Members Remember
Michael Blumenthal

A Tribute by Ehud Assia

On April 28, 2007, Professor Michael Blumenthal, IIIC member #86, from Tel-Aviv, Israel, passed away at the age of 72.

Michael Blumenthal graduated from Hadassah Medical School at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and completed residency in ophthalmology at the medical center there. He was the Director of the Department of Ophthalmology at the Soroka Medical Center in Beer Sheba for 6 years and the Chairman of the Goldschleger Eye Institute at the Sheba Medical Center, Tel-Hashomer, for 17 years. He was a full professor at the Tel-Aviv University, Director of the Institute for International Scientific Exchanges in Medical Sciences and Sidney A. Fox Chair in Ophthalmology. He was the founder of the Annual Meeting on Ocular Microsurgery in Israel and the meeting organizer for 25 years and was the chief editor of the Israel Journal of Ophthalmology ("Ha'AYin"). His eye institute "Ein-Tal" is the biggest and the most reputable private eye center in Israel.

Professor Blumenthal was a gifted surgeon, especially in cataract surgery. He developed the Mini-Nuc technique by which the lens nucleus is extracted manually through a small, stitch-less incision, utilizing anterior chamber maintainer. His clinical results were excellent and comparable to those achieved by using sophisticated computerized machines. He taught his technique in hundreds of lectures, courses, publications and live surgeries all over the world.

A Tribute by Arthur Lim, MD (Hon), FRCS
Honorary Director
Tianjin Medical University Eye Centre

Professor Michael Blumenthal, internationally renowned and respected eye surgeon, played a major role in the development of quality cataract surgery with posterior chamber intraocular lens implant without phacoemulsification in the People's Republic of China. We were delighted that he could spend a week in Tianjin in 1999 at the 12th International Cataract Implant Microsurgery & Refractive Keratoplasty Meeting, 2nd Worldeyes International Meeting & 4th IIITC International Meeting where his method was taught and live surgery demonstrated to 200 participants.

Michael Blumenthal, besides his many international achievements, generously came to Tianjin, People's Republic of China, so that Chinese ophthalmologists who do not do phacoemulsification could learn his technique. Many eye surgeons have since used his techniques with satisfaction.

This technique is currently practiced by numerous surgeons worldwide. His book on Small Incision Manual Cataract Surgery (co-authored by Peter Kansas) was published in 2004. He was also a creative and dynamic researcher, and in his clinical and experimental studies included extensive investigation of fluid dynamics and the expandable full-sized hydrophilic intraocular lenses.

Michael Blumenthal was very active in the international arena. He was among the founders of the ESCRIS (then, the EIIIC), hosted the annual meeting in Jerusalem in 1987 and served as the president of the Society from 1995 to 1997. He was an active member of the ASCRS, AAO, AOI, ICO and other international organizations. At the 2004 meeting of the IIIC he was honored with the Jan Worst Medal lecture.

Michael Blumenthal will be always remembered as a unique and devoted teacher and mentor. He guided and guarded his young colleagues and many of his residents are now directors of eye departments and among the leading ophthalmologists in Israel. Blumenthal was a loving and dedicated husband and father. In spite of his extremely tight schedule he spent a considerable amount of time with his wife Naomi and his children Dara, Uri and Bouz.

For Michael Blumenthal cataract surgery was not only art and profession, but love and passion. He operated until the last days of his life, and when he could no longer operate - his life, literally, ended. His death is a great loss to his family and friends, peers and colleagues and to the world of ophthalmology.

We wish to record our thanks and appreciation to a great ophthalmologist who had not only contributed to numerous developments, but has made a major contribution in China.

At my invitation as the Honorary Director of Tianjin Medical University Eye Centre, Prof. Michael Blumenthal was at this meeting with Prof. Joaquin Barraquer and his son, Dr. Rafael Barraquer.