The Swiss transplantation Community has lost one of his most senior and respected members with the sudden and untimely death of Professor Gilles Mentha a few weeks ago while riding his bicycle on a mountain road near Geneva at the age of 61.

Gilles Mentha was a Professor of Surgery, and a world recognized expert in hepatobiliary surgery and liver transplantation. He was chief of the Division of Transplantation and of the Hepato-pancreato-biliary Center at the University of Geneva Hospitals. He was one of the pioneers of liver transplantation in our country and has always been a generator of progress in the field. He was instrumental in helping the development of live-donor liver transplantation and performed the first liver transplant in a patient with colorectal metastases in our country. He gave a remarkable lecture on this topic in the 2013 Congress of our Society in Interlaken.

He will be remembered for his constant striving for excellence, attention to detail, and accuracy for the good and the safety of the patients. Patients always were at the center of his attention and loved and respected him for his humanity and gentle demeanor.

In spite of his remarkable achievements, he was a man of great humility who took pride in putting forward his team rather than himself. His motto was that the success of a group had much more value than the exploit of an individual. He was a man of consensus and will also remain a model of integrity for his peers, colleagues and students.

Gilles Mentha was a mentor, a colleague, a friend who will be deeply missed by all of us. The Swiss Transplantation Society offers its sincere condolences to his family and close friends he has left behind.

The Swiss Transplantation Society Board

| President | Thierry Berney, Geneva |
| President-elect | Stefan Schaub, Basel |
| Past president | Pierre Clavien, Zurich |
| Treasurer | Maurice Matter, Lausanne |
| Secretary | Paola Gasche, Geneva |
| Scientific Committee | Philipp Dutkowski, Zurich |
| Communication | Irene Koneth, St-Gallen |
| Councilor at large | Hendrik Tevaearai, Bern |
The Scientific Program Committee met this spring under the leadership of Philipp Dutkowski and has prepared an attractive program for the 13th Congress of the Swiss Transplantation Society that will take place in Interlaken, January 23-24, 2015.

Hot topics featured in the scientific program include strategic aspects of donation after cardiac death, humoral rejection and obesity in transplantation. This year, we will introduce a new Young Investigator Workshop, in which a topic of general interest will be presented by experts in an interactive way to fellows and residents considering a career in transplantation. Transplant immunology is the topic selected for this year.

As each year, the best papers published by Swiss investigators or groups will be presented in a dedicated oral session. A poster presentation will also be organized as another new feature of the Congress, in order to cover the whole range of transplant research in Switzerland.

The best papers will compete for the 2015 Swiss Transplant Awards, and prizes awarded thanks to SwissTransplant and our corporate sponsors. Do not forget to submit your papers on time: a call will be issued and sent to our membership in a fall edition of this newsletter.

The next newsletter will also include the final scientific program with complete lecture titles and invited speakers names. Meanwhile, the board of the Swiss Transplantation Society is confident that the 2015 edition of its Congress will provide to delegates great science and networking opportunities.

The new board and office of the Swiss Transplantation Society

A new board for the Swiss Transplantation Society was elected in our last general assembly last January in Interlaken. Its current composition is Thierry Berney (President, Geneva), Stefan Schaub (President-elect, Basel), Pierre Clavien (Past president, Zurich), Maurice Matter (Treasurer, Lausanne), Paola Gasche (Secretary, Geneva), Philipp Dutkowski (Science, Zurich), Irene Koneth (Communication, Saint-Gallen), and Hendrik Tevaearai (Councilor-at-large, Bern).

We are facing several issues that we have immediately started to address. The first measure taken was to professionalize the office of the society in order to improve all logistical aspects of society management and congress organization. Another important issue was to improve continuity of our society’s management, which until now was dependent on its President’s secretariat, and thus changing every two years. Members of the board have issued a call to professional congress organizations (PCOs) to apply for serving as the Swiss Transplantation Society’s office. Candidates were interviewed and the final choice was set on Meeting.com, a PCO that has already organized in past years several national or international congresses. Meeting.com has already started work on the management of our membership and the organization of our 2015 Congress and has shown great efficiency and a very open collaborative attitude. We have no doubt that this collaboration will be a lasting asset for the Society.

Primary objectives of the new board will be to maintain the dynamism and attractiveness of our society in order to keep our active membership and recruit new members among our younger colleagues, and to ensure the soundness of its finances in a changing world with regard to relationship with corporate sponsors. The society and its board will have to show creativity in offering new benefits of membership, mostly to younger investigators, and devising new models for interacting with our sponsoring partners. Discussion will be held and approval will be sought on these matters in our next general assembly, to which we invite you to actively participate, keeping in mind that the first and foremost purpose is to provide the best possible forum for physicians, surgeons and scientists in the field of transplantation in Switzerland.
Membership fees

Absence of payment of membership fees has been a major problem faced by the society and its Treasurer and has played a sizeable role in the deficit in the 2013 finances of the Swiss Transplantation Society. In the past years, less than 20% of members have actually paid their dues. This is made even worse by the fact that the Swiss Transplantation Society is paying back 50 CHF to The Transplantation Society (TTS) for each member, in good standing or not, as part of the joint membership agreement. With the low percentage of paying members, we are actually disbursing more money to TTS than cashing from our members!

This is of course not of voluntary attitude on the part of our members, but rather an illustration for the need to professionalize our office.

In an effort to revitalize the finances of the society, our new office will invoice all members for the 2014 and 2013 unpaid membership fees, and is looking for more convenient ways for payment including e-banking, credit card and automatic renewal. The livelihood of our society is highly dependent on its membership being and remaining in good standing! Please, valued members, pay your dues!

Membership recruitment

The livelihood and scientific health of our society is also dependent on application for membership of all involved in transplantation science and medicine: established surgeons, physicians and scientists; fellows, residents and trainees; students; coordinators, nurses and other allied health professionals. We are grateful to all professionals involved in transplantation in Switzerland for enrolling their colleagues in the society. We encourage and urge senior professionals and group leaders to stimulate and facilitate application for membership of their trainees and students and participation to our yearly congress.

Congress venue: 2015 and beyond

It is obvious to the board that a particularly attractive feature of our yearly congress resides in the Victoria-Jungfrau hotel as its venue. However, the former financial policies for registration to the congress are no longer sustainable for reasons we will outline below.

Until last year, registration fee for members inclusive of admission to congress sessions, coffee breaks, accommodation and gala dinner did not even cover the cost charged to the society for the room only. This was rendered possible until 2 years ago thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, the money raised allowing the society to cover these costs. However, the sponsoring situation has been rapidly changing these past years, and in spite of the continued commitment of our major sponsors, our overall fundraising has sharply dropped, causing for the first time an almost balanced result in 2012 and a clear deficit in 2013.

For this reason, the board had to make the assuredly unpopular decision to slightly increase the registration fee to the congress, and strictly enforce the reduced registration fee to members in good standing only. We also had to separate registration fee and accommodation price in order to avoid a programmed deficit. Rooms at the Victoria-Jungfrau will still be made available to our members at a reduced price by the hotel management, but will represent a significant increase of total congress costs for delegates as compared to previous years. Our new office will propose rooms with a variety of budget options in other, less costly hotels in Interlaken. The networking dinner will still be held in the Versailles hall of the Victoria-Jungfrau and include the chocolate fountain for the aficionados!

Unfortunately, the choice of venue for the following years (2016 and thereafter) will depend on the financial results of the 2015 congress and on the changing rules in the pharma industry for sponsoring events held in five-star hotels. In the meantime, we are happy to have been able to maintain our congress in this beautiful venue in 2015.