

OBITUARY



Birgit Thilander

Birgit Thilander, Professor Emerita, of Gothenburg, Sweden, also known as Bibi Thilander, passed away at the age of 92 on the 29th July, 2016.

She received her professorship in orthodontics at the University of Gothenburg in 1969, and was actively pursuing her research projects at the university at the time of her death. Professor Thilander was also working with Lars Bondemark and Krister Bjerklin on a new textbook, *Essential Orthodontics*.

At the end of the 1950s, Bibi wanted to start her postgraduate education in orthodontics in Stockholm. At that time, it was unusual to accept a female dentist but this did not deter Bibi who went to Vienna, Austria, for some months to enhance her qualifications. She was then accepted as a postgraduate resident in Stockholm and took her degree in orthodontics in 1960. By that time, she also was well into her research studies for a PhD and graduated one year later. She wrote more than 200 original articles, several of which earned her prestigious awards. She is also remembered for becoming the first female professor in odontology not only at the University of Gothenburg but in the whole of Sweden. She was also the first female president of the European Orthodontic Society (EOS) in 1981.

Bibi Thilander had a natural talent for teaching, which was proven by her being the primary supervisor for 19 PhD students. She was an Honorary Professor at the Universities of Helsinki Finland, Bergen Norway and Bogota Colombia and an honorary member of World Federation of Orthodontists and EOS. She participated in her 50th EOS meeting in June 2016.

We all remember Bibi for her lifelong curiosity and drive to find the answers to her questions about orthodontic treatment. She had an extremely sharp intellect, and the clinical issues were always the basis for her research, and the answers to the issues, for ethical reasons, were often found through animal studies. She was well-known for her work on how the tissues react when

teeth are orthodontically moved and this research emphasis resulted in long-term interdisciplinary cooperation with periodontists. In addition, her research on craniofacial growth and dental implants was remarkable. She followed the facial and jaw growth in 5-year-old children until they were 30 years of age. The uniqueness of this research was that it was a large group of individuals with normal anatomy, and thus, the normal development and growth could be described. Her expert knowledge of facial and jaw growth was utilized by Professor Per-Ingvar Brånemark, the father of dental titanium implants, utilizing this expertise resulting in the important knowledge that head, face and jaw growth should be complete before insertion of dental titanium implants.

She was predeceased by husband, Holger Thilander, and her children, Gisela and Mats .

With Birgit Thilander's death, we have lost one of the most significant researchers in orthodontics. We remember warmly as a highly respected colleague and friend.

Krister Bjerklin and Lars Bondemark