

A tribute to Günther Geyer (1930–1980)

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Günther Geyer died on 18 June, 1980, three months short of his fiftieth birthday. During his years as a medical student from 1950 to 1955, he had already been active in the Anatomical Institute of Friedrich Schiller University in Jena. Histochemical research was in the foreground there because of the influence of Professor Hermann Voss, and the young student devoted all his energy to the work. His first histochemical publication appeared in 1953 in the *Anatomischer Anzeiger* on the subject of acetalphosphatides in muscle using the plasmal reaction. On completing his medical studies, Geyer became an assistant in the Anatomical Institute and continued the histochemical work which he had begun. He also had many teaching responsibilities in all areas of macroscopic and microscopic anatomy. In 1956, his research entitled 'Vergleichende topochemische Untersuchungen mit der Reaktion nach Hale und ihrer Modifikation nach G. Müller an Organen und Geweben der weissen Ratte' led to his being awarded the advanced Dr. med. degree. In the following years, Geyer published in *Acta histochemica*, contributions concerning basic histochemical methods. He worked towards building, within the Anatomical Institute at Jena, a histochemical section of which he became the head on 1 January, 1961. In this position he had better working conditions at his disposal and could depend upon the collaboration of a chemist and a technical assistant. In 1962, he displayed his talents with his 'Methodische Untersuchungen über den histochemischen Nachweis von Sphären Mucopolysacchariden' in which he introduced six new histochemical methods. In the same year, Professor Voss retired and Geyer became the provisional head of the Anatomical Institute. In 1964 he was named Professor and was appointed Director of the Anatomical Institute. In order to widen the research approaches used at his Institute, Professor Geyer began to apply electron microscope techniques. These were improved constantly with a view to adapting light microscope histochemical reactions for use at the fine structural level. It was with the same objective that an autoradiography laboratory was set up and the histochemical section was further developed, so that biochemical research became, to a limited extent, possible. Later, haematological and biophysical research methods were also included in the Institute's programme. While involved in a constant search for new methods, Professor Geyer kept certain organs, originally kidneys and their basal membranes, at the centre of his research. Later, he was concerned with capillaries and epithelial cells of the mucosa of the small intestine, which were studied with combined histochemical, electron microscopical and autoradiographic methods. At the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, his major research efforts were directed toward the cell surface, so that the red blood cell came increasingly to the foreground as a model. At the same time Professor Geyer influenced the greater LESS