

# Dan Grandér *in memoriam*

## Life and Work at Karolinska

On April 8<sup>th</sup> 2014, the whole of OnkPat at Cancer Center Karolinska, CCK, came together to celebrate Dan Grandér's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. He was the Chair of the Department of Oncology-Pathology at that time. Two years later, Dan was diagnosed with cancer and passed away in October 2017. He dedicated his entire career to cancer research and especially cared for education and mentoring young researchers.



At the group retreat 2005

Dan's life is closely connected to Karolinska, from his birth in 1964 at Karolinska Hospital to the appointments as Professor in Experimental Oncology at Karolinska Institutet and the head of OnkPat in 2008 and 2011, respectively. In between, he got his PhD "On the Interferon system in primary human tumor cells" under supervision of Prof. Stefan Einhorn, and an M.D. from Karolinska Institutet, where he combined postdoc and clinical internship, and finally established his own research group. In 1998, his first PhD student, Olle Sangfelt, has graduated, followed by 10 more, and some of them became successful group leaders. Five more PhD students were registered with Dan Grandér as a main supervisor at the time of his passing. As for research interests, Dan was fascinated by new discoveries that were on their way to become a breakthrough in science, and, most of all, he was interested in deciphering the basic molecular mechanisms underlying development and progression of cancer, such as, to give an example, non-coding RNAs and their role in gene expression and resistance to therapy.



Dan Grandér. Photo by Markus Dagnell

It is not only Dan whose career has been shaped by Karolinska. Karolinska owes a lot to Dan as well. Dan was very engaged in teaching, both of undergraduate and graduate students. He was the 'father' of the Biomedicine master program. Indeed, Dan has been a director of multiple teaching programs, for which he has received several awards. One of these, awarded by the students, the best Teacher at KI, he was particularly proud of. He regarded that award to be the finest he had received during his career, as students are the most discerning judges, and being chosen by them as Master was significant to Dan. When Dan Grandér passed away, his brother Jonas instigated two yearly awards, of 50 000 SEK each, in his memory: for the best dissertation in cancer research at Karolinska Institutet, the [Dan Grandér's Memorial Prize | Karolinska Institutet \(ki.se\)](https://www.ki.se/om-karolinska-institutet/medlemskap/medlemskap-2014) and "The Master" [Mäster – Medicinska Föreningen \(medicinskaforeningen.se\)](https://www.medicinskaforeningen.se/) for the best teacher at KI chosen by the students, now in the name of Dan Grandér.

As to his private life, Dan was very active in several other areas. It was well known that you could meet Dan more often in the gym than in his office. It was a place to train and also to hang out and often even discuss science and start a collaboration. Dan was also a passionate collector of art and, one can say, antiques. One peculiar collection he owned was of old irons from all over the world, some of them have spread from his home into his office. But that's not all: Dan was one of the initiators of Stockholm's Jewish Film Festival, the first of its kind in Europe, which was held annually for 20 years. And we probably have just scratched the surface of his various interests.