

In Memoriam: Ayan Gulgonen

Ayan Gulgonen, MD, a retired hand and reconstructive microsurgeon, died in Istanbul on August 25, 2016 at the age of 79.

Dr. Gulgonen was born in Istanbul in 1937. He graduated from Ankara University, faculty of medicine in 1961. He completed his formal residency training in general surgery in Germany, at Geissen-Evangelisches Hospital where he met Brigitte. He then worked as an Oberarzt at Unfall-Krankenhaus, Austria, and at Zofingen-Bezirksspital, Switzerland.

Upon his return to Turkey, he helped to establish Emergency Department Services and a modern triage system at the Hacettepe University; and served as its chief for 2 years. Coming from the German School of teaching, his trauma experience was all encompassing including head, torso, and extremities, but he quickly turned to Orthopaedics and extremity reconstruction. He was one of the first to learn and apply AO principles in bone fixation. One of his presentations on extremity reconstruction caught Bob Carroll's attention. Dr Carroll subsequently invited him to do formal hand surgery training with him in New York, Columbia University. He completed his hand surgery fellowship along side with Drs. Ulrich Lanz and Dean Louis in 1972.

Between 1974 and 1975, he worked as the faculty at the Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at Gulhane Military Medical Academy. Following his return to civilian life, he took a faculty position at the department of plastic surgery at Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine. During his tenure there, he went to France to learn microsurgery and worked with Dr. Michon at Hopital Jeanne D'Arc in 1978.

Following his return, he established the nations first hand and microsurgery center providing year around coverage at the French Pasteur Hospital, Istanbul in 1978. He performed nation's first 5 digit replantation, toe-to-thumb transfer, and various free tissue transfers along with numerous finger and major replantations of the upper, and lower extremity. He always wanted to give back to his country. He was the first to set up a hand fellowship program and trained over 70 hand surgeons between 1978 and 2010 until his retirement.

His publications and lectures centered on the field of complex hand reconstruction. He firmly believed in primary reconstruction, no matter how severe the injury was. His publication on the long-term outcome of major upper extremity replantations still remains to be the case series with the longest follow-up in the current literature. Throughout his career, he has been invited to many international meetings, symposiums, and panels as the guest speaker to share his vast experience in hand trauma and reconstructive hand surgery. He has been the member of numerous national, and international, hand, and reconstructive microsurgery societies including the American Society for Surgery of the Hand, American Society of Reconstructive Microsurgery, Austrian Traumatology Association, German Reconstructive Microsurgery Society, Turkish Medical Society, Turkish Orthopaedic Association, Turkish Reconstructive Microsurgery Society. He also

served at the editorial board of the Journal of Hand Surgery (Br) and received countless life time achievement awards.

Many will remember Dr. Gulgonen as the mentor hand surgeon. However, he was also an avid collector of Anatolian Kilims and Rugs. His passion to collect stemmed from his desire to preserve his heritage. He wrote a series of books on Anatolian rugs. Many prominent exhibition halls and galleries in Europe have displayed his collections.

He led a secular life, loved his baroque music, and Besiktas. For his students, he was not just a teacher in hand surgery, but also a great role model who always looked at the future and talked about the next big project in his life. A considerable number of Turkish Doctors received their inspiration to embark upon a career in surgery of the hand from Dr. Gulgonen.

He is survived by his wife, 3 children, and 6 grand children.

Kagan Ozer, MD