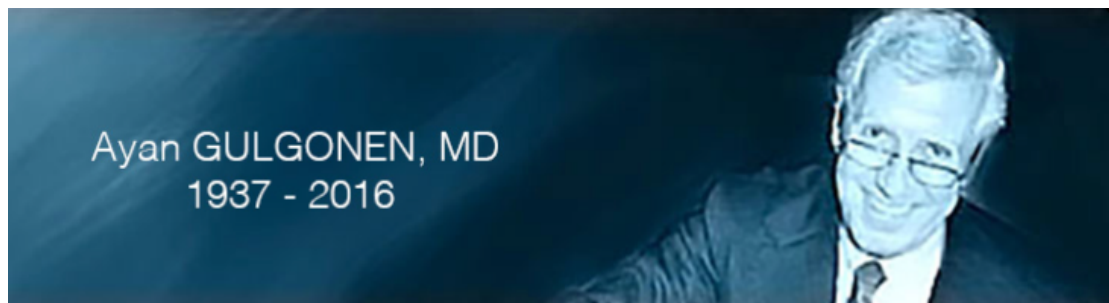


In tribute to Ayan Gulgonen (1937-2016)



Ayan Gulgonen, a mentor and pioneer in the field of Hand Surgery and Microsurgery in Turkey, passed away on August 25, 2016. The international family of hand surgeons and microsurgeons feel the personal loss of a great friend and colleague, and the medical world a loss of a true giant in the field.

Ayan Gulgonen was trained in general surgery at the Geissen-Evangelisches Hospital and then worked as an "Oberarzt" at Unfall-Krankenhaus in Vienna, as well as in Zofingen-Berzirkisspal in Switzerland. He returned to Turkey in 1969, where he was faculty and division chief of the Emergency Department at the Hacettepe University. In 1972, he completed his hand surgery fellowship at Columbia University. After serving as a faculty at the Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at Gulhane Military Medical Academy (1974-1975), Professor Gulgonen joined the faculty of Medicine at Istanbul University. In 1978, he pursued additional microsurgery training at Hopital Jeanne D'Arc in France. Upon Dr. Gulgonen's return to Turkey, he established the first hand and microsurgery group in the country. In 1980, he presented his thesis on "Finger Replantations" and earned professorship at the Marmara University. He served as the chief of hand surgery at VKV American Hospital, and was active in training fellows until his retirement in 2010.

Professor Gulgonen was one of the founders of the Turkish and Hand and Upper Extremity Surgery Society in 1977. In the history of the society, Dr. Gulgonen is considered the man who initiated the application of Hand Surgery and Microsurgery together. Between 1978 and 1980, Professor Gulgonen accomplished many "firsts" in Turkish Microsurgery, including the first replantation of 5 digits, toe-to-thumb transfer, replantation of upper and lower extremity, among others. Professor Gulgonen was also a renowned teacher, having trained numerous surgeons in hand and microsurgery, establishing national symposiums on advanced techniques in hand and microsurgery. In recognition of his efforts, Dr. Gulgonen received the "Eczcibasi Science Award" in 1979, and the "Medical Sciences Award" by the Istanbul Medical Chamber in 1994.

Great surgeons are remembered by generations because of their wisdom and actions that altered the course of history. Professor Gulgonen changed medical history in Turkey with his actions and perseverance to strive for excellence. Gulgonen also had the humility and passion that makes him a true giant.

A few words and good-bye to my friend Ayan; a man, who by nature was polite and pleasant. He was a humble man of few words who had a vision and the courage to try to achieve the most from the often-meager opportunities. Ayan was a surgeon of great strength and perseverance, who believed that it was worth the effort to strive for excellence, even when things seemed impossible. Ayan lived his life well.

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