

### **Ulf von Euler**

Ulf von Euler, for many years professor of physiology and head of the Department of Physiology at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, died suddenly on Thursday, March 10, 1983, when he succumbed to the sequelae of a heart operation. Alert and active to the very last, his death came unexpectedly and painfully to his relatives and intimate friends.

Ulf von Euler reached the age of 78 years. After an unusually long and successful scientific career—he published his first scientific paper at the age of 17—he became a leading figure in international physiology. He was a grand seignor of his time, highly esteemed and admired for his personal qualities and scientific achievements. Ulf von Euler grew up in a scientific milieu as his father, Hans von Euler, was professor and Nobel prize winner in chemistry, his mother an eminent scientist, his grandfather professor of chemistry and his godfather the Nobel prize winner in chemistry, Svante Arrhenius. With the intuitive talents of the born scientist he selected essential problems and tackled them successfully with his creative and imaginative mind. In this way, he made a series of now famous discoveries. In the thirties when as a young man he visited Henry Dale's laboratory in London, Ulf von Euler discovered substance P. His scientific education with Dale had a decisive influence on his career and his scientific approach followed to a great extent the classical lines taught by Dale. A few years after his stay in England came his discovery and analysis of the biological and chemical properties of what he named the prostaglandins. Both discoveries led to the opening of new fields which today are the centre of interest for physiologists and pharmacologists. But von Euler's name is especially associated with the discovery of noradrenaline as the transmitter in the sympathetic nervous system. For this discovery he received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 1970, together with Bernhard Katz and Julius Axelrod. The three eminent scientists were awarded the prize: "for their discoveries concerning the humoral transmitters in the nerve terminals and the mechanism for their storage, release and inactivation".

Besides intense research activities of his own and comprehensive international engagements, he carried a heavy load in the Nobel Committee of the Karolinska Institute, for many years as its secretary and also as chairman of the Nobel Foundation. He took over the leadership of *Acta Physiologica Scandinavica* after Göran Liljestrand in 1957 and in his hands the Acta has grown rapidly and developed into an international journal of great repute, the respected voice of Scandinavian Physiology in the scientific world. Ulf von Euler will be remembered as one of the great "classical" physiologists of his time.

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