Orbituary

Weiterstadt, November 2021

In memoriam Doris and Ralf Weidenmüller

Dipl.-Ing. Ralf Weidenmüller was managing director of the ZELLCHEMING association from 1977 to 1999. He passed away on November 2, 2021, at the age of 87.

He was born in Chemnitz on October 17, 1934 and grew up in Dreiwerden near Mittweida. After attending school in Switzerland, he acquired his first technical experience in the paper trade at the Biberist paper mill near Solothurn and at the J. M. Voith machine factory in Heidenheim/Brenz. In 1955, he began studying mechanical engineering at the TH Darmstadt. In 1958 he joined the ZELLCHEMING association.

He then studied paper engineering under Prof. Dr.-Ing. Walter Brecht, the brother of the poet Bertolt Brecht. After graduating in the spring of 1962, he worked for G. Haindl'sche Papierfabriken in Augsburg preparing to start up the newly built paper mill in Walsum/Lower Rhine. Initially, he oversaw paper stock preparation and plant control. In 1965 he became plant manager. In 1972, he moved to Hannoversche Papierfabriken Alfeld/Leine as authorized signatory and head of the technical department.

In 1977 he became managing director of the technical-scientific association of pulp and paper chemists and engineers, ZELLCHEMING e.V. This also included the position of editor-in-chief of the technical journal "Das Papier". From 1982 to 1984 he also acted as Secretary General of the European Technical Association of the Pulp and Paper Industry (16 countries at that time) "EUCEPA", based in Paris.

In 1990 he was awarded the Knight's Cross First Class of the Order of the White Rose of Finland by the President of Finland in recognition of his services to the development of technical and economic relations between Finland and Germany. In 1999 he was appointed honorary member of EUCEPA in Grenoble. In the fall of 1999, Ralf Weidenmüller retired and handed over the management of the ZELLCHEMING association to Dr.-Ing. Wilhelm Busse.
Privately, he was engaged in local history and family research. He was also interested in the history of technology and paper, paper restoration and handmade paper - on this subject he also wrote the popular non-fiction book: "Paper making – A new hobby".

Mrs. Doris Weidenmüller (born on April 22, 1940, in Darmstadt) passed away after a serious illness already on March 21, 2021. Mrs. Weidenmüller was active in the association ZELLCHEMING until 2012 after her husband joined the association.

After her studies of paper technology at the TH Darmstadt with Prof. Dr.-Ing. Walter Brecht and after raising her three children, she worked first half-time and later full-time in the office of the association ZELLCHEMING, at that time still in the Berliner Allee in Darmstadt.

In the beginning Doris Weidenmüller oversaw the patent reports for the journal "Das Papier", later she contributed to the success of the ZELLCHEMING annual meetings in Baden-Baden and Wiesbaden for many years, even many years after ZELLCHEMING had already moved to Emilstraße. Among other things, she organized the popular ladies’ program at that time and accompanied the participants through the day to the excursion destinations with great commitment and pleasure; furthermore, she took care of the celebratess and guests of honor.

Doris Weidenmüller was very dedicated to her work at ZELLCHEMING and only really retired at the age of 72. She was always devoted to her family; she spent her free time playing tennis and traveling - she loved to go hiking in the Italian Dolomites.

The board and management of the ZELLCHEMING Association will always honor the memory of the deceased.