



## Obituary

Dr Bodil Eskesen



Dr Bodil Eskesen was born on the 8th of September 1912. She graduated as MD in 1939, and in the following years she received a broad medical training in several hospitals in Denmark. Her particular interest with physically disabled people started as a member of the polio-team to Greenland during the epidemic there in 1953. She then became a registrar at the Rehabilitation Hospital in Hornbaek, Denmark. In 1956 she organised the facilities for polio rehabilitation in Iceland. Bodil became a specialist in physical medicine and rehabilitation in 1959, and the following year was appointed consultant at the Rehabilitation Hospital in Hornbaek. She introduced the modern treatment and rehabilitation of spinal cord injured individuals in

Denmark. To gain further experience, Dr Eskesen visited several centres around the world. She came to Stoke Mandeville on several occasions and was a great admirer of Sir Ludwig Guttman. She was known as a doctor, who did everything possible for her patients, whenever called upon. Bodil was unmarried, but if someone without this knowledge asked her if she had any children, she answered: 'yes, 600'. Referring to the 600 spinal cord injured individuals to whom she gave parts of her life.

Nationally as well as internationally Bodil Eskesen was known as a lovable person. Whenever possible she participated in the annual scientific meetings of IMSOP, and was truly honoured on being elected to the council in 1981, and further re-elected in 1985, and became a Senior Member of the Society in 1991.

Because of her vital interest in the spinal cord injured she established a S.C.I. Patient Association in Denmark in 1982, and was its chairman for the next 13 years. Afterwards she was elected an honorary member of the Danish Paraplegic Association.

Not only for the spinal cord injured but also for many other physically disabled, Bodil gave the possibility of their taking part in sports activities. Bodil was the main organiser for the first Danish participation in the Olympics for disabled, held in Tel Aviv, Israel in 1968. In 1971 she was founding member of the Danish Society for Sport for Disabled, and was chairman until 1980, and after this, the honorary president of the Society.

For her great visionary and unselfish contributions she became honorary member of the Danish Society of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, and in 1982 received the highest honour from the Danish Disability Society – the Golden Pin. Furthermore in 1982 Queen Margrethe the second of Denmark decorated her with the Cross of the Order of Chivalry.

Bodil was a wonderful person, who leaves behind her many fond remembrances. She died on the 31st of August 1996. We pay tribute to her memory.

Fin Biering-Sørensen