

## In Memory of Professor Vladimir Janda (1928-2002)

Craig Liebenson, DC

Professor Vladimir Janda passed away on Nov. 25, 2002. Lovingly referred to as a friend, teacher and the "father of Czech rehabilitation," his passing will be felt by everyone in the field of musculoskeletal medicine.

In the words of Dr. Alena Kobesova, from Prague, Czech Republic: "Vladimir was very special man, teacher, scientist ...We all will always miss him. Now we have to do our best to continue in his work - to develop it, teach it and spread it. I believe in this way he will never be forgotten, and this is what he would like us to do. He will be in our hearts forever."

I've decided to use this column space to share some of the outpouring of words that have flowed from Professor Janda's students' hearts all over the world. He touched health care providers pan-professionally; he was that rare pioneer who could see the paradigm shift before anyone else, and was not afraid of it. His work is still so far ahead of clinical practice that researchers studying the motor control system will be indebted to him for decades to come.

"Professor Janda had a tough exterior, but his struggles and disappointments with his disability (polio) gave him a tenderness that I feel blessed to have seen. He has had the most profound influence on me both professionally and personally, more than any other individual I have met since joining the profession. He was a unique man that had a heart of gold; what I will miss most is our quiet conversations over dinner or a scotch, where he let us into his world and feelings. Ironically, I don't believe he realized the profound effect he had on the field of musculoskeletal medicine. He was so humble, and this only added to his character. We have lost a great man in Vlad."

*Gary Ierna, DC  
Riverhead, New York*

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"What impressed me most about Dr. Janda was his passion for teaching and his refusal to allow his physical limitations to deter him from what he loved best: traveling around the world teaching and training clinicians in musculoskeletal medicine. He has been a tremendous gift to the world of rehabilitation, and his concepts have influenced countless clinicians. I will miss him greatly. I have lost not only a great professor, but also a mentor and friend.

"May his soul rest in peace, knowing that he has left a lasting legacy in all of us."

*Clare Frank, PT  
Los Angeles, California*

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"Our profession suffered the loss of one who will truly be missed. When we lose such inspirational people, I find continuing their work and mission helps us who grieve in ways unimaginable."

*Annie O'Connor, PT*  
*Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago*

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"I am deeply saddened, but feel equally deeply blessed for having known this great man as a friend and mentor. I feel as if I have lost a member of my own family."

*Donald R. Murphy, DC, DABCN*  
*Rhode Island*

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"In 1992 I sat in a classroom in Oakland, California, with a man whose teachings would totally change my practice over the ensuing decade. From his insightful explanation of muscle imbalances and movement patterns, his analysis of gait, and other observations, he produced a road map for the function and treatment of patients. More than that, he taught me by his example to be a selfless and caring doctor. Whether we were in a classroom, treating patients in his office, or sitting in a restaurant, Vlad combined and expressed a rare balance of rigorous scientific observation and deep compassion. It is not often in our lives that we meet with such real genius."

*Susan Green, DC*  
*San Francisco, California*

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"It's the end of an era. I feel proud to have known him and to have learned from his wisdom."

*Neil Osborne, DC*  
*Anglo European College of Chiropractic*  
*Bournemouth, England*

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"We mourn the loss of Dr. Vladimir Janda. He was a true friend of rehabilitationists worldwide. His academic work revolutionized our practices. Physicians, physical and occupational therapists, and chiropractors benefited from his teaching and academic pursuit of motor control and clinical research. A pioneer in neuromechanics and applied research, Dr. Janda has left a legacy that will continue to impact rehabilitation for years to come."

*Sandy L. Burkart, PhD, PT*  
*Palm Beach, Florida*

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"I remember Vlad fondly as an accomplished and respected physician, teacher and linguist. He worked tirelessly to deepen our understanding of integrated musculoskeletal function (especially of the muscle system and motor control), and to raise the quality of worldwide patient care. Regardless of one's profession, the depth of his insight elevated the practice of manual medicine and rehabilitation to a new level of greatness and refinement.

"Vlad was a generous and treasured friend and mentor, with a keen intelligence, warm smile, sense of humor, down-to-earth spirit and a deep appreciation for life. I thank him for his friendship, vision, devoted teaching and for having enriched the lives of so many through his own."

*Pamela W. Tunnell, DC, DACRB  
Ridgefield, Connecticut*

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"He truly did transform the profession. I'm pleased we were able to see him recently during his last trip to the U.S. He was a part of LACC."

