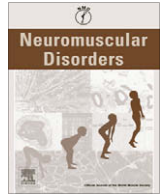


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# Neuromuscular Disorders

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## Obituary

### George Karpati O.C., C.Q., M.D., FRCPC, FRS (C) 1934–2009



It was with disbelief that we learnt of George's sudden and untimely death on Friday 6th February, 2009. George was at a dinner meeting at the Faculty Club organizing the 75th anniversary of the Montreal Neurological Institute (MNI).

For over a decade (1968–1980) George as the Leader, and we two worked together developing the beginnings of the Neuromuscular Unit at the MNI. We were and remained the closest of friends to the end.

George Karpati was born in Debrecen, Hungary. George and his family were prisoners of the Nazi regime and his father was killed at Bergen-Belsen. After the war George returned to Hungary only to have to flee yet another tyranny, the Communist invasion of Hungary in 1956 when he was 22 years.

In 1960 George, obtained his medical degree from Dalhousie, Halifax. He completed his Residency at the Montreal Neurological Institute and went on to do Fellowship with King Engel at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda. This was the beginning of what turned out to be a life-long incredible dedication to Myology. To this day I remember with envy the first beautiful muscle histochemical pictures that were shown at MNI Grand Rounds. Soon thereafter Friday mornings occupied the three of us going over the muscle cases of the week.

The rest is History. George rapidly became a household name in the world of Neuromuscular Disorders. He was made a full Professor, Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery, McGill University

in 1978 and awarded the Isaac Walton Killam Chair of Neurology in 1985. His bibliography is extensive and his work earned him Canada's greatest honor the Order of Canada of which he was an Officer (2001). He was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, received the Queen's Jubilee Medal the following year and made a "Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Quebec" in 2005. He organized two International Congresses on Neuromuscular Diseases in Canada (Montreal in 1974 and Vancouver in 2002). His work on gene therapy in Muscular Dystrophy was a first and encouraged others to explore similar ideas.

George was one of the most imaginative and innovative people we ever met. He could participate with the best on almost any subject. He was a linguist and a pastry chef and an avid "neuropolitician". We loved to ski together in earlier days. George was big in heart and mind.

We watched his two sons Adam (now a physician) and Joshua (a writer and radio personality) grow up to successful charming people. Shira (known as Bunny to George, because of the bunny they had at home many years ago) were married for 43 years. George will be missed by us all and the Neuromuscular World has lost one of its Greatest.

Andrew Eisen  
Stirling Carpenter