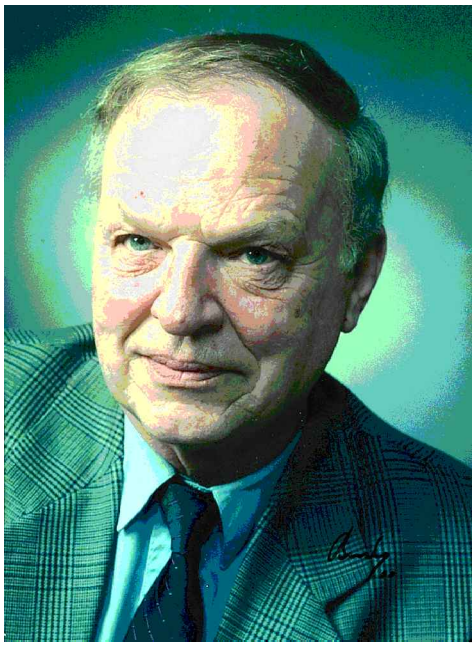
Bo Nilsson

1933–2001

Our close friend and mentor has died.

Bo Nilsson, Professor of Orthopedics, died on Monday, 5 March after a short illness. Bo was country-bred on the estate of Östervik, near Kristinehamn, at the lake Vänern in the province of Värmland, Sweden. In 1951, he started his medical studies at Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, where he was also active in the student organization and a member of the students' choral society. He worked briefly in the Department of Neurosurgery in Stockholm, in Härnösand in northern Sweden and came to Malmö in 1960 where he started a very successful academic career. At the same time as Cameron and Sörenson (1963), Bo Nilsson was the first to develop a technique to assess bone mass in vivo in patients. In his thesis (Nilsson 1966), Bo described such an instrument. At this time, there were still no clinical applications, since no treatment of osteoporosis was available. The pioneer work of Bo Nilsson in this field later, however, had great clinical effects when adequate treatment for osteoporosis was developed in the 1990s.



After a few years doing research in the Hospital for Special Surgery, New York, Bo Nilsson came back to Malmö and Lund University, first as a Senior Lecturer and then, since 1981, as Professor and Head of Orthopedics.

Bo Nilsson has written many original scientific research papers, but even more important, he has been a scientific advisor and helped about 30 physicians to get a PhD degree. The great generosity of Bo in all fields was very obvious as a senior researcher. Never has any senior advisor with such joy and enthusiasm and without any personal gain been of so much help to every PhD student who wanted his advice. Numerous PhD students have completed their thesis with Bo Nilsson in his holiday house in Fjällbacka in the west coast archipelago of Sweden. The policy of an open door was also obvious in his office. Although Bo's main interest was osteoporosis, his field of research ranged over the entire subject of orthopedics, such as hip fractures, arthrosis and orthopedic diseases in children.

Bo Nilsson was a very much admired teacher in Lund University. In 1986, he was awarded the leading teaching prize a teacher in the School of Medicine can receive, i.e., the university prize for outstanding skills in teaching medical students. For many years Bo was a member and in 1984–1985, Chairman of the Board for Undergraduate Education. Having visited universities, such as McArthur in Canada, Harvard in the USA and Maastricht in Holland, Bo Nilsson introduced problem-based learning in the Department of Orthopedics in Malmö 20 years ago. His pioneering efforts have led to revision of the system in the School of Medicine and in several other schools in the university. Since 1982 Bo has also been responsible for 41 week-courses in educational techniques, required for all doctors with a PhD certificate applying for an Associate Professorship in the School of Medicine.

Bo had numerous assignments on the national and international levels. After 1984, he was a

member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare. He has been the Scientific Secretary of the Swedish Orthopaedic Association and President of the Nordic Orthopaedic Federation.

With his warm personality and his great enthusiasm, Bo Nilsson was very popular with his patients.

Since his retirement almost 3 years ago, the entire medical staff in Malmö University Hospital realized that it was too early for him to retire completely and therefore he was asked and—as usual he accepted—to serve as Chairman of the Malmö Physicians' Association. Although this union field was new for him, he was very much appreciated and he fought for what was best for the patients and his colleagues.

Bo Nilsson was a man who in a positive way took up a great deal of room. He always had a funny story to tell and it was intellectually stimulating and socially agreeable to talk with him. He wanted everybody to be at ease and to be friends. Bo Nilsson liked everybody and everybody liked him. He combined the roles of chief, leader and the happy gamin. We miss him very much.

Karl Obrant and Olof Johnell

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