



## **Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Kurt Bauknecht**

Prof Kurt Bauknecht served as IFIP President from 1995 to 1998. He co-founded the Swiss Informatics Society (SI) in 1983 and later served as its President.

He was a member of IFIP TC 6 on Communication Systems and also TC 8 on Information Systems. He brought these interests together in the establishing of WG 6.11's flagship conference on e-Commerce, e-Busi-ness, and e-Government (later changed to e-Society) (I3E) in 2001 and which is still held each year. This brought together his interest in information systems and telecommunications with their application in the real world.

Although a quintessential academic, Kurt Bauknecht's early career was in the world of data processing. After his graduation with a diploma degree in electrical engineering from ETH Zurich in 1960, he worked as a software engineer for Le Matériel Téléphonique ( L.M.T. ) in Paris and later for Compagnie des Machines Bull, also in Paris.

He subsequently joined the University of Zurich as a senior research associate. In 1967, he received a PhD from ETH Zurich and in 1970 he was appointed associate professor at the University of Zurich and became the head of the newly founded Institute of Electronic Data Processing. In this capacity, he also became the director of the Computing Centre of the University of Zurich. In 1973, the institute was renamed Institute of Informatics (Institut für Informatik, IfI) and he was promoted to full Professor. He continued to be the department head and director of the Computing Centre until his retirement in 2003.

Martin Glinz, full Professor Emeritus and Department Head 2007-2016, has written in tribute to Kurt Bauknecht "Under his leadership, both the Department and the Computing Center grew steadily. By the time of his retirement, IfI had developed from an institute with only one professor in 1970 to a full-fledged department with nine full or associate professors and nearly 100 people (professors, lecturers, PhD students, postdocs and administrative personnel). He laid the foundation on which his successors could build and develop IfI into the vibrant department that it is today." Martin Glinz summed up Kurt Bauknecht academic contribution as "a highly respected and influential colleague who devoted quite a lot of energy into the development and well-being of the department's faculty, staff, and resources. All who had the opportunity to work with him will remember his engagement, his leadership, and also his openness to new ideas brought up by his colleagues in the department."

Kurt Bauknecht's period as IFIP President was a time of operational change as international bodies adapted to the arrival of the internet which extended their global reach and the ability of members to interact worldwide. It also accelerated the transformation of a number of national societies into regional and global organisations. Given his research interests, he was well placed to promote the adoption of new technologies within IFIP.

However, the same technological changes gave rise in 1997/8 to one of the key challenges for IFIP during Kurt Bauknecht's Presidency when after a lengthy and agonising series of discussions General Assembly voted narrowly in 1998 that the ACM and IEEE-CS could both become Full Members of IFIP as special exceptions to the "one country, one member" rule that otherwise applied and with a designation as "US-based". This reflected their global importance to the informatics research community.

In an interview for the IFIP Newsletter after completing his term as IFIP President, Kurt Bauknecht remembered his period in office as a period of change when "IFIP established itself comfortably in Laxenburg [following the move from Geneva in 1995] and made a major transition from the classical "paper-based" organization to one that is making full use of ICT. The IFIP Telecom project was designed and implemented and the IFIP Secretariat provided leadership in demonstrating the advantages of the Internet in the process of management".

He also revived IFIP's important links with UNESCO when, with the IFIP Executive Director, he visited Paris to meet with UNESCO officials in order to activate the relations between the two organizations. He noted that the visit helped set a course of proactive IFIP involvement in UNESCO activities and led to many positive developments.

Outside his professional activities, he told the IFIP Newsletter that his hobbies were "mountaineering, skiing and golf and 3 grandchildren with unbelievable energy!"

Kurt Bauknecht died on April 23, 2019 at the age of 83.