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IN MEMORIAM

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In Memoriam: Francois Grémy (1929-2014)

On July 22nd, 2014 passed away professor Francois Grémy. Professor Grémy had a dual curriculum vitae. In the domain of information sciences he completed three Master degrees in Physical Sciences (1948), Mathematics (1948), and Statistics (1961). As a physician he passed the Paris resident fellows' competitive examination, the "Internat de Paris", in 1953 and obtain a specialty in neurophysiology. In 1958, at the age of 29, he was appointed as tenured professor in biophysics at the Faculty of Medicine of Tours, and two years later in 1960 as professor in biophysics at the Pitié-Salpêtrière School of Medicine in Paris. Between 1966 and 1971, François Grémy published five comprehensive textbooks in the three scientific areas where his different training mutually contributed: biophysics, biomathematics, and biostatistics.

Very soon, François recognized the key role played by information sciences in medicine and initiated at Pitié-Salpêtrière in 1966 a curriculum on the medical applications of computing techniques. To foster research in information sciences François Grémy created in 1969 the INSERM Unit U88 entitled Informatics and Statistics methodology in Medicine. This unit was going to be the framework for his close collaborators to develop not only clinical informatics but also clinical research, epidemiology, health informatics, statistics, and decision support systems. As a recognition of this involvement he was appointed in 1970 as professor of Biostatistics and Medical Informatics at the Pitié-Salpêtrière School of Medicine.

In 1967, Professor Grémy established within the International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP) the Technical Committee 4 (TC4) on medical informatics. The first meeting of TC4 was held in Paris in April 1968. A dozen nations were represented and François Grémy was elected as president. During his presidency (1967-1973), François Grémy initiated within TC4 several working groups that represented many emerging subfields for this new discipline. In 1973, François Grémy negotiated during the preparation of the IFIP meeting

in Stockholm the creation of a separate structure devoted to the healthcare field. The result was the first MEDINFO 74 held in Stockholm at the same time and same location as the IFIP meeting (August 5-10). François Grémy acted as the chair of the MEDINFO 74 Programme Committee. The International Medical Informatics Association (IMIA) was constituted as a Special Interest Group of IFIP.

In 1984, François Grémy was appointed as Professor of Biostatistics and Medical Informatics in the University of Montpellier-Nîmes, and chair of the Medical Information Department of the Lapeyronie University hospital. He published his first comprehensive textbook on medical informatics in 1987. However, he progressively focused his research on health informatics, the assessment of medical informatics technology, and finally on public health. He was appointed in 1990 as Professor of Public Health at the Montpellier-Nîmes Faculty of Medicine. He became a member of the French National Committee for Public Health, strongly engaged in the prevention of tobacco, alcohol dependence, and the social integration of autistic patients.

François Grémy is recognized at the international level for his key contributions to the development of Medical Informatics and the birth of IMIA. In 1996, he became with Jan van Bemmel one of the two first Europeans recognized as Fellow of the American College of Medical Informatics. In 2004, he received during the San Francisco MEDINFO meeting the first IMIA Award of Excellence.

In France, in addition to being recognized as the father of Medical Informatics in his country, François Grémy has left a strong heritage for the development of public health. He has influenced the decision makers with his political engagement for prevention, social equity, solidarity, and against any clinical form of racism.

Paris, December 2014

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