



**Dear President,**

**Death of René Roch (MH, FRA)**

It is with very great sadness that we inform you of the death, on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November, 2018, of René Roch, Honorary President of the FIE since 2008, President of the FIE from 1992 until 2008 and a Member of Honour of the FIE since 1989.

René Roch was born on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June, 1929, in Paris. He studied at Paris-Sorbonne University where he obtained a degree in law, followed by a diploma as a chartered accountant.

He practised as an auditor and was a member of the Paris Appeal Court.

A former foilist and sabreur, in 1949 he was French university champion, both senior and junior, at sabre and, the same year, French university junior champion at foil. As a member of the French national team between 1950 and 1961, he took part in many international competitions such as the Coupe Santelli, the World Championships and the Student Games. He was several times French senior sabre champion and French junior foil champion.

In 1951, he reduced his sports activity in order to focus on his studies and to fulfil his military obligations. From 1956, the year he was the military champion of France, until 1961, he again became a member of the French national team. In 1957 he was selected for the World Student Games and, that same year, he took 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the 'Spartakiades' in Moscow in the sabre team competition. In 1959 he was selected to take part in the Senior World Championships. He took part in the Coupe d'Europe from 1970 until 1975.

It was in the 1980s that his career as a sports administrator began. He was the General Treasurer of the French Fencing Federation from 1980 until 1984, then Vice-President of that Federation from 1988 until 1992. From 1992 onwards he was a Member of Honour of the FFF.

At the same time he was Treasurer of the FIE from 1984 until 1992 and President of the FIE's Promotion Commission from 1984 until 2000.

In 1999, René Roch was created Chevalier of the Order of the Legion of Honour and, the same year, the Republic of Senegal promoted him to the rank of Officer in the National Order of the Lion of Senegal in recognition of the impetus he had given to the development of fencing in Africa. In collaboration with the Senegalese Fencing Federation, he created the first International Fencing Masters' Academy in Africa in Dakar. The IOC awarded him the Olympic Order in 2009.

Throughout his career he defended passionately the values of a sport of fencing which was French-speaking but practised world-wide. He instigated numerous modifications to the FIE's Rules and to the organisation of competitions.

René Roch's contribution to the universality and the development of fencing was incalculable. Under his presidency, the first FIE World Veteran Championships were organised in 1998 and, in 1999, women's sabre became part of the programme of the World Championships. Wireless fencing made its début at the Olympic Games in Athens in 2004. He introduced video-refereeing at the Senior World Championships in Turin in 2006 and then at the Olympic Games in 2008. In 1996, women's épée was introduced into the Olympic programme in Atlanta and women's sabre joined the Olympic programme in 2004 in Athens.

René Roch worked with amazing perseverance for decades for the development and promotion of fencing. Inspired purely by the urge to see fencing prosper, he never stopped giving of his best with all his energy in the interests of our sport.

The International Fencing Federation and the fencing family have lost a remarkable and outstanding leader who was tirelessly devoted and dedicated to the cause of our sport.

In his memory, we would ask all competition organisers, all officials and all fencers to observe a minute of silence at all competitions in 2018.

We would like to extend our most sincere condolences to his family and friends, and to the French Fencing Federation, and ask them to accept our most heartfelt sympathies at this difficult time.

**Alisher Usmanov**  
**President**

