

In Remembrance: 77 Years with Hans Werner Meuer

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[1] On Monday, January 27, over 250 people gathered at the small evangelical church in Daisbach – a very small, quiet town in Southern Germany – to bid farewell to Hans Meuer, the founder of TOP500 and the ISC General Chair. Hans passed away on January 20 at the age of 77.

Like Hans, the day of his funeral service, was full of surprises – first it rained, then it hailed, and when the guests left the church for the supper the family had organized, the sun shone for the remainder of the afternoon. Hans received a beautiful funeral, attended by family, friends, former colleagues, members of the HPC community and his ISC team. Some even flew in from across the Atlantic Ocean on a short notice.

The service started and ended with the melody of Hans' favorite song, *My Way*. Men and women wept unashamedly. It was painful for many to say goodbye to a vibrant man who for 27 years, at the close of each ISC conference, reminded everyone: “See you again, next year.”

Many were amazed that Hans spent close to 30 years observing the world's fastest computers from his modest town. He lived there among 1000-odd men and women who had very little knowledge of supercomputers or his career achievements. If not for Hans, Daisbach would not have had a web presence in the 1990s. But what impressed the local townspeople most was his generous nature. Even the church bell that rang furiously to mark his funeral was made possible by his fundraising.

Outside work, Hans was a chess player, a nature lover and a philanthropist, and in his younger days, a very good footballer. These only came to be known through two farewell speeches his closest friends delivered at the funeral and a 77 year photo gallery his grandchildren created for him. During his lifetime, Hans was humble about his achievements and always insisted that nothing would have been possible if not for the support from his colleagues and team members.

Hans was also passionate about good food and wine, and shared this passion with others, including the ISC conference attendees. Over the years it has become a tradition to serve high-quality food at all ISC-organized events.

But his greatest attribute was his engaging personality – his open and directness won him many friends in his various careers and also some rivals. He kept his friends and people he trusted close. He also had an ability to recognize talent and highly respected capable people, be it his associates or young employees; he never stole their thunder, but helped them establish their own careers.

Over the past few years, Hans spent a great deal of his time grooming the ISC team to continue the company's mission. To make that happen, he established a flat hierarchy and close-knit family atmosphere within the organization. He began to spend less time at the work desk and travelled more often to Italy and Turkey, the other two countries he loved besides Germany.

Until the end of his journey, Hans enjoyed life to the fullest and infected others with this appreciation.

His contributions to the TOP500 project and ISC will be greatly missed, but his legacy and the passion he imparted to others will continue.

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[1] http://www.scientificcomputing.com/sites/scientificcomputing.com/files/77_Years_with_Hans_Werner_Meuer_lg.jpg