



In Celebration

A legend turns 80: Congratulations to Prof. Dr.-Ing. Erich Hahne



Imagine a man who has been editor of the International Journal of Heat and Mass Transfer for 50 years, who has graduated doctoral students over a period of 45 years, whose best-selling textbook on Technical Thermodynamics just went into its 5th edition, who is almost daily in his university office even 15 years into his official retirement, a fierce fighter for high academic standards, a loyal emeritus to his institute, a true gentleman, and, last but not least, a caring family man and friend. If you do this, you will end up with a picture of Erich Hahne, who celebrated his 80th birthday on February 2nd this year.

Over the years, he has made outstanding contributions to a wide range of topics in the thermal sciences, ranging from thermo-physical properties via boiling heat transfer to solar engineering. This also sums up nicely the interesting mix of characteristic traits with which he approached his professional life (and some say private life as well, but I leave this judgement to his wife Ingeborg). A true stickler for fundamental correctness, sometimes with a boiling temper, but overall with a sunny disposition.

He was born in Athens, Greece, to where his father was seconded for a period of years. His, for a German, unusual second name "Perikles" originates from this time. Subsequently he grew up and studied in Munich, finally graduating with a doctorate in

mechanical engineering under the guidance of heat transfer pioneers Profs. E. Schmidt and Grigull. The title of his thesis was "Heat Transfer by Natural Convection in Fluids Close to Their Thermodynamic Critical Point". Infected by "the heat transfer bug", he subsequently accepted a position in the Technical University of Munich, eventually rising to the position of "academic director". Following a one-year NASA-funded research fellowship at CalTech in Pasadena, USA, he was appointed full professor and director of the Institute for Thermodynamics and Thermal Engineering (ITW) in the University of Stuttgart, in 1973.

For the University of Stuttgart, this appointment was a stroke of luck as ITW flourished under his leadership to develop into an internationally highly respect research centre for phase change heat transfer and solar engineering. Pioneering investigations on central solar heating plants with seasonal storage and the foundation of the Research and Testing Centre for Solar Systems have firmly established the institute in the forefront of solar research. To date, he has authored and co-authored close to 400 journals and conference papers.

Being a dedicated teacher he has taught a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses such as: technical thermodynamics (with up to 900 students in a single class!), heat and mass transfer, heat exchanger design, optimised energy conversion, and solar energy technology.

He is well-known as a very active member of the international heat transfer research community. Being one of the founding members of the International Centre for Heat and Mass Transfer (since 1968 as German representative, later as a member of the Scientific Council, and between 1978 and 1981 as chairman of the Executive Committee), he was the recipient of the 20th Anniversary ICHMT Award in 1988. He is still one of the German delegates in the Assembly for the International Heat Transfer Conferences which he has served in many responsible positions.

He is an editor or co-editor of important international journals, including the International Journal of Heat and Mass Transfer (since 1966), the International Communications in Heat and Mass Transfer (since 1974) and the Journal of Solar Energy (since 1987). Accepting and enjoying the international nature of his profession, he has hosted many visiting scientists from all over the world. As the University of Stuttgart liaison officer for Chinese universities, he visited China several times and became an Honorary Professor at the Shanghai Institute of Mechanical Engineering in 1983.

In his private life, he is a devoted husband, father and grandfather, and an accomplished sportsman (tennis and skiing). He also enjoys the theatre, ballroom dancing, and lately the pleasure and leisure of cruise ships.

In April 2000, he retired from his chair in the University of Stuttgart. However, not surprisingly for a person with his legendary vitality, his is not a restful retirement. He has maintained his office at ITW to continue many of his activities including the supervision of doctoral students, the editorship of journals and the organisation of conferences. Succeeding him as director of the Institute for Thermodynamics and Thermal Engineering in the University of Stuttgart, Germany, was an honour and a challenge, and always a pleasure and an inspiration. He never attempted to interfere with the directions I gave to "his" Institute, but was always there when I needed his advice and support. For this wisdom and generosity I am deeply grateful.

On behalf of his many students, colleagues, and friends from all around the world, including the editors of this journal, I wish him a very happy birthday, many more productive years, continued good health, and happiness with his family and friends.

Prof. Hans Müller-Steinhagen
(since 2010 Rector of Technische Universität Dresden) and all members of the Institute for Thermodynamics and Thermal Engineering of the University of Stuttgart.

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