

## Obituary

### Professor Fridolin P. Mechel



Fridolin P. Mechel, founding member and first president of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Akustik (DEGA), died after a brief illness on 4 May 2014 in Grafenau near Stuttgart.

Fridolin Mechel was born on 16 April 1930 in Blickweiler/Saar, where he grew up and received his high school diploma. He studied physics at the Universities of Mainz and Heidelberg and finished his academic training in Göttingen. There he received the Diplom and Dr. rer. nat. degrees in 1957 and 1959, respectively, specializing in the field of sound propagation in absorbing channels. Thereafter he headed research groups on aero-acoustics at the Universities of Göttingen and Saarbrücken.

Fridolin continued his professional career at Grünzweig und Hartmann in Ludwigshafen in 1966, where he was responsible for a number of laboratories specializing in various technical and administrative fields. In 1977 he was appointed director of the Fraunhofer Institute for Building Physics in Stuttgart. There, he set up new departments, started important cooperations, and realized a trend-setting new laboratory building.

The scientific contributions of Professor Mechel include eight books, nearly 100 articles in reviewed journals and 20 patents. Most prominent among his books are the exhaustive three-volume set on "Schallabsorber" (sound absorbers), his treatise of "Mathieu functions", the comprehensive collection of "Formulas of Acoustics" and the volume on "Room Acoustical Fields". His books and journal papers are exacting and mathematically demanding publications, many of them written for the specialist in the field.

Apart from his scientific work, Fridolin Mechel has decisively contributed to the formation and early development of the DEGA. At the founding assembly in December 1988, he was elected the first president of the new society. He began to establish national and international relations of the DEGA, helped to form first technical committees, and issued a communication letter, the "Sprachrohr", for the information of the society members. He was also one of the founders and the first speaker of the newly formed European Acoustics Association.

Fridolin Mechel was decorated for his scientific work with the highest award of the DEGA, the Helmholtz Medal, in 1997 and he was also named a Fellow of the Acoustical Society of America. He was an active member in the Institute of Noise Control Engineering and in the German Physical Society. In addition, he served as the German representative in the International Commission of Acoustics from 1988 to 1993.

The international community of acousticians lost a most creative and pre-eminent colleague while the DEGA mourns one of its mentors and pioneers. He will be gratefully remembered by all who knew him. Fridolin is survived by his wife Katharina and three daughters.

Gerhard M. Sessler, TU Darmstadt