

## **SARTON MEDAL LECTURES**

## LAUDATIO RENE VAN TIGGELEN

*Michel Thiery*

It is my privilege and pleasure to introduce the 2003-2004 Sarton Medal recipient of our medical faculty. We know our distinguished colleague and friend Colonel-M.D. René Van Tiggelen as the founder and animator of the Belgian Museum of Radiology. Consequently, presenting him before this audience may be superfluous but the rules of the George Sarton Committee must be followed! Retired Colonel René Van Tiggelen, M.D., born at Louvain on June 3, 1941, studied medicine at the Université Catholique de Louvain (U.C.L.), where he graduated in 1967 and specialized in radiology.

Having studied under the aegis of the Belgian Army, he was sent to Germany to take charge of the radiology departments of the Military Hospital of Cologne and Soest. In 1986 he was sent to the Republic of Rwanda to launch and head a radiodiagnostic section at the Hospital of Kanombe. On his return to Belgium he divided his professional activities between the radiology department of Brussels Free University (V.U.B.) and the Military Hospital at Neder-over-Heembeek. Released from the Army in 1997, he stopped practising, accepted teaching posts and is currently teaching medical imaging at the Institute for Tropical Medicine in Antwerp and a High School at Brussels.

So far the medical career of the man who already during his formative years developed a keen interest in medical history and in the historical background of radiology and radiodiagnosis in particular. The hobby became a passion in pursuit of a dream: collecting "oldtimers" to tell the fascinating story of the medical applications of Roentgen-rays. His dream materialized in 1992, when the Army services proposed to Colonel-M.D. Van Tiggelen to implement a radiology museum within the gigantic complex of the Queen Astrid Military Hospital of Neder-over-Heembeek near Brussels. Being part of an "active" radiology department, the Belgian Museum of Radiology is a "live" museum where patients waiting for examination find concrete answers to their often anxiety-laden

questions as well as an “open” institution packed with instruments and apparatuses illustrating the story and development of radiology through a rich display of past and present examples of radiologic technology. In this treasure house temporary exhibitions are also organized, such as the one on “The living bone” in 2002 and the one dealing with “Medical electrology” in 2003 around the unique electrologic apparatus picked up by the director-curator and repaired at the Ghent Museum of the History of Science.

Dear colleague and friend, on behalf of our university, our faculty, the Sarton Committee and its president I wish to congratulate you for your endeavors and thank Mrs. Van Tiggelen, née Françoise Goetghebuer, faithful companion of your hectic professional and medico-historical careers.

