

The corrosion world is mourning the loss of Professor Dr. Ewald Heitz who passed away on 11 January 2018. For decades he was a formative figure in corrosion research.

Ewald Heitz was born in Lörrach in 1931 as the son of a locksmith. Already at the age of twelve, his love for chemistry became evident in daring backyard experiments with chlorine and acetylene. After graduating from high school in 1951, he studied chemistry in Basel, Karlsruhe and Würzburg. In 1958 he passed the main diploma examination and only two years later he received his doctorate with Professor Walther Jaenicke in Karlsruhe with an electrochemical thesis in the field of photographic development. After a period as a research associate in the USA, he was hired in 1961 as one of the first scientists for the DECHEMA Institute, which was founded in the same year.

As a young scientist, he was very focused on the goal of corrosion in organic media, a field of work that at the time was not very well developed, and which offered the best opportunities for his own scientific profile. At that time, there was no way for anyone involved in this field to avoid his publications and he was able to habilitate with this groundbreaking work at the University of Frankfurt in 1969. From then until his retirement, he lectured on corrosion and electrochemistry at the University of Frankfurt, which appointed him as an honorary professor in 1975. At the DECHEMA-Forschungsinstitut, Ewald Heitz headed the department of Materials and Corrosion for many years and was appointed the first director of the institute in 1994.

In addition to research in the field of corrosion in organic media, he expanded his activities to include further research topics. From 1971 onwards, he was one of the few corrosion scientists to deal intensively with flow-induced corrosion. In 1989, the field of microbial corrosion followed. In addition, he has also published groundbreaking review articles on electrochemical measuring methods in corrosion. All these topics occupied him until his retirement in 1996.

In addition to research, DECHEMA-Forschungsinstitut scientists have been involved in continuing vocational training from the very beginning. The concept of one-week experimental courses was born. Ewald Heitz was the initiator and designer of the courses on corrosion and corrosion protection and technical electrochemistry. These activities led to the publication of two recognised manuals under his authorship. He was also internationally active, among other things in the context of international seminars for lecturers from developing countries, which were organised under the auspices of the TH Karlsruhe.

From 1990-95 Ewald Heitz served as general secretary of the International Society of Electrochemistry. He was honoured by the European Federation of Corrosion with the Marti Franqués Medal, which was awarded to him shortly after his retirement in 1996 at the EUROCORR meeting in Nice.

The world of corrosion owes thanks to Ewald Heitz for his invaluable contribution to the development of corrosion sciences in research, teaching and committee work. Ewald Heitz will be remembered not only as a scientist, but also as an outstanding and multifaceted personality in the national and international corrosion community. He will be sadly missed and remembered with great respect.

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