

Congratulations from the president of IAEG

Congratulations on the occasion of the 96th birthday of Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Karl-Heinrich Heitfeld

As his student and successor, it is a great honor and a special pleasure for me to congratulate Prof. Heitfeld to his 96th birthday.

On behalf of our colleagues, companions, co-workers, students and friends, I would like to express my admiration, appreciation and gratitude for his excellent scientific achievements and his services in promoting young scientists and put them on the table of gifts on his 96th birthday.

On this occasion of his birthday, we would like to convey our good wishes for health, joie de vivre and many more years of fulfilling, good times with his family and friends.

Dear colleagues and friends, ladies and gentlemen, in the course of my remarks you will find that Professor Heitfeld is a remarkable scientist with personal and professional sovereignty. Or as a former president of the Alfred Wegener Foundation once described him as "one of the outstanding personalities of the German geosciences".

Karl-Heinrich Heitfeld was born on November 3rd, 1924 in Hamm / Westphalia.

He began his professional career in 1953 as a geologist at the Ruhr Dam Association in Essen, where he headed the geological department from 1957-1965 and accompanied numerous projects. Prof. Heitfeld played a key role in the rehabilitation of the dams in the Rhenish Slate Mountains after the damage in World War II and in the construction of several large drinking and process water dams, especially the Bigge dam.

Its international reputation was among others by working on the Aswan high dam, the Euphrates dam, in several dam projects in Greece, such as Spercheios, Nestos, Mornos and hydro-power plants in East Asia.

During his work at the Ruhrtalsperrenverein and also in the years 1965-1970, in which he handled numerous projects as the owner of a consulting office for engineering and hydrogeology, Prof. Heitfeld always maintained a close scientific relationship with the Academia and he received the merit of Habilitation in 1966.

In 1970 he was appointed to the first professorship for engineering geology and hydrogeology in Germany at RWTH Aachen University.

In his academic career as a university professor, Dr. Heitfeld was active in self-administration and held the office of vice dean and then dean from 1976-1980.

Karl-Heinrich Heitfeld founded the subject of engineering geology in Germany and shaped it into what characterizes this subject today, namely to be the link between the geosciences, especially geology, and the other natural and engineering sciences, especially that Mining and civil engineering.

During his career as a university professor, Dr. Heitfeld has published more than 200 publications, supervised around 200 master theses and diploma, and led more than 50 PhD students to doctorate.

Five of his students were appointed to university professors, a significantly larger number take on the subject for demanding tasks in practice or in the civil service.

In the early 90s, Professor Heitfeld and his wife, Dr. Hildegard Heitfeld, established three foundations.

Two are intended for outstanding achievements by young geoscientists at RWTH Aachen

University and at the University of Münster. Another is the GeoUnion Alfred Wegener Foundation.

For your special merits, dear Prof. Heitfeld, for engineering geology and your efforts to maintain scientific relationships between the Federal Republic of Germany and the former GDR and other Eastern European countries even in difficult times, the TU Berg-Akademie Freiberg awarded you an honorary doctorate in 2000.

In 2003, the RWTH Aachen recognized the scientific achievements and the services to the promotion of young scientists with the award of the honorary senator.

Professor Heitfeld and his wife have also got involved in social policy. They supported the renovation of the Rossau church in East Germany with a foundation.

The work of Prof. Heitfeld in more than ten committees and societies, in particular the German Research Association, and the engagement of the married couple were recognized and honored with the award of the German Federal Cross of Merit, 1st Class in 2003.

There is still a lot to say, dear prof. Heitfeld, but please allow me a few more personal words: You have understood how to motivate your students, doctoral candidates and employees and to get them excited about engineering geology.

You have promoted the scientific dialogue and critical discussions.

The scientific interest was always the focus.

Your willingness to help, your open ear for personal concerns and your tolerance in the personal and official areas have left room for development for doctoral students and employees.

We thank you for your successful commitment and for your support and advancement of young scientists and wish you health, satisfaction and zest for life.

Rafig Azzam