



Obituary: Gil Brogdon



The community of forensic radiology lost a pillar in the recent passing of Byron Gilliam “Gil” Brogdon who died on March 28, 2014.

Dr. Brogdon was an Honorary Member of the ISFRI and seen by many members of our Society as Godfather of Forensic Radiology. His career spanned more than six decades, several continents, touched numerous disciplines, and garnered awards and accolades. Gil Brogdon was an internationally recognized authority in forensic radiology. His textbook *Forensic Radiology* (1998) is a keystone to our field and still is a reference for practitioners and researchers in forensic radiology and imaging.

B.G. Brogdon was born in 1929 in Arkansas (USA). He earned his medical doctorate in 1952 from the University of Arkansas and obtained his board certification in radiology four years later. During his career he was Chief of Diagnostic Radiology at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, MD (USA), Chairman of the Department of Radiology at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, NM (USA), and Chairman of the Department of Radiology at the University of South Alabama in Mobile, AL (USA). Dr. Brogdon's career included numerous visiting professorships in the USA and Europe and countless lectures across the world. He authored or co-authored more than 360 publications, 65 book chapters and six books.

Professor Brogdon was a pioneer in forensic radiology. Throughout his career he was a strong advocate of interdisciplinary collaboration and communication between radiology and forensic sciences. He was an active and highly esteemed member of both the radiologic and forensic community: Professor Brogdon was a Distinguished Fellow of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, Past President of the American College of Radiology, a member of the Forensic Sciences Foundation Board of Trustees, a Life Member of the American Roentgen Ray Society and Emeritus

Member of the Radiologic Society of North America. In addition he received numerous awards and medals for his contributions to the fields of radiology and forensic sciences and was an Honorary Member to several scientific societies.

Dr. Brogdon died at the age of 85, at his home in Mobile, AL (USA), surrounded by his children. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife Babs. Gil Brogdon will be missed by his family and his numerous personal and professional friends.

1. Personal comment on the death of Gil Brogdon by personal friends and professional colleagues

Everything about Dr. Brogdon was exemplary. He was a dedicated educator, a supportive mentor, a doting husband, a humanitarian and a sincere friend. I was so impressed with his ability to juggle so many obligations simultaneously with such finesse. He never missed a beat and his memory was impeccable. I'm certain that he could recall the names and faces of everyone he had ever met and he could tell you something unique about everyone. Dr. Brogdon inspired me in both my professional and personal life. He was a dear friend and a trusted confidant.

I will always think fondly of the great times that we spent together – enjoying cocktails at the Grand Hotel, navigating the American Academy of Forensic Sciences and celebrating our birthdays together. I have lost a cherished friend and the world has lost a great man. *Jamie Elifritz, MD. University of New Mexico, AL (USA)*

I first “met” Dr. Brogdon through his writing, in his first edition of *Forensic Radiology*. I was thoroughly impressed by his candor and his articulate, thorough and often humorous approach to scientific writing. Having minored in the history and philosophy of science, Dr. Brogdon's appreciation of medical history and his introduction to the history of forensic radiology struck home. Already leaning towards a career that would in some way involve forensic radiology, Dr. Brogdon pushed me over!

Meeting Dr. Brogdon in person was an experience. He was twice as funny and twice as interesting as his writing. He was supremely generous with his time and intellect and somehow managed to move about with more energy than colleagues literally half his age (and sometimes younger). I had the great pleasure to attend his lectures on the history of forensic radiology on several occasions – a never-ending stream of fact and interesting anecdote – as if Dr. Brogdon had stood right at Roentgen's shoulder as he toiled to expound on his newly found rays.

I still have, and often refer to the handwritten note I scrawled, literally, on the back of an envelope, when he offered his prescription for a successful career in Forensic Radiology. I owe him a great debt. I hope I can repay that debt by carrying forward at least some small fraction of his energy, enthusiasm, collaborative spirit and knowledge and sharing it with the current and next

generations of radiologists, residents, technologists, pathologists, anthropologists and so on.

I consider myself truly fortunate in that Dr. Brogdon was not just a mentor, not just a model for my career, but also a friend. Although I knew the end would come, as it does for us all, it did not prevent the shock and grief. I will miss him a great deal, as will so many. Next year's Academy meeting will not be the same. *Gary M. Hatch, MD, University of New Mexico, AL (USA)*

I first met Gil Brogdon at the annual meeting of the German Society of Forensic Medicine in 2001, in Interlaken (Switzerland). My mentor, Prof. Richard Dirnhofer had invited Gil Brogdon to lecture on forensic radiology and to share our preliminary experience with the Virtopsy project with Gil Brogdon. I was deeply impressed by Gil's open mind and his genuine interest in innovation. He was a true gentleman and this very first meeting was the starting point of a 16-year long friendship with Gil and later also with his wife Babs. We meet every year, typically meeting of the AAFS or the RSNA but also at other conventions and congresses all over the world.

Gil had always had close ties to Switzerland and the Swiss Society of Radiology and in 1992 – long before I met him – the

Swiss Society of Radiology had awarded Gil with their most prestigious honor, the Schinz medal for his outstanding contributions to the field of radiology.

Gil kept his close relationship to Switzerland and was an active supporter of the Virtopsy project. Gil Brogdon remained active after his retirement and kept a close eye on the developments in forensic radiology. He was delighted when the ISFRI was formed and, unexpectedly, he was also the first member of our Society to like the ISFRI on Facebook. In 2012, during the first ISFRI Congress Gil Brogdon was also nominated Honorary Member of the ISFRI for his outstanding contributions to the field of forensic radiology, together with Richard Dirnhofer and Peter Vock, both founders of the Virtopsy project.

The last time I saw Gil Brogdon was at conference in Marseille in October 2012. We took a taxi to the Vieux Port, the picturesque old harbor of Marseille and sat down in a small café. We drank Pastis together, and watched the world go by. This time, as I returned to Marseille for the 3rd ISFRI Congress, Gil was no longer there to join me for our Pastis. Dear Gil, thank you for all the support you give to us. We will remember you forever – you gave us so much! *Michael J Thali, University of Zurich (Switzerland)*