

# Tribute to Herbert Eckstein

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*Founder,  
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I met Herbert Eckstein, eldest child of Professor Albert Eckstein and his wife Dr Erna Schlossmann-Eckstein, as well as his younger brothers Klaus and Peter, during my tour of duty as Professor Eckstein's assistant at the Ankara Numune Hospital Department of Pediatrics. In addition to being a junior staff member in the pediatric clinic, I very soon became practically a member of the family, being with them for week-end hikes and social gatherings. In 1940 I was certified as a pediatrician by the Turkish Board and left Ankara, to return only in 1947 after spending time abroad, partly at the Harvard University Graduate School of Medicine, Boston Children's Hospital and Washington University in St Louis, under Professors Charles Janeway in Boston and Alexis Hartmann in St Louis.

On my return to Ankara Professor Eckstein accepted me as a member of his teaching staff in the then recently established Ankara University Faculty of Medicine, first as a senior lecturer and later as associate professor. Professor Eckstein, in addition to being a leader in his profession, a prolific writer in the field of child health, was a father figure to me, and I was extremely fortunate to have this association with him. Early in 1950 he left Ankara to take a professorship in Hamburg, but unfortunately he died that same year, at the age of 59, on 18 June. Soon after his death I rushed to Hamburg to extend my condolences to his family, who were then still in that city.

Professor Eckstein's dream had been to establish a children's hospital in Ankara, but this dream had not been realized. In 1954 permission to establish a pediatric clinic and Institute of Child Health was granted by the Ankara University Senate. Ground was broken in June of that year in the Hacettepe district of Ankara. Hacettepe Children's Hospital opened its doors to patients in 1957, and by 1958 the Institute of Child Health was providing care in practically all specialities of pediatric medicine and surgery.

During the building of the hospital I invited Dr Erna Eckstein to give me a hand in the planning, selection and purchase of equipment for both the hospital and the support services and she agreed to act as consultant to the housekeeping department.

Herbert Eckstein joined the hospital as our surgeon and indeed he was a leading figure in the establishment of pediatric surgery there. He acted as general pediatric surgeon, orthopedic surgeon and pediatric urologist. He was most interested in urolithiasis, a common disorder in Turkey.

Herbert, in addition to his contribution as a surgeon and teacher, also set an excellent example by his industriousness and his gentle approach and he was extremely well liked by his associates. While he was occupied with the surgical side of the hospital, Maria, his wife, a physiotherapist, assisted in the establishment of a department of physiotherapy at the hospital. Three years after their arrival in Ankara, Herbert and Maria Eckstein left for the United Kingdom, where Herbert continued his work as a urologist. His ties with our children's hospital were not severed and he paid numerous visits as a guest lecturer and was honored by Hacettepe University. We treasure fond memories of Herbert as well as the entire Eckstein family.

**Dr. Yüksel Bozer**  
*Rector,*  
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My personal acquaintance with the Eckstein family dates back to 1936. I was a student at an Ankara primary school then and had fallen ill with diphtheria. My health had deteriorated rapidly before I was finally transferred to Dr Albert Eckstein's pediatric clinic at the Numune Hospital. His administration of an antitoxin proved so effective that I recovered almost overnight. Not only did I feel gratitude to the senior Eckstein, but the potency of parenteral medication had left its impression on my mind.

I first met Herbert in 1957. He was about to leave for Turkey when he asked to see me. His mother, Dr Erna Eckstein had already started working at the Hacettepe Children's Hospital. Herbert was soundly dedicated to his patients and had fine relations with his assistants and colleagues in Ankara. He would either be working through the nights or stayed with his family. He did not seem to be particularly fond of socializing. In Turkey he had developed an interest in urinary stone disease; researched the problem and gained wide experience. I recall operating with him in the theaters we used to call "Kızılay" that have since been replaced by the new children's hospital. We had designed a spacious operating theater for children, including an annex for endoscopy and minor surgery. Subsequently we were joined by the late Dr Vahdettin Gökmen and Dr Aykut Erbeni and worked together as a staff until I left for training in cardiovascular surgery in 1959.

Without doubt Herbert Eckstein was a formidable surgeon who contributed greatly to pediatric surgery at the Hacettepe Children's Hospital, especially in urological surgery. His untimely loss is most regrettable. May he rest in peace.

## THE CHILD IN TURKEY

by Dr. Albert ECKSTEIN

*Professor of Pediatrics*  
*and Director of the Children's Hospital, Ankara*

Albert Eckstein on children in Turkey, 1949