



Lynn Taylor Staheli (1933–2021): in memory of the outstanding pediatric orthopedic surgeon of our time



Lynn Taylor Staheli was born on November 13, 1933, in Provo, Utah, USA, where he received his education, and moved to Seattle in 1963 to enter a residency in orthopedics. In 1968, Dr. Staheli became a faculty member at the University of Washington. A few years later, he was promoted to the rank of professor emeritus and appointed to head the department of the Children's Orthopedic Hospital. In 1979, Professor Staheli co-founded the Pediatric Orthopedic Research Group, which over time evolved into the current professional society, the Pediatric Orthopedic Society of North America (POSNA), and a few years later he became one of its first presidents. In 1980, Professor Staheli became the Founding Editor of the first Journal of Pediatric Orthopaedics, which remains to this day the most renowned international journal in the field of pediatric orthopedics.

Dr. Staheli's scientific contributions include 85 peer-reviewed articles, 25 of which focus on developmental variations of lower extremities in children. These studies had a significant impact on the treatment of musculoskeletal disorders in children, demonstrating that most variations of normal lower extremity development in children correct on their own without unnecessary or costly medical intervention. Professor Staheli is the author of 10 chapters, 18 books (including monographs and the world-renowned *Fundamentals of Pediatric Orthopedics*, a handbook for pediatric orthopedic specialists in the United States and around the world), 17 innovative developments (including surgical techniques and limb research methods), he presented more than 1000 lectures in 38 countries.

Professor Staheli loved teaching not only medical students but also practicing pediatric orthopedic surgeons around the world. His passion for teaching was driven by a great desire to help children with musculoskeletal disorders, both personally and through the training of other doctors. Colleagues note that Dr. Staheli was a very open, unselfish, unassuming, and altruistic person. He never attributed to himself the total merit of his numerous achievements, on the

contrary, he always acknowledged the small contribution of others to his own.

Early in his international career as a lecturer, Dr. Staheli realized that even in the most remote countries there are very clever and talented orthopedic surgeons who are open to Western knowledge and new experiences, despite limited resources. So in the late 1980s, Dr. Staheli began publishing manuals on pediatric orthopedics, created with a computer and printer and readily available to orthopedic surgeons around the world. These books had few words, many pictures, and colorful drawings to make the text understandable to those who did not speak English.

In 1995, at the peak of his knowledge and skills at the age of 62, Professor Staheli stepped away from the clinical practice of pediatric orthopedics to focus on finding ways to disseminate educational materials to orthopedic surgeons around the world. These efforts led him to establish Global HELP, an international nonprofit humanitarian organization, in 2002. The mission of the organization was to provide free or low-cost publications on health care, primarily on pediatric orthopedics. To accomplish this mission, Professor Staheli asked many orthopedic surgeons among his friends from around the world to translate Global HELP materials into different languages. The first and most important of the monographs "*Clubfoot: Ponseti Management*" was translated into more than 30 languages thanks to the international contacts of Professor Staheli, who traditionally acknowledged all translators by mentioning their names and photographs. In the early 2000s, Professor Staheli convinced major American publishers of orthopedic literature to allow him to record a CD containing the penultimate editions of the major orthopedic textbooks, and he distributed these free CDs to orthopedic surgeons during lectures around the world. Suddenly, digital libraries everywhere were filled with virtually the latest orthopedic resources. Until the very end, Professor Staheli's primary mission was to educate pediatric orthopedic specialists for the health



and safety of children worldwide. In his lectures he often said, "Let nature cure the apparent problem before you take over. Exhaust non-operative management to treat pain and dysfunction before resorting to surgery. Use the most time-tested procedures and the least expensive technology if the more expensive technology only adds cost and not measurable benefit."

On December 11, 2015, Professor Staheli visited H. Turner National Medical Research Center for Children's Orthopedics and Trauma Surgery. He was a guest lecturer with a series of educational lectures on 'Normal Development and Functional Disorders of the Lower Limbs in Children'. The seminar aroused great interest among pediatric orthopedic surgeons and was attended by more than 150 specialists from many regions of Russia and from near abroad countries. All of the attendees remembered the hot

discussion and the opportunity to ask the professor their questions in person.

In the belief that mentoring is a vital aspect of medical education and practice, Professor Staheli became a mentor to many leading orthopedic surgeons around the world, who are infinitely grateful for his professional and spiritual growth.

In 2002 and 2018, Professor Staheli received the highest honor given to pediatric orthopedic surgeons, the POSNA Distinguished Achievement Award, for his leadership, academic contributions to the medical literature and humanitarian efforts.

Dr. Lynn Staheli passed away on August 9, 2021. He was 87 years old. The legendary man left behind a legacy of students and like-minded individuals who will undoubtedly continue his mission for the health of young patients.

*The team of H. Turner National Medical Research Center for Children's Orthopedics and Trauma Surgery;
the Editorial Board of the Journal of Pediatric Traumatology, Orthopedics and Reconstructive Surgery*