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Carl-Gustav Groth, pioneer transplantologist

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At the turn of the millenium, Carl-Gustav Groth retired as Professor of Transplantation Surgery at the Karolinska Institute and Huddinge Hospital in Stockholm, Sweden. Carl-G. Groth saw the end of the millennium

as the founding president of the International Xenotransplantation Association. He will enter the new millenium as president of the Transplantation society and will preside at the 2002 World Congress of the Society in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Carl-G. Groth will continue to lead research in xenotransplantation at the Huddinge Hospital. His group is exploring the transplantation of porcine pancreatic islets as a cure for type I diabetes and collaborates with Imutran in Cambridge. At the annual meeting of the Swedish Medical Association on November 1st 1999, Carl-G. Groth gave a summary of his research in the Huddinge Hospital Transplant Lecture, the title of his discourse being "Can transplantation of insulin-producing tissue cure diabetes?". Previous Huddinge Hospital Transplant Lecture speakers include many distinguished transplantologists such as Thomas Starzl, Sir Roy Calne and Joseph Murray (Nobel Prize 1990).

There does not seem to be time for a life of leisurely retirement for Carl-G. Groth. He has recently been elected Chairman of the Board of Sophiahemmet, the most renowned private hospital in Sweden.

Born in Helsinki, Finland in 1933 some of his childhood memories are of Russian bombardments of Helsinki during World War II. His family moved to Stockholm in 1944. He studied medicine at the Karolinska Institute where he graduated in 1961. In 1965 he defended his Ph.D. thesis in Rheology, "Disturbances in the flow properties of the blood".

Carl-G. Groth trained at the Serafimer Hospital in Stockholm where in 1964 he, with an 8 mm camera, filmed Professor Curt Franksson perform the first renal transplantation in Sweden.

Carl-G. Groth spent some very formative years with Thomas Starzl at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, Denver, Colorado as Postdoctoral Research Fellow in 1966–1968 and again in 1971–1972 as Associate Professor of Surgery. Carl-G. Groth's major contributions to the first successful liver transplantations



are well described and duly recognized in *The Puzzle People*, the autobiography of Thomas Starzl.

On his return to Sweden in 1973, Carl-G. Groth became Associate Professor of Surgery and Chief of Transplantation, Karolinska Institute and Huddinge Hospital. Ten years later, in 1983, he was appointed as Professor of Transplantation Surgery and Chairman of the then founded Department of Transplantation Surgery.

Under his guidance, the kidney, pancreas, bone marrow and liver pancreas transplantation programs have reached a status of international excellence. The Department of Transplantation surgery has initiated and led numerous clinical trials of immunosuppressive agents.

Carl-G. Groth and his group have pioneered the transplantation of porcine pancreatic islets. From 1990–1993 ten diabetic kidney-transplant patients were grafted with porcine fetal islet – like cell clusters. It was shown that porcine pancreatic endocrine tissue can survive in the human body.

Carl-G. Groth is the author of more than 700 publications on kidney- pancreas- islet- liver- and xenotransplantation. He has been invited as speaker at more than 200 national and international conferences and symposia. He is member of 9 Editorial Boards

In his department more than 30 professionals have successfully completed their PhD studies – many of them have later been appointed professors or associate professors.

Since 1986 Carl-G. Groth is a member of the Nobel Assembly which awards the Nobel Prize in Medicine. He was the Chairman of the Assembly in 1998.

Carl-G. Groth is honorary fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of England (1989), the American Surgical Association (1992), the American Society of Transplant Surgeons (1997), and the Swedish Society of Gastroenterology (1998)

He was awarded the King's Medal of the 8th Dimension in 1998.

Carl-G. Groth is not only a very active and successful professional, he is also a family man. He and his wife Birgit have three children born in 1961, 1963 and in 1970. He has traveled in the Arctic with his two sons. Besides he is a skilled ocean sailor. He has participated as helmsman in eleven Round the Gotland Races triumphing in three of these.

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