

Obituary of Prof. Dr. Ing. Hermine-Valeria Gärtner (14.8.1942-20.7.2018)

With Prof. Dr. med. Hermine-Valeria Gärtner has the German pathology and especially the renal pathology lost a meritorious and impressive personality.

Prof. Gärtner, born in 1942 in Lower Lusatia, was one of the first women in German pathology to hold a C3 professorship for immunopathology, nephropathology and hematopathology from 1980 to 2004 at the University Hospital Tübingen. In addition, she served from 1992-2012, well beyond her retirement, first as a women's, then as a gender equality officer of the Medical Faculty of the University of Tübingen and had in this role, in particular by their participation in more than 100 appointment procedures, a decisive share in the content and personal orientation of the faculty.

As one of the few female professors in medicine and one of the first ever female professors of pathology, she was a role model for young physicians and has put much of what has helped women out of their way to overcome career obstacles although her starting conditions were not at all rosy. After the loss of her father and older brother in World War II she was devastated by the war turmoil moved with her mother and sister to Esslingen in Württemberg. There she was able to prevail in spite of difficult starting conditions in her own kind with enormous ambition and irrepressible will and began after graduation in the winter semester 1961/62 the study of human medicine in Tübingen, which she had to earn by numerous sideline activities.

In addition to the study of human medicine she was interested in philosophy, psychology, literature and comparative religious studies and had in the context of the then still offered study General e in Tübingen very good opportunities to actively pursue these interests. After the first exam ("Physikum"), Prof. Gärtner moved for 3 semesters to Munich, Kiel and Vienna and then returned to Tübingen to prepare for the final state examination. In addition, in Tübingen she also wanted to complete her doctoral thesis in psychiatry with Prof. Schulte as soon as possible. However, he fell ill with myocarditis due to coxsackieviruses and died, so that Prof. Gärtner was now working on a doctoral thesis on the topic "The Criminogenic Effect of Alcohol". The experience with the various schools of psychiatry during her doctoral thesis meant that she longed for a more objective approach and therefore opted for pathology as another field of activity. During her medical internship in Munich, she received an offer as an assistant to the senior chief physician of the Pathology Institute in Tübingen, where she had passed the state examination very well. Of course, she did not want to turn down this extraordinary offer for the time and was given an appointment for a job interview with the director of the institute, Professor Adalbert Bohle, who remembered her from the lectures and courses and asked her what she wanted in pathology. With her prompt answer "I want to habilitate myself" she was able to astonish the otherwise very strict Prof. Bohle, who then hired her. Since the pathology of Tübingen under Bohle's direction was all about the kidney, the path of Prof. Gärtner into renal pathology was foreshadowed. Under the direction of Prof. Bohle she developed into an excellent nephropathologist and accompanied her famous mentor by national and international congresses. She has published numerous, still current and frequently cited international articles and books and then habilitated in 1978 with a thesis "Perimembranous glomerulonephritis, a prototype immunocomplex disease". As an example of the quality of her scientific work, it should be mentioned that Prof. Gärtner, as one of the few pathologists worldwide, was able to publish a paper in the prestigious New England Journal of Medicine in 1996 as

first author. Another scientific milestone is the book "Kidney Structure and Function" written together with Prof. Bohle, who was already ill at the time, and still is one of the standard works in the field.

Her personal autobiography was published in 2015 under the title "My life with the mask - through passion into the spheres of power".

With Prof. Gärtner passing German pathology and nephrology is losing not only a pioneer of modern nephropathology, but also a multi-faceted, interesting and always in a positive spirit controversial personality, who understood to entertain her audience through her lively style of speaking and her incredible personal presence. She has always been able to use her versatile talents in a variety of fields and make outstanding achievements.

To say it in the words of her revered teacher Adalbert Bohle, we say goodbye to Prof. Gärtner with the words "**Change of paradigms in nephrology - a view back and a look forward**".

Mein Leben mit der Maske



DEZEMBER 4, 2015

About the author and other contributors

Valeria Gärtner, born in the Lower Lusatia, held a C3 professorship for immunopathology, nephropathology and hematopathology from 1980 to 2004 at the University of Tübingen. She has published numerous, still up-to-date and frequently cited international articles and books.

Her greatest passion was for 20 years - certainly not only in medicine - equality work. From 1992 to 2012, she was a key equal opportunity officer in faculty policy,

notably through her involvement in more than one hundred appointment procedures. As one of the few female professors in medicine and one of the first female pathology professors, she was and is a role model for young doctors and has set much of what helps women to overcome career obstacles today.

With tremendous ambition and irrepressible will, she has fought her way out of simple social conditions - refugee and keychild - following the painful loss of her homeland after her father and older brother had gone to war. Her life was not only dedicated to pathology, but she was equally passionate about her love of theater, literature and philosophy, especially Nietzsche. In addition, she undertook numerous adventurous expeditions in the Himalayas, especially to Tibet, where she penetrated into some regions as the first European.

What material would provide for several lives, she has now captured in her impressive and exciting to read life balance.

The Obituary was published in: [The nephrologist](#)
March 2019, Volume 14, [Issue 2](#) , pp 164-165 | [Cite as](#)

Obituary of Prof. Dr. Ing. Hermione-Valeria Gardner