



GENE KLINGBERG

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In 1946, when I was working in the United States as a pediatric fellow at the St. Louis Children's Hospital of Washington University, I had the good fortune of meeting Dr. Gene Klingberg, a young and dynamic member of the teaching staff. Our supervisor, Professor Alexis F. Hartmann, very frequently called on Dr. Klingberg for his opinion. At the time, Klingberg was one of the youngest people on the staff. Professor Hartmann, in addition to being known the world over, was a man of marked human feelings. He was well in advance of his times. In the America of the 1940s, especially in the southern states, racism was at a peak. Afro-Americans were hospitalized on separate wards, or were forced to be examined and hospitalized in separate institutions. Even public toilets were segregated for use by white and colored people. In busses blacks sat in the back rows of seats while the front rows were reserved for whites. Even if there were empty seats in the section reserved for whites, black people had to stand at the rear. In this climate there was an outbreak of polio in St. Louis. Although there were empty beds in the white children's ward, sick colored youngsters were not being admitted. Seeing this, one day Dr. Hartmann called Klingberg and told him, "This segregation must be brought to an end. We are going to open these wards to all children, no matter what their color".

Conservative members of the teaching staff were in opposition. In fact, Washington University, as a private institution, was in danger of losing its funding. But with Klingberg's support this change was brought about. These events increased my already great respect and admiration for Dr. Klingberg. It was only many years later that de-segregation began in the United States as a whole.

When in the 1950s I was in the process of establishing a children's clinic, institute and hospital, even more important than obtaining buildings and equipment was the question of finding the proper instructors to train the students and residents. With this in mind, while selecting outstanding medical graduates from the İstanbul and Ankara Medical Schools, I was busy trying to arrange for them to have good modern pediatric training. Part of this plan was to send some of them abroad for training and to bring teachers to Turkey from other countries. This was to

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occur in two stages. At that time, most doctors who were doing specialization in the Turkish university hospitals were not paid, so apart from a few hours doing rounds each day, they spend the rest of their time working in schools or on construction sites or as salesman for pharmaceutical firms. And at the end of the prescribed time period they were certified as specialists. With the establishment of Hacettepe, it was our intention to start a residency program as practiced in the United States. I invited Dr. Joe Wray, whom I had met in the United States, to help set up the program and serve as chief resident. He remained for four and a half years. By that time I had been back from the United States for six or seven years. During that time I had been so involved with setting up an institution that I had not had the time to do any research. For this reason, I at once thought of inviting Dr. Gene Klingberg to come and help train the residents. At first he hesitated and said, "Aren't you the best person for this task?" I replied that if I had thought so, I would not have asked him to come. So he agreed to come for six months. When he got to Ankara and sensed our excitement in establishing Hacettepe, he became equally enthused and stayed for a year and a half. He put his stamp on every area of pediatrics, in particular pediatric hematology. And he said at the inauguration of the hospital, "This institution will be on a level with the best in the United States".

Gene Klingberg has passed away, but his memory will live on in our hearts as one of the founders of Hacettepe.