



## EFAS lifetime award provided by the European Federation of Audiology Societies (EFAS)

EFAS lifetime award presented to Prof. Dr. Jan Wouters, B-Leuven, on the occasion of the first online congress of the European Federation of Audiology Societies (EFAS) on May 20th, 2021

*The EFAS lifetime award is awarded to an individual for a sustainable series of research contributions in the field of audiology/hearing science, whose work has had major impacts on the field and/or practice of audiology and who has significantly advanced EFAS and its goals, e.g. by advancing audiology within the countries represented by EFAS.*



### **Laudatio on behalf of Jan Wouters**

by Wouter Dreschler, NL-Amsterdam

This is a special moment!

The ingredients for this special moment are:

- a new EFAS award
- a brilliant investigator
- interesting projects with positive effects and impact on Clinical Audiology.

I am delighted that the EFAS board decided to dedicate this first EFAS award to Jan Wouters.

He is a special person that fully fulfills the requirements just mentioned.

I am also delighted that I have the honor to present a laudatio on Jan and his achievements.

Jan is not only a brilliant scientist, but he is also a “gastronome” and a “connoisseur”.

The Michellin Guide, the Gault&Millau Guide, and the Bib Gourmand are essential books in his library and have an important position, close to the “Handbook of Clinical Audiology” by Katz and “das Ohr als Nachrichtenempfänger” by Zwicker (just to mention a few “classical books”).

It is for this reason that I like to serve you today a “laudatio menu” with six-courses:

### 1<sup>st</sup> course is education

- Education is where we all start. Jan is still very young, but he received his PhD grade as early as 1989. His thesis was related to nuclear physics. After a postdoc position and the military service he tried to get a position as a physicist, and in that time such a position was not available in the department of physics, but there was a position at the ENT clinic in Louvain.



- It is quite a distance from nuclear physics to Audiology and for that reason he was sent for 3 months to Amsterdam to learn the basics of clinical audiology from Theo Kapteyn. And this stimulated the link between physics and the clinical work in Audiology and ENT, with a strong connection to Neurosciences.
- Apart from his own education, Jan invested much time in the structure of Audiological Education in Leuven, in Belgium and in Europe. Jan was supporting the role of physicists in Audiology, but he was also convinced that co-operation with other disciplines was essential, both in clinical work and in research.
- Jan was one of the leading persons in designing the framework of the general audiologist and the audiology specialist with appropriate courses and job requirements

### 2<sup>nd</sup> course: the lab ExpORL

- Jan was the founder of the experimental lab Exp-ORL, situated close to his colleagues in the hospital, both ENT and Neurosciences.
- He started the courses on Speech therapy and Audiology, connected to this scientific lab, ExpORL. Nowadays, there are about 450 students that are trained in a 5-years course.
- In the Netherlands, these students are very wanted, because of their knowledge and the level of education.



### 3<sup>rd</sup> course: national efforts

- As far as I know Jan was active in several co-operative research programs in Belgium, for instance in fitting Cochlear Implants in children.
- He was also one of the founders of B-Audio, about 10 years ago. He still is the president and invests much time in this platform for exchange of clinical and scientific issues.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> course: international efforts

- Jan (and his group) wrote about 400 publications, mostly in peer-reviewed journals.
- He received more than 11.000 citations, according to ResearchGate.
- He is editor of several high standing journals in Audiology
- He was a Fellow of ICRA, the Int. Collegium of Rehabilitative Audiology, and also served as Treasurer of the board for many years.



#### 5<sup>th</sup> course: strengthening of the co-operation within the EU



- Jan was involved in many EU projects, like HEARDIP, SPACE, and HEARCOM and several Marie Curie projects.
- And in other international projects as his project for the Wellcome Trust and the project Comm4Child.
- He served the Board of EFAS as president elect, as president, as past president and as secretary general.: 8 years in total!
- Jan is chairman of the EFAS Working

group on School-age Hearing Screening, see his contribution later today.

#### 6<sup>th</sup> course: and then the final and most important course:

- → the informal moments with some desert wine and coffee afterwards.



Here we find Jan as a person.

- He is interested in the persons he works with
- He is engaged and loves to invite people at his home
- He is a wonderful host
- He is faithful to colleagues and friends
- He is a wonderful person: a friend!

He fully deserves the EFAS lifetime award,

- not only because of his contributions to the research and the impact on the field of Audiology.
- .... but also because of the huge added value he had for the co-operations and friendships in our audiological society.



Thanks, Jan!!

..... see you soon!

*(all pictures: Copyright by Wouter Dreschler, Amsterdam)*