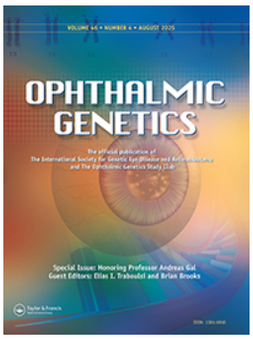

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EDITORIAL

Honoring Professor Andreas Gal

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This issue of the Journal honors one of the Ophthalmic Genetics' recently retired editors and world-renowned geneticist Andreas Gal. Professor Gal is a distinguished researcher and academic known for his significant contributions to the field of genetics, particularly in relation to systemic and eye diseases.

Born in Hungary, Gal's early academic journey led him to study at the University of Szeged, where he obtained his medical degree *summa cum laude* and demonstrated exceptional aptitude in genetics and molecular biology. He spent a decade at the Institute of Genetics, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Szeged, Hungary. In 1985, he became Head of Laboratory of Molecular Human Genetics & DNA Diagnostics, Department of Human Genetics, University of Bonn, Germany, followed by a position as Head of the Laboratory of Molecular Human Genetics, DNA Diagnostics, Department of Human Genetics, University Medical School, Lübeck, Germany. In 1994, he became Full Professor, Head of the Department of Human Genetics, University Medical Center Hamburg Eppendorf, Hamburg, Germany. Andreas was a devoted mentor to many trainees, many of whom have become prominent researchers in their own right. His scientific research has led to improved diagnosis and care of ophthalmic genetics patients and served as the basis for several current and past therapeutic trials.

Gal is recognized for the identification of several genes and mechanisms that contribute to the development of rare and common disorders and his extensive research on various genetic conditions, including retinitis pigmentosa (1–4), Norrie disease (5, 6), Usher syndrome (7, 8), and various systemic inherited diseases such as the mucopolysaccharidoses (9–15), Fabry disease (16–22) and others. Key publications include studies on the genetic underpinnings of *RPE65*-related Leber congenital amaurosis (23), *RDH12*-related retinal dystrophy (24), retinitis pigmentosa (25, 26), *MERTK*-related disease (27), autosomal-recessive posterior microphthalmos caused by mutations in *PRSS56* (28), as well as others that are too numerous to list in this editorial.

In recognition of his significant scientific work, Professor Gal has received numerous honors including the Research award "Fighting blindness" of German and Swiss Retinitis Pigmentosa Associations in 1989, Alcon Research Institute (Fort Worth, TX), Recognition Award for outstanding contributions in the field of vision research in 2006, the Recognition Award of Retina International for outstanding contributions in the field of vision research in 2012, and the Honorary Gold Medal of German Society of Human Genetics for outstanding accomplishments in field of Human Genetics in 2013.

In 2017, he gave an outstanding Francois Lecture at the ISGEDR meeting in Leeds, UK (https://isgedr.com/2017-leeds-day-3/#screencasts201701). His accolades reflect not only the high regard in which he is held by the scientific community but also the impact of his findings on the field of genetics, especially as it pertains to eye diseases.

Andreas Gal's ongoing contributions continue to inspire advancements in genetic research and therapeutic approaches, highlighting the vital role of genetics in understanding and treating complex diseases.

Our journal, Ophthalmic Genetics, was privileged to have Professor Gal on its leadership editorial board for more than three decades during which he provided invaluable service to authors and readers alike. His editorial approach was one of integrity, fairness, and support to authors from around the globe. He is extremely appreciated for his wisdom and collaborative attitude. His dedication to the betterment of scientific publications, the investigation of disease, and the education of clinicians and basic scientists alike place him in the highest cadre of academics worldwide.

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