

Klaus Unger 16.6.1936 – 7.10.2020



Our friend and colleague Klaus Unger passed away after a short illness on October 7th 2020. We have lost an excellent scientist, a wonderful mentor, a dear friend, in short: a true “Mensch”.

Klaus was highly successful in two rather separate fields of science, in zeolite science and in chromatography, both connected by his deep interest in porous materials. His early work on innovative silica-based stationary phases for chromatography led him to broaden his interest to zeolites and later on to ordered mesoporous materials. His science was always characterized by the combination of a deep understanding of the fundamentals of the materials he worked on and a keen eye for practical applications. He was therefore always a sought-after partner for industrial companies, and his many decade long relationship to Merck at Darmstadt, only a few kilometres away from his home in Seeheim-Jugenheim, testifies of the importance of his research also for industry. Klaus loved the area, with the vineyards of the Rheingau, the Odenwald, and the Spessart close by for extended hikes. So after his habilitation in Darmstadt, he only moved across the Rhine to Mainz to become a professor for Analytical Chemistry, and stayed with Mainz University until his retirement in 2001.

Klaus had colleagues and friends basically anywhere in the world, and all of them enjoyed him as a partner for scientific collaborations and beyond. He has served on IUPAC committees for the characterization of porous solids, he co-initiated a number of high profile conference series, and he was always active in various scientific organization, such as the IZA, the German Fachgruppe Zeolithe (DECHEMA), or the Arbeitskreis Chromatographie of the Fachgruppe Analytische Chemie of the German Society for Chemistry (GDCh). He was one of the founding members of Federation of European Zeolite Associations (FEZA) as the chairman of the German Zeolite Association at that time,

and served as the first treasurer. Born in Zwickau, which was for about 40 years part of East Germany, he always kept links to the colleagues in the former GDR also during the separation of the two countries, and after Germany's reunification, he played a very active role in helping to re-integrate the science between East and West Germany in the field of porous materials and separation science.

Klaus was loved by his students and coworkers. They enjoyed scientific freedom, support wherever it was needed, and the overall very warm, welcoming and extremely friendly atmosphere in the group. Within hours after the news of his passing away spread, there were dozens of emails expressing the sadness of his former coworkers, and one quote from the mails stands for all of them: "one of a kind with the biggest generous heart". This is how we all feel – it was a privilege to have known Klaus, and we will miss him dearly from now on.

Wolfgang Schmidt and Ferdi Schüth, for his many colleagues, students and friends