

IN MEMORIAM: THE SCIENTIFIC CAREER AND LEGACY OF MATTI WECKSTRÖM (1959-2015)

Pasi Tavi

University of Eastern Finland, A.I.Virtanen Institute, P.O. Box 1627, FI-70211, Kuopio, Finland
email: pasi.tavi@uef.fi

Matti Weckström studied for his MD and PhD degrees in Department of Physiology, University of Oulu. During 1988-1989 he worked at the University of Cambridge as a visiting researcher. After his post-doctoral training he started his own research group and became a faculty member at Department of Physiology, University of Oulu. Since the year 1998 he worked at the Department of Biophysics as a professor of biophysics.

From the beginning of his scientific career Dr. Weckström was interested in sensory transduction and very important goal of his work was to obtain an understanding of the molecular details of the key aspects of light transduction and vision. Already as a PhD student he performed demanding biophysical measurements from the photoreceptors of flies and established methods and protocols for the acquisition and analysis of complex biological signals. Over the years Dr Weckström earned an international reputation as an innovative and skilful cellular biophysicists. The endless scientific curiosity of Dr. Weckström lead him to study also other biological questions. As a young group leader he initiated research on cardiac physiology and biophysics which yielded several doctors and a strong tradition in cardiac biophysics and mathematical modelling continued by his former students successfully even today.

In addition to his scientific contributions, Dr Weckström was much respected as a mentor of students and postdoctoral fellows and as a committed and effective teacher. As the Head of the Department of Biophysics, Dr Weckström established a strong curriculum for biophysics and elevated the role of biophysics among biological and physical sciences in Finland

Matti Weckström was an exceptional teacher, scientist and academic leader. The untimely interruption of his impactful career leaves a very significant void in the field of biophysics and casts a long shadow over the future of biophysical education and research in Finland.