

Obituary Professor Dr.-Ing. Jens Weitkamp



Professor Dr.-Ing. Jens Weitkamp, the former director of the Institute of Chemical Technology of the University of Stuttgart passed away in Paris on August 25, 2019, the same town in which he was born on June 5, 1942. The scientific communities devoted to the research of porous materials and heterogeneous catalysis complain heavily the loss of this famous and excellent scientist, teacher and human being.

Professor Dr.-Ing. Jens Weitkamp studied chemistry at the Universities of Berlin and Karlsruhe. In 1971 he completed his doctoral studies under the supervision of Professor Dr. H. Pichler and his habilitation a few years later at the Engler-Bunte Institute of the University of Karlsruhe with Prof. Dr. K. Hedden. High quality research on upgrading of crude oil and natural gas as well as petrochemistry has determined the scientific life of Prof. Dr.-Ing. Jens Weitkamp and he has advanced these fields to a very large extent. Examples are refinery processes like cracking, hydrocracking, isomerisation, alkylation, reforming and demetallization as well as petrochemical reactions like alkylation of aromatics, transalkylation and epoxidation. Furthermore, formation of organic platform chemicals and fine chemicals as well as catalytic reduction of diesel exhaust and the application of zeolites for adsorptive separation and purification have been additional research areas for Prof. Dr.-Ing Jens Weitkamp.

In almost all of these research fields the application of zeolites and porous materials have been the main driving force for Prof. Dr.-Ing. Jens Weitkamp, either as heterogeneous catalysts or adsorbents. He has promoted this research field in its entire broadness.

In 1986 Prof. Dr.-Ing. Jens Weitkamp became Professor of Chemical Technology at the University of Oldenburg, in 1988 he took over a Full Professor position for Chemical Technology at the University of Stuttgart. His university can be proud of Prof. Dr.-Ing. Jens Weitkamp as a scientist, teacher, dean, vice-president and senator.

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Jens Weitkamp was the Founding President of the German University in Cairo, which offers students from middle-east countries an education within engineering and science.

When one discusses zeolites, the name of Prof. Dr.-Ing. Jens Weitkamp is closely associated with the development of zeolites, porous materials and their applications. There are many discussions today on the kind of research universities should carry out, fundamental versus applied research. Prof. Dr.-Ing. Jens Weitkamp proved Louis Pasteur's word: "There is no fundamental research, there is no applied research, there is only good research". The excellent research of Prof. Dr.-Ing. Jens Weitkamp has advanced our understanding of zeolites and porous materials significantly. It is impossible here to enumerate all his results in more than 250 papers and books on zeolites.

It is not surprising that the scientific community showed its respect and recognition to Prof. Dr.-Ing. Jens Weitkamp as he became a

- Member of the Council of the International Zeolite Association (IZA) (1994 – 2001).
- Chairman of the 10th International Zeolite Conference (IZC), held in Garmisch-Partenkirchen in 1994.
- Vice-President (1994 – 1997) and President of the International Zeolite Association (IZA) (1997 – 2001).
- Member of the Board of the German Society for Petroleum and Coal Science and Technology (DGMK) (1991 – 2002) as well as founder and chairman of its petrochemistry division.
- Member of the Scientific Program Committee of the World Petroleum Congress (1997 – 2008) as well as a member of the Scientific Board of the German Society for Petroleum and Coal Science and Technology (DGMK).
- Member of the Board of DECHEMA (1998 – 2009) and its Vice-President (2002 – 2009). DECHEMA is the German Society for Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology.
- Chairman of the Board of the DECHEMA-Section Catalysis (1999 – 2005).
- Member of the DECHEMA Working Party Catalysis (1996 – 2008, Predecessor organisation of the German Catalysis Society (GeCatS).
- Member (1988 – 2005) and Chairman (1988 – 1998) of the DECHEMA Working Party Zeolites.
- Member of the Board of the DECHEMA Research Institute (Karl-Winnacker-Institute) (1994 – 2009).
- Member of various committees of the Max-Planck-Society.

In 1993 Prof. Dr.-Ing. Jens Weitkamp founded the scientific journal "Microporous Materials", which he edited until the merger with "Zeolites" in 1997. Since 1998 and until 2003 he edited the new scientific journal "Microporous and Mesoporous Materials" as Editor-in-Chief, which became the leading journal within the field of zeolites and porous materials. Today, this journal, which is, in addition, the official journal of the International Zeolite Association (IZA), is well established in the scientific community thanks to the tremendous efforts Prof. Dr.-Ing. Jens Weitkamp devoted to this journal.

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Jens Weitkamp received a number of highly ranked recognitions (among others):

- Alwin-Mittasch-Prize of the DECHEMA (2010).
- Honoray Membership of DECHEMA (2011).
- Carl-Zerbe-Award (1976) as well as the Carl-Engler Medal (2002) of the German Society for Petroleum and Coal Science and Technology (DGMK).
- Corresponding Member of the Saxon Academy of Sciences and Humanities (2003).
- Honorary Professorship of the Changchun University in China

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Jens Weitkamp has helped to bridge the gap between the industry and academia. He expected and performed high quality research within zeolite science and catalysis. Without him, zeolite science would not be where it is today. We owe him a lot.

Besides his various professional engagements, Prof. Dr.-Ing. Jens Weitkamp loved classical music, with focus on opera (especially Wagner operas) and "Schubert Lieder".

The scientific communities devoted to the research of zeolites, porous materials and heterogeneous catalysis show great respect for the lifetime achievement of Prof. Dr.- Ing. Jens Weitkamp and we regret the loss of this excellent scientist, teacher and human being.

Our thoughts go to his family and especially to Sophie and her family, his companion for the last ten years. We will keep Prof. Dr.-Ing. Jens Weitkamp in our memories.

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Prof. Dr. rer. nat. Michael Stöcker
SINTEF Industry, Oslo, Norway and
Technical University of Munich, Germany

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Elias Klemm
Institute of Chemical Technology
University of Stuttgart, Germany