



## Martin H:son Holmdahl

To cite this article: (2015) Martin H:son Holmdahl, Upsala Journal of Medical Sciences, 120:2, 132-133

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.3109/03009734.2015.1044055>

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 Published online: 05 May 2015.

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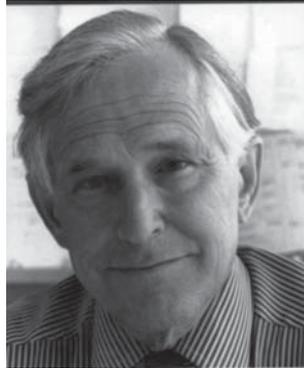
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## IN MEMORIAM

### **Martin H:son Holmdahl**



Martin H:son Holmdahl

Uppsala Medical Society has the sad duty to inform about the death of Martin H:son Holmdahl, who died in his 92nd year on 11 March 2015. He is remembered with gratitude for his important work for science, education, humanity, and medicine in the academic community in Uppsala.

He was born in Gothenburg in 1923, the son of Henrik Holmdahl, MD, into a family of academics, priests, and medical doctors. He began his medical studies in Uppsala in 1942 and finished them in 1950. He completed his thesis at the Department of Physiology in 1956 on ‘apnoic oxygenation’ under the mentorship of Professor Henrik Enghoff. Already in the late 1940s Martin H:son Holmdahl was contacted by the professor of surgery, Olle Hultén, to give guidance on anaesthesia. His leadership for anaesthesia in Uppsala was formalized in 1953. He did part of his training at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School in London.

When Uppsala, in 1956, got an independent Department of Anaesthesia, Martin Holmdahl became its first head. He developed it into a strong and modern university clinic. Using his experience from the polio epidemic in 1953, he was one of the first to introduce modern intensive care in Sweden. His knowledge in the field of respiratory physiology was of course of utmost importance. In 1965 Martin H:son Holmdahl became the first professor of anaesthesia at Uppsala University. His scientific work focused on mentorship for young anaesthetists, and he was anxious to support his students in their scientific projects. Respiratory physiology, local anaesthesia, resuscitation, and patient-controlled analgesia are some of the fields in which about 35 doctoral theses were published under his stewardship.

Over the years he became more engaged in the leadership of the faculty and later the university. After a period as dean of the Medical Faculty between 1969 and 1970 he was elected Rector Magnificus of Uppsala University in 1978, a position he held until his retirement in 1989. Even after this he remained very active and took an important role as an adviser and discussion partner for his younger colleagues in the department. We saw him almost daily at work just a few months ago.

For Uppsala Medical Society he was the person who provided insights in discussions. He encouraged contacts between generations and often championed the viewpoints of the young medical students. Whenever Martin H:son Holmdahl took part in the society meetings he added quality and depth to the discussions. He was a strong spokesman for this journal, and he supported the initiative, together with the Medical Faculty, to arrange the annual Rudbeck Day. His autobiography portrays his life and his contribution to national and international academic study of anaesthesia well. From his youngest days Martin was a spokesman for humanity and everyone’s right to freedom. On his 80th birthday Uppsala University honoured him by instituting a prize for Human Rights

in his name. In 2010 the Selander Foundation initiated a lecture to be held every year in Martin H:son Holmdahl's name, and Uppsala Medical Society is one of the organizers.

Martin H:son Holmdahl left a lasting imprint in many of us who met him. Characterized by his scientific interest, never-ending curiosity, enthusiasm, and humanism, his memory will persist in the minds and hearts of very many friends, students, colleagues, and trainees.

For Uppsala Medical Society  
Lars Wiklund, Henry Johansson, and Torbjörn Karlsson