

## Obituary: Willi Maurer, 1941–2017

It is with great sadness that we share with you that Willi passed away on December 30 after a long illness.

Willi joined Sandoz in 1978 and served as Global Head of Biostatistics at Novartis after the merger in 1996. Shortly afterwards, he founded the Statistical Methodology group which he led up to his retirement in 2006. Since then he continued actively working as a prime force consultant for Novartis until a few months ago.



It is difficult to find the right words to describe Willi as he was truly an outstanding person, someone filled with love, kindness, sincerity, and modesty. Willi was a role model to everyone who was fortunate to have been mentored by and exposed to him. He led by example as he openly listened to new ideas and encouraged others to speak up, especially his younger colleagues. He had a tremendous impact on drug development throughout his career.

As such, Willi was a respected thought leader within industry, academia, and the regulatory community who influenced the careful and responsible implementation of innovative trial designs and new statistical methodology at all stages of drug development. In particular his groundbreaking work on multiplicity and adaptive designs has fundamentally changed the clinical trial landscape.

Willi was also a very active member in the Basel Biometric Section (BBS) as well as in the Austro-Swiss Region (ROeS) of the International Biometric Society (IBS). Being a ROeS member since 1977, he was the president 2002–2003 and organized a wonderful ROeS seminar in his home town, St. Gallen. Even after his presidency he stayed engaged and was the local organizer of the ROeS seminar 2007 in Bern and a key member of the organizing committee for the first Central European Network (CEN) conference led by ROeS in Zurich 2011. His humbleness, insights and pragmatism were essential for the success of these seminars, and last but not least it was always a pleasure working with him on such events.

All these contributions to the profession and to drug development made him a leading figure of our society, recognized in 2015 by the ROeS who bestowed on Willi the honor of becoming one of its Honorary Life Members.

We are very sad to lose Willi but we certainly are so grateful to have been his work colleagues and friends and we can all treasure the moments and interactions we had with such an esteemed person. Like so many of us, Willi was passionate about his work and devoted his professional life to drug development. Willi personified our drive to deliver medicines that can make a difference for patients, and he continued to do so when he became a patient himself. His career and the legacy he leaves is an inspiration to all of us.

Frank Bretz, Amy Racine and Uli Burger