



## **Olaf Evjenth (1926 – 2020)**

Olaf Evjenth hails from Valnesfjord in Fauske Municipality. He grew up on a farm on Hundholmen. Olaf was the second youngest of 11 siblings. His father died when the youngest sibling was 4 years old. Olaf worked a bit as a bricklayer after high school. He was active in the local sports club, especially in track and field, before he went to Oslo to study. He enjoyed playing the guitar and earned while studying by playing with friends at dances. His home currently is at Solem Skogen in Oslo with his wife Grethe (passed away 2014). He had an active sports career at national and international level in the field events. After an active completion career, he was national coach in hammer throw, discus and shotput for several years. He completed higher education at the National Gymnastics School in 1952 and Oslo Orthopaedic Institute (later the State Physical Education) in 1958. After working at separate physical institute at Ryen few years, he teamed up with Hans Gunnari and founded Hans & Olaf AS at Bislett Bad in 1967. At the same time, he Freddy Kaltenborn and took postgraduate studies in manual therapy on his institute in Bygdoy Alle in 1967-1968. In the early 1970s, he began teaching manual therapy, and the first interns graduated as manual therapists from Hans & Olaf Physiotherapy AS in 1975. He and Hans Gunnari retired from active institute operation in 1989 when four of the staff therapists took over as owners. However, he long trained almost daily, pumping iron and pedalling an ergometer cycle in a ways that much younger people have difficulty repeating Olaf soon built a reputation among patients and students.

From the beginning of his career he was curious and sought new ways to achieve better results. Knowledge combined with broad experience of top sports enabled him to contribute greatly where a combination of manual therapy and exercise was necessary. Along with Hans Gunnari, he developed fitness training apparatus (Norwegian Sequence) which were based on their functional experience. The apparatus were sold to fitness training centres worldwide. Olaf also early believed that patients could benefit from acupuncture and proper nutrition. Dr. George Bentze was one of the first in Norway to use acupuncture and sought "alternative" approaches, especially in nutrition. He was an early collaborator (from 1971) of the institute until his death in 1983, 55 years old.

In his work as a manual therapist, Olaf was a true pioneer, nationally and internationally. We who have had him as a mentor were impressed by the ways he perfected standard techniques and developed new ones. Students with him were constantly introduced to new varieties in their three-year internships. Olaf is clinician in all ways; patients are his real textbook. Although he could have travelled and held courses and lectures throughout the year, he remained true to the challenge of examining and treating patients. In class, he shared his experience and demonstrated patient care of the highest class. Olaf demands much of himself as well as of others in physiotherapy in general and manual therapy in particular. He has always said clearly whenever he thought the quality was insufficient. Olaf always

had a driving commitment and represent us and was a principal contributor to the ascent of our profession in this country. In contexts where Olaf can draw on all his capabilities, he performs in ways that combine gentleness and strength, considers and compares findings, and reaches clear conclusions and recommendations to patients and students. His abilities in clinical assessments of patients along with his eminent proficiency are his strongest attributes. It is perhaps therefore a paradox that this is particularly evident in his extensive contributions to the literature.

Olaf has had an extensive book and video production with examination and treatment techniques in manual therapy (see the following list) eminent in our national plan. It is no exaggeration to say that all further education in manual therapy worldwide benefits from his contributions. His textbooks compiled jointly with Jern Hamberg have for decades been used as a basis within muscle stretching by both therapists and those active in sports. He introduced, systematized and relayed techniques in pain localization of musculoskeletal disorders more than 20 years ago. The latest textbook for which he has been the principal author covers new techniques in mobilization and manipulation.

Olaf also has been active in the international scientific community since the early 1970s. He and Freddy Kaltenborn have been notable in contributing the Kaltenborn-Evjenth concept rooted in the academic tradition they brought with them from our experts. Olaf quickly became much sought after to speak at international congresses and leader of courses and seminars "worldwide." The list of countries in which he has taught include Sweden, Finland, Germany, Spain, Greece, Italy, Iceland, Austria, Holland, Australia, Japan, Korea, the USA, Canada, and Chile. He has an honorary title from Oakland University, in Michigan, USA. After his 80th birthday, he has slowed down a bit, but remains a reliable knowledge and experience resource for students and manual therapists.

In 2010 he was awarded HM The King's Medal of Merit in Gold for his contributions to manual therapy and athletics.

Olaf passed away 15th of April 2020. (Written by Roar Robinson)