy – himself a biologist – was actively supported by leading Basel University academics from the fields of medicine, linguistics and ethnography. In contrast to more specialized journals already existing, *Acta Tropica* was intended to cover “the whole sphere of tropical science” including anthropology and ethnography, natural history of the tropics, tropical agriculture, tropical medicine, and veterinary surgery and medicine. For nearly 30 years Professor Geigy as editor in chief succeeded in maintaining this very broad scope, which testified to his own wide-ranging interests and knowledge. Not until 1977 did the new Editorial Board yield to the pressure of current developments and decide to concentrate on biomedical sciences only. Professor Geigy’s successors were honoured by his membership of the new Board for a further 4 years, during which he himself participated in the change of editorial policy and witnessed the move to other publishers.

In view of the growing specialization of most sciences and the steady rise in the number of papers for publication, limitation to a single field – in this case the biomedical sciences, themselves of staggering complexity – became unavoidable. It is interesting to note, however, that in recent years scientists have begun to emphasize the intricacy of the interrelationships between widely separate disciplines affecting human health. Thus, if the scientists of today are bound to accept a high degree of specialization and hence to rely on equally specialized journals, familiarity with subjects ranging far beyond their own speciality is nevertheless essential. If they are to avoid regrettable errors they must rely either on a wide array of narrow-scope journals or on highly diversified newspaper-like periodicals. It is Professor Geigy’s merit to have based his own active life, including that with *Acta Tropica*, on a truly holistic attitude – and one that was already his 40 years ago!

Even with its narrower scope *Acta Tropica* continues to serve the international scientific community. The very first editorial stated that the journal’s contents would “embrace pure scientific research and research with a view to practical applications”. This still holds good today, and Professor Geigy can look back upon his achievements with well deserved pride and satisfaction.

For the Editorial Board:

Thierry A. Freyvogel