



National Press Building #809
Washington D.C. 20045
(202) 737-0127
www.americanhungarianfederation.org / www.hungary1956.com



Prof. Dr. Geza J. Jako, Biography 2007



Geza Julius Jako (Szalardi - von Jako), Physician, scientist, educator. White House Advisor for Cancer to Presidents Reagan and Bush Sr. Inventor of soft tissue microsurgery, laser surgery, minimally invasive surgery. Pioneer of human cochlear stimulation for deafness.

Dr. Jako was born in Budapest in 1930 and studied at the same school as von Karman and E. Teller (the Trefort Prep-School) from 1940-1948. He graduated Summa Cum Laude from Semmelweis Medical University (1948-1954). As a medical student Dr. Jako's interest included Physics and Engineering. He built the first electronystamograph (for vertigo investigations) in Hungary and the third in the world as well as hearing measuring instruments.

At age seventeen Dr. Jako took a course at the University with George von Bekessy on the mechanism of hearing. George von Bekessy was helped with human ear specimens and advised by both Dr. Jako's grandfather and uncle. Later, von Bekessy moved to Harvard University where he and Dr. Jako met again and continued a friendly relationship until von Bekessy died.



Dr. Jako became interested in the field of Ear Nose and Throat Surgery (ENT) his family's specialty. One great-grandfather, physician Alexander de Nagy, worked with Professors Balassa and Czermak in the city of Pest in 1857, starting the world's first medical specialty known as "LARYNGOLOGY". Dr. Jako's maternal grandfather, Prof. Geza Krepuska was the first chairman of Otology at the Medical School in Budapest. He was well known in Europe for his scientific and surgical work on ear and brain surgery, as well as Dr. Jako's uncle, Prof. Istvan Krepuska.

As a "Freedom Fighter" during the 1956 Hungarian revolution, Dr. Jako organized the ambulance and medical emergency service for Pest in the Peterfy City Hospital, after which he had to escape the communist backlash. Two of his co-workers were executed (Ilona Toth and Geza Pech) and many others were imprisoned. His former hospital in Budapest is now recognized as the "Hospital of the 1956 Revolution" and two historic commemorative marble plaques attest to his contribution during the revolution. It is also mentioned in several papers, books, and film documentaries released in 1956. He was also awarded Knighthood (Vitez) in 2000.



Crossing the Atlantic in a US Navy Military troop transporter as a refugee, Dr. Jako arrived in Boston, Massachusetts in 1957. He completed his specialty training in Ear, Nose and Throat, Head and Neck Surgery at Harvard Medical School and later served on the faculty.

In 1973, he was appointed Professor and Director of Research at Boston University School of Medicine. He received a Professorship in Biomedical Engineering at Northeastern University in Boston and was lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He spent two four-year terms in top advisory positions at the National Institute of Health (Secretarial Appointments) in Communicative Sciences and General Medical Sciences. He received White House Advisory Positions by President Reagan to the National Cancer Advisory Board (1982) and to the three member President's Cancer Panel in 1990 by President Bush Sr. Dr. Jako was also the Founding President and Honorary Member of the American Society for Laser Medicine and Surgery.



The American College of Surgeons (ACS) recognized Dr. Jako for his contributions in Laser Surgery, and as the architect of one of the fifty significant inventions in surgery during the second half of the 20th Century. Dr. Jako is recognized as the “Father of Laser Surgery.” His students have gone on to become some of the top ENT and Laser surgeons in the world.

Endoscopic laser surgery became one of the most important treatments for laryngeal cancer in Europe and in the United States. It is the minimally invasive treatment for laryngeal cancer and saves thousands of “voice boxes”. In cooperation with his Dentist colleague Dr. Harvey Apotheker, they pioneered Micro and Laser Dentistry. Dr. Jako is also considered to be the pioneer of Biomedical Engineering in Otolaryngology. With his physician son Dr. Ron von Jako and surgeon colleagues in Hungary, they pioneered Minimal and Direct Access Surgery, also referred to as “Keyhole Surgery”.

In 1984, Dr. Jako published the new concept for fusing diagnostic (CT, MRI, PET, and Ultrasound) images for improved diagnosis and surgery, referred to today as computer-assisted, image guided surgical planning and therapy. Dr. Jako was elected to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 2001. Dr. Jako's work, entitled “Hungarian Born Scientists who made the 20th Century”, is exhibited in the Hall of the Hungarian National Museum. There he is among two dozen other scientists such as Eotvos, Teller, Szentgyorgyi, von Bekessy and other Nobel Prize Laureates.



Dr. Jako is listed in Who's Who in American Politics, Chairman of American-Hungarian Republican National Federation 1970-1974 (with Edward Teller as Honorary Chairman). He was elected as “at-large Delegate” for the 1976 Republican National Convention.

He has over 150 publications including text book chapters and seven U.S. patents relating to Minimally Invasive, Micro and Laser Surgery. There are over 120 surgical instruments bearing his name. Dr. Jako is especially known for his Endoscopic instruments and microsurgical techniques of the larynx which are used worldwide. One of his instruments known as the “Jako - laryngoscope” was mentioned twice in the popular paperback version of “Mash Goes to Paris.”

Dr. Jako is Honorary and Emeritus member of numerous international and domestic Medical Societies and received several international and domestic awards for advancing his medical specialty and pioneering laser and microsurgery. He received the very prestigious “Hektoen Gold” award from the American Medical Association in 1972 for inventing Laser Surgery. He received the “Sommelweis Bronze and Silver Awards” from his Alma Mater University and the “Special Commendation Award for Advancing Medicine” by the Harvard University Senate in 1995. He is an honorary member of the Hungarian Ear Nose and Throat and Surgical Societies. Dr. Jako is a member of the American Hungarian Federation.