

Philip Poole-Wilson

On March 4, Philip left us forever. He died suddenly on the way to the hospital where he had spent so much time before retiring just a few months previously. Cruelly, fate would not permit this tireless worker and leading figure in world cardiology to enjoy “a few more quiet years.”

I have had the privilege of working with Philip during several years. Initially, this was in the design and monitoring of various international clinical trials, and I admired his scientific rigour in designing studies made to answer specific clinical questions; Philip was a clinician at heart. This led him to conduct trials with groups that were particularly difficult to study because of their baseline characteristics—a typical example is the SENIORS study—knowing that the results could be uncertain. Years later, we served on the European Society of Cardiology’s Audit Committee, which was a difficult task for me, as I knew little about finance. Here, I saw proof of his financial knowledge and good judgment when faced with difficult situations, which he always resolved with supreme grace, avoiding undesired confrontation at all costs.

His scientific contributions have been enormous, particularly in the field of heart failure; an example is his treatise on heart failure, which despite constant changes in this discipline, is still the best work available and the text of reference. The book’s main characteristic—and Philip’s as well—is clinical sense.

Philip dedicated his life to the study, practice, and teaching of cardiology, and he also participated actively in organisations that promoted international implementation and management of the same. In this manner, he became President of the European Society of Cardiology, and contributed to the growth of the society in its difficult initial stages. All cardiologists, and the Spanish Society of Cardiology as a whole, should honour him for his efforts. Years later, moved by his preoccupation with cardiology in developing countries, he became President of the World Heart Foundation, where his labours were considerable.

One of Philip’s characteristics as a scientist was that he had “heretical” ideas about seemingly conventional medical matters. Occasionally, his viewpoints seemed to be clearly unorthodox, but he always invited people’s questions and opinions about them. This characteristic, which some great masters possess, was a hallmark of Philip’s, and it made him a brilliant debater.



Prof Philip Poole-Wilson. Image courtesy of Imperial College London Press Office.

His immense scientific curiosity was bound to a great love of nature, and of plants in particular. A fond memory of our friendship involves his curiosity for some plants “smelling of honey” that he, coming from his shadowy island, could not identify. One day, when he was with his dear wife Mary on the Mediterranean coast, he asked me about these aromatic shrubs; they turned out to be *Pittosporum tobira*, Japanese Cheesewood. Ever since that day, long ago, he would ask me every time we met whether those aromatic shrubs were still flowering in my land of orange and lemon trees. Philip, I wish with all my heart that wherever your spirit goes, it may always be accompanied by the sweet perfume of our beloved Japanese Cheesewoods. Rest in peace, my friend, and thank you for what you taught us!

Jordi Soler-Soler
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