

## In Memoriam

# Karl Axel Melin

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Dr. Karl Axel Melin died in Stockholm on December 25, 1992, at the age of 77. He is survived by his wife, Ulla, and son, Thomas.

Karl Axel Melin was born in Gothenburg in 1915. After studying in Stockholm and receiving a medical degree from the Karolinska Institute, he qualified as a pediatric specialist at the Crown Princess Lovisa's Children's Hospital in Stockholm. In 1953, Dr.

Melin was appointed assistant physician at Stora Skondal, at that time a hospital for patients with epilepsy. He became chief physician in 1966 and remained at Stora Skondal until his retirement in 1980. His activities at this hospital formed the foundation for his achievements in the field of epilepsy covering almost half a century. He was a devoted worker on behalf of persons with epilepsy, both at the national and the international level.

Dr. Melin's interest in epilepsy began in 1945 when he was encouraged by his peers at the Crown Princess Lovisa's Children's Hospital to study a neglected group of patients. At this time, society was greatly prejudiced against persons with epilepsy. For example, marriages were prohibited, and many patients were institutionalized. Fortunately, the situation in Sweden has changed radically due, in large part, to the sustained efforts of Dr. Melin.

Education was an important tool in changing public perception about people with epilepsy, and Dr. Melin's special gifts as an organizer and coordinator were great assets in this effort. He was one of the founders of the national lay organization, the Swedish Epilepsy Association, and served as its president from 1970 to 1980. He supported the establishment of the Swedish Epilepsy Society in 1986 and became its first honorary member. Dr. Melin also realized the need for international collaboration, and he was associated with the International Bureau of Epilepsy from its inception in 1961, becoming one of its first vice-presidents. He retained this post until the early 1980s. From 1969 to 1973 he was also vice-president of the International League Against Epilepsy and served as the League's treasurer from 1973 to 1981.

Dr. Melin's interest in epilepsy continued long after his retirement, and he took an active part in discussions at the Swedish Epilepsy Society's annual meeting about the future of epilepsy medical care only a few weeks before his death. His many accomplishments improved the lives of patients with epilepsy, and we shall all miss him.

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