

Obituary

Obituary – Professor Marcus Maurer (1966–2024)

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Professor Marcus Maurer (22.05.1966–7.09.2024)

“To live in hearts we leave behind, is not to die” – Thomas Campbell

Professor Marcus Maurer, MD, PhD, a distinguished physician and researcher in the fields of dermatology and allergy, left us for his heavenly abode on September 7, 2024. He was only 58 years old. On July 31, 2024, Professor Maurer went missing during a hike to Monte Giove near his vacation home by Lake Maggiore, Italy. Intense search activities continued in the following weeks, resulting in an agonizing period of waiting for his family and well-wishers. His remains were finally found in the Alpe Pizzocca area by an Italian mountain rescue unit, bringing a tragic end to this illustrious career.

He was born on May 22, 1966, in Kaufbeuren, Germany. He completed his medical school at the Universities of Mainz and Berlin and earned his board certification in Dermatology in 2000, followed by Allergology in 2003. Professor Maurer went on to complete his postdoctoral research in experimental pathology at Harvard Medical School and Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital in Boston.

Through his illustrious career, Professor Maurer conducted groundbreaking research furthering the understanding of mast cell functions, urticaria, mechanisms of pruritus and inflammation, and angioedema, helping to advance both

scientific knowledge and clinical practice. In addition to academics, his clinical expertise focused on chronic urticaria, recurrent angioedema, and mastocytosis, significantly benefiting such patients around the globe. He was truly a rare amalgamation of both academics and clinical practice, which has laid the foundation for his lasting legacy in the domains of dermatology and allergy.

Professor Maurer has left behind an immense body of work, including more than 100 funded research projects and over 800 original and review articles, with an H-index of 100. He also authored over 50 books and book chapters; his total scientific impact factor reached 5780. His scientific curiosity, combined with his passion for investigating new therapies, made him a pivotal figure in allergy research and treatment, impacting the lives of countless individuals around the world. His leadership in dermatology societies and his editorial roles in major dermatological journals reflected his commitment to advancing the field and sharing knowledge globally.

He had an extraordinary gift for bringing clinicians and scientists from different regions and disciplines together, creating an environment of fruitful and meaningful collaboration. Another incredible aspect of Marcus was his ability to inspire physicians at every stage of their careers. He guided them in conducting meaningful research on mast

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cell-mediated diseases while teaching them the importance of collaboration and mutual support in both research and life. He was extremely passionate about his work and cordial toward his peers and junior colleagues, which made him a “father figure” for researchers working on urticarial disorders across the world. As a mark of respect, the Indian Skin Allergy and Research Society (SAS) has decided to introduce the “Marcus Maurer Oration” in its annual congress, which will be delivered by an erudite physician who has conducted outstanding work in urticaria and angioedema.

Throughout his career, Professor Maurer has held numerous esteemed positions at various universities and has been bestowed with many scientific awards. At the time of his unfortunate demise, he was the Deputy Director of the Institute of Allergology at the Charité–Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Germany, and the Co-Director of Immunology and Allergology at the Fraunhofer Institute for Translational Medicine and Pharmacology. Some of his notable awards included the EAACI Clemens von Pirquet Award for Clinical Research in 2022 and the APAACI Lifetime Achievement Award in 2023.

A key aspect of Professor Maurer’s legacy is his work with the Global Allergy and Asthma Excellence Network (GA²LEN), a renowned collaborative network dedicated to improving the management of allergic diseases globally. He served as Treasurer of GA²LEN and was instrumental in driving forward its mission to close the gap between clinical practice and research in allergy and asthma. He was also actively involved in instituting Urticaria Centers of Reference and Excellence (UCARE) and Angioedema Centers of Reference and Excellence, global networks of leading centers providing

high standards of care for patients with urticaria and angioedema, respectively. His leadership in these initiatives helped shape the way these conditions are diagnosed and treated worldwide, providing hope and improved care for thousands of patients.

Professor Maurer also played a key role in disseminating knowledge about urticaria, angioedema, and other mast cell disorders to Indian dermatologists. He has participated in numerous Indian Association of Dermatologists, Venereologists, and Leprologists webinars, which proved to be hugely successful and educational. Today, there are 4 UCARE centers in India, and many more are in the pipeline, which bears a testament to his inspirational role.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Marcus was a cherished colleague, companion, and friend. His wisdom, sense of humor, ever-smiling, and optimistic personality will continue to inspire generations of clinicians and researchers across the world. He is survived by his wife, Dr. Claudia Maurer, a fellow dermatologist at the University of Heidelberg, and their three children, Michael, Laura, and Sophie.

The loss of Professor Marcus Maurer is immeasurable. The entire family of Indian SAS mourns alongside his family, friends, and colleagues. His passing deeply saddens us, and we shall remember him always. We pledge to continue his legacy and work untiringly to realize his dreams, honoring his motto – “Never give up!”

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