

November 12, 2019

Obituary for Prof. Max Burger

The Biozentrum is mourning the death of Max M. Burger, former Professor of Biochemistry at the Biozentrum, University of Basel, and former director of the FMI, who passed away on November 2 at the age of 86. Between 1972 and 1987, Max Burger was a professor at the Biozentrum, which he led for over five years. In 2005 he was awarded the Federal Cross of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany.



Prof. em. Max Burger (1933-2019)

Max Burger was born in 1933 in Zurich. After studying medicine at the University of Zurich, he worked as a doctor for several years. He then moved to research and received his doctorate in 1964 in biochemistry from Washington University in St Louis, USA. He built his research group on cell surface molecules and cancer research at Princeton University from 1965-1970. He then went to the then newly founded Biozentrum in Basel. During his time at the Biozentrum, he was its leader for five years. In 1987, Max Burger was appointed director of the FMI, a position he retained until his retirement in 2000.

Max Burger was a member and chairman of numerous scientific advisory and award committees. In particular, he was President of the Department of Biology and Medicine of the Swiss National Science Foundation, a member of the Board of Directors of Ciba-Geigy, and founder and chairman of the Novartis Scientific Advisory Board. For his achievements he has received numerous awards, including the Selman A. Waksman Medal (1970), the Otto Nägeli Prize (1975) and the German Federal Cross of Merit (2005).

In his role as research group leader, Max Burger focused on the molecular basis of cancer, in particular the function of glycoproteins and cellular interaction, and viral transformation. Through his pioneering work in cancer research, Burger gave essential, new impulses to biochemistry in Europe. Many ideas for innovative and forward-looking new approaches in health research go back to his initiatives. With his death, the Biozentrum has lost an outstanding scientist, dedicated mentor and charismatic people.

The Biozentrum and its employees express their condolences and condolences to his family.

The memorial service will take place on 27th November at 11.00 in the Pauluskirche in Basel.