*Paul Hooper, DC  
Faculty, Southern California University of Health Sciences(formerly LACC)  
Whittier, California*

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"In 1991 I saw Professor Janda present at an LACC symposium. I was terribly excited by what I thought I heard. In fact, I understood very little, but that didn't dampen my enthusiasm for seeking out a fuller explanation on my own. I was later assigned to organize rounds for him at LACC's Thie Clinic as a rehab clinician. At the end of the two weeks of rounds I invited myself to Prague, though Professor Janda assured me that I would be treated poorly if I persisted in going. I dragged Ron LeFebvre with me, and after a month at the Charles University clinic - the fires were lit!

"It happens because it's allowed to happen, but what will happen next is our problem."

*Jerry Hyman, DC  
Professor Janda and Ron LeFebvre, DC, in Vrasz, Czech Republic, 1995. New Hampshire*

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"I assisted Professor Janda on a lecture tour, and found myself driving with him to New Jersey late one night, for a Sunday morning workshop. Although I had been to Prague twice and assisted him many times before, I hadn't known 'Vlad' very well. Suddenly, I had become a 'roadie' for one of the great minds in manual medicine - the Einstein of movement patterns!

"Vlad had studied neurology in Prague at a time the profession was locally saturated. He brought the sensibilities of the clinical neurologist, plus an amazing gift for observation, into the field of physical rehabilitation. Realizing that classical pathoanatomical diagnosis was a dead end, his genius was to recognize that the nervous system's patterned response to major events like strokes and polio repeated itself in subtler ways when the body was overloaded by the everyday demands of work or poor posture. The resulting muscle imbalances and altered patterns of movement could transform an

acute injury response into programmed chronic pain. With his own body stooped by the chaos of polio, he developed a startling diagnostic eye for the posture and gait of others.

"Based on prodigious reading of the international literature (much of it never translated into English), his own observational studies of many hundreds of surface EMG readings, and direct observation of thousands of patients, Dr. Janda became an expert on the function of muscles and described basic patterns of dysfunction. His therapeutic approach was to recognize the aberrant pattern and temporarily correct it by relaxing a key tight muscle, activating an inhibited muscle, or manipulating a restricted joint; he would then 'reboot' the nervous system by a specified regime of balance and postural training (sensory-motor training). Internationally famous, having published hundreds of articles in a number of languages, his influence eventually came to America, penetrating chiropractic rehabilitation and physical therapy on both coasts."

*Ron LeFebvre, DC  
Clinical Science Dean, Western States College of Chiropractic  
Portland, Oregon*

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"Dr. Vladimir Janda has been a guest lecturer for the Kaiser Permanente Southern California Orthopaedic Physical Therapy Residency since 1994. The movement analysis and intervention strategies taught to us by Dr. Janda have effectively lessened the movement impairments and associated disability in many of our patients. Our residents and their patients are forever grateful for the lessons taught to us by Dr. Janda. In addition, he has served as a mentor to many of the clinical faculty in our program. His dedication to improving the science and art of rehabilitation provided a sustaining example for his students to follow. He touched us all with his knowledge, sincerity, humor and compassion. He will surely be missed, and remembered as a wonderful man."

*Joe Godges, DPT, MA, OCS  
Los Angeles, California*

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"What a great loss! I was so blessed to have had the opportunity to meet him."

*Jo Fasen, PT  
Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago*

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"It was with great sadness that I received the news of Professor Janda's death. He was a great pioneer within the field of musculoskeletal and rehabilitative medicine. I will miss him deeply as a mentor, friend, and above all, a teacher who quietly sacrificed his health in pursuit of his passion and the demands placed upon him by others eager to learn and avail themselves of his talents.

"Professor Janda opened a door to possibilities that I had only fleetingly glimpsed and encouraged me to become a detective in the field of human musculoskeletal dysfunction and rehabilitation. I speak for many when I say that he entered my professional life and energized it by creating an irrefutable

paradigm shift that has left me excited to work every day. I am very, very grateful and will always honor and cherish his memory."

*Robert Lardner, PT*  
*Chicago, Illinois*

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"This was a true gentleman; we are all better off having known him and worse off having lost him."

*Richard Erhard, PT, DC*  
*University of Pittsburgh*

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*Craig Liebenson, DC*  
*Los Angeles, California*  
[cldc@flash.net](mailto:cldc@flash.net)

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