

Professor Dr Gottfried Machata letter to Dr Majda Zorec Karlovšek

Liebe Frau Präsident,

Wie versprochen übersende ich in der Anlage den Artikel aus dem Bulletin über die Hintergründe der Entstehung des TIAFT. Es ist vielleicht ganz interessant die näheren Details zu wissen und da von den Gründungsmitgliedern ja nicht mehr allzu viele leben, habe ich das Ereignis so wie ich es in Erinnerung habe zu Papier gebracht. Mit dieser Schilderung gehe ich konform mit Fred Rieders und Irving Sunshine (beide leider schon gestorben, mit beiden habe ich noch in Washington und New Orleans gesprochen), mit Allan Curry und anderen damals Anwesenden.

Meine Frau und ich möchten sich noch nochmals für die vorzügliche Organisation des Kongresses bei Ihnen und bei allen Mitarbeitern bedanken. Ebenso habe ich mich besonders über die sehr nette Übergabe des Buches von Pregl gefreut. Ich habe ja noch Ende der 40er Jahre mit seinen Methoden gearbeitet. Meine Arbeitzeit hat damit 3 wissenschaftliche, analytische Perioden umfasst: Der Milligrammbereich (Pregl), der Mikrogrammbereich (DC, GC) und schließlich der Nanogrammbereich (GC, GC-MS, LC, LC-MS).

Neben dem Kongress haben wir auch die schöne Stadt Ljubljana und Slowenien etwas näher kennen gelernt und den Aufenthalt sehr genossen.

Mit vielen lieben Grüßen

Gertrude und Gottfried Machata

Wien, September 9, 2006

## To the history of TIAFT

Having returned from one of the most noteworthy and largest conferences (held in Washington, D.C. in conjunction with the SOFT and the FBI), I, as a founding member, would like to make a contribution concerning a relatively unknown aspect of TIAFT's history. As already known, we founded our association in London in 1963 on the occasion of the conference of the IAFS (Internal Association of Forensic Sciences). A small meeting held in private by some 20 people took place at E.G.C. Clarke's apartment, and a decision was made to found an association of toxicologists, hence TIAFT came into existence. As far as I can recall, those in attendance were, among others E.G.C. Clarke, A.S.Curry, Ann Robinson, I.Sunshine, L.Bradford, K.Dubowsky, R.Forney, A.Stolman, A, A.Alha, R.Bonnichsen, F.Rieders, R.Abernethy, B.Finkle, A.McBay, S.Kaye, O.Pribila, A.Heyndrix and H.Street. For a more comprehensive list of the attendees one should refer to the publication by Sunshine, "Was it a poisoning?" Toxicological work was gaining more and more significance within the scope of forensic medicine. In particular, little attention was paid to toxicological work at IAFS conferences. Yet, it remains essential to mention that this very disregard for and discredit of toxicology (which has often been subjected to being labelled a subsidiary science) was even more noticeable in Europe than in the USA. Frequently our toxicological lectures were shifted to final conference days when other meetings were going on the same time in different fields of study, and attendees had already taken an early departure. Repeated protests were of no avail. We met in small groups to discuss this issue in detail, with an eye to remedying the matter. By the glow of an open fire (I still remember this vividly) and with fine drinks (Scotland was nearby) and with the fruitful discussion that proceeded, we decided to found our own association. In my opinion, the aforesaid reasons, combined with the increasing number of toxicologists, were decisive for the formation of TIAFT. Decision made at the initial private meeting entailed an independency of the organization, the right to claim its own time slot within the conference period of the IAFS and the determination of further joint conferences together with the IAFS as for time and place, however, as a separate association within a conference. We hoped this would enhance the attention paid to this area in the field of forensic sciences, and in particular, in toxicology circles, especially those in Europe. The first president, E.G.C.Clarke, and secretary A.S.Curry, were proposed and elected. On Clarke's early death, A.S.Curry assumed the presidency.

Apart from then on nearly annually held TIAFT events, the following conferences with the IAFS took place: 1966 Copenhagen, 1969 Toronto, 1972 Edinburgh, 1975 Zurich, 1978 Wichita and 1981 Bergen (Norway). Especially for the conferences held in Europe, the conference exhibited little change regarding the assignment of lecture times, which remained unfavourable. The conference in Bergen stood out as one that stirred considerable displeasure among the toxicologists because of its planning scheme, hence, it was decided that for the upcoming conference of the IAFS in 1984 in Oxford a different conference venue was to be chosen for the TIAFT meeting, although both conferences were to take place at the same time. The location was Brighton – situated nearby. The aim of the change was to enable all interested parties to be able to attend both conferences.

In time, TIAFT has grown into a strong, independent organization. After the conferences in Brighton and Oxford, which took place at the same time, the TIAF conferences that followed were held at different times and places. It is important to note that the events of the IAFS were nevertheless not able to exclude toxicology, thus significant room had to be provided for toxicology.

Meantime, much has changed. Toxicology has secured an incontestable place in the field of forensic science, and it may be said, has strongly enhanced its significance. This can be evidenced by the annual congress of the AAFS (American Academy of Forensic Sciences), where the toxicological section is the largest and all sections are considered to be equal.

Perhaps these recollections bear a history that interests old members, yet they are also important for those actively engaged in our field by offering individuals the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the roots of TIAFT. This report is based on my personal recollections, thus only sheds light on partial aspects of the history of our association, one which I have been a member of since its inception and one which I have always felt a close attachment to.

Gottfried Machata  
Vienna, September 2004