

Cancerworld

In memory of Aron Goldhirsch, challenging oncologist with a vision

Editorial Staff / 3 March 2020



Prof. Aron Goldhirsch, an outstanding representative of Italian Medical Oncology, awarded and recognized internationally, passed away on February 26.

Since 2019, he was Medical Consultant at the Breast Cancer Center in Multimedica (Milan, Italy). For many years he held the position of Senior Consultant for the Senology Program and Director of the Melanoma, Sarcoma and Rare Tumors Program at the European Institute of Oncology in Milan and was Professor of Medical Oncology at the University of Bern, in Switzerland. He was also laureate *Honoris Causa* at University of Göteborg, in Sweden.

He was considered a true pioneer of Medical Oncology on an international scale: he was a founding member and Vice-President of the Breast International Group, as well as President of the Swiss Group of Clinical Research Against Cancer.

He mainly dedicated his activity to the care of patients with breast cancer. He started his studies at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Milan, where he obtained his degree in 1972. He then moved to neighbouring Ticino, working in internal medicine and medical oncology departments and

at the establishment of the Cantonal Cancer Service.

He then moved to Bern, where he held the role of Clinical Director of the Bern Branch of the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research, starting the coordination of international research studies on breast cancer. During the Bernese years, he began a 40-years long collaboration with the Department of Biostatistics of the Harvard School of Public Health and the Harvard Medical School in Boston, where he was invited Professor for a period of 6 years. In 1988 he returned to Ticino in the role of Primary at IOSI alongside Professor Franco Cavalli.

In 1997, through an agreement between the Cantonal Hospital and Milan's European Institute of Oncology (IEO), he became the Director of the Department of Medicine at IEO and, later, the Deputy of Scientific Director Professor Umberto Veronesi.

Goldhirsch has been for many years as the Director of the Scientific and Clinical evaluation of research Department at IEO, where he directed the Senology Program and the Program for melanoma, sarcoma and rare tumors.

He was president of the Swiss Group of Clinical Research on Cancer (SAKK). His scientific activity was strongly connected to that of the International Breast Cancer Study Group (IBCSG) based in Bern, of which he was a founding member and the chairman of the Scientific committee. He has been the vice president and founding member of the Breast International Group (BIG), a consortium of cooperative groups from all over the world and based in Brussels whose activity is dedicated to breast cancer research.

Aron Goldhirsch was a passionate teacher and a challenging partner in scientific discussions. He also was an empathic and attentive doctor for his patients. He will be deeply missed by the scientific community and by The European School of Oncology he continued to work with until his very last days.

"Aron was a leader. As such, based on his understanding of the facts, he sometimes had intense discussions with colleagues" said Matti Aapro, President of ECCO (European Cancer Organisation) and of the Sharing Progress in Cancer Care (SPCC) association. "We all learned a lot from him, and will miss his vision".

[CancerWorld dedicated to Aron Goldhirsch the cover story of March/April 2007.](#)