

# Wilfried Brauer (1937–2014) in memoriam

## *Personal recollections*

At the end of February this year we received the sad tidings of the passing of *Wilfried Brauer*. Although not quite unexpected, the tidings still left us with a feeling of sorrow and longing. We had lost a close friend, a remarkable scientist and an influential administrator. Wilfried was one of the early pioneers of theoretical computer science in Europe. He was active in the founding stages of EATCS and the IFIP working groups TC-1, and made significant contributions also to the working group TC-3. Through his activities as EATCS President, IFIP Vice President and the Chairman of the Gesellschaft für Informatik, as well as through his scientific work and that of his students, Wilfried Brauer made a lasting contribution to the theoretical computer science community. This is visible also in his many decorations, such as honorary doctorates from the University of Hamburg and the Freie Universität Berlin, Werner Heisenberg Medal and IFIP Isaac L. Auerbach Award.

However, the purpose of this writing is not to dwell on such formal matters. We would rather want to bring forward happenings and recollections from the forty years we had the privilege of knowing Wilfried and working with him.

Wilfried could handle difficult matters in a smooth and balanced way. As far as we remember, he never lost his temper. Another very characteristic feature of Wilfried was that age seemed to have no influence on this outer appearance. He was still in the new millennium the same boyish joking man we got to know in the early 70's.

Wilfried belonged to the early small European community working in theoretical computer science. We got to know Wilfried and his wife *Ute* at Oberwolfach meetings in the early 70's. Wilfried seemed to know everybody well and was interested in new emerging fields of study. Lindenmayer systems constituted such a field. Working in L systems, we got invitations to Hamburg. During such visits we also enjoyed hospitality in Brauers' home at Gustav Leo Strasse.

Most of our meetings with Wilfried were connected to the work with

Springer–Verlag. The book series *EATCS Monographs in Theoretical Computer Science* was launched at ICALP in Antwerp in 1983. The representatives of Springer–Verlag were then Gerhard Rossbach and Ingeborg Mayer. Rossbach was replaced by Hans Wössner at the end of the 80’s.

Wilfried, the two of us and the two representatives of Springer-Verlag met a couple of times yearly, usually at ICALP conferences and in Grzegorz’s home in Bilthoven. Most of the time Ute accompanied Wilfried. Then Grzegorz’s wife *Maja* and Ute had a special “ladies’ program”.

The Bilthoven meetings gradually developed a specific format allowing ample time for work. Discussions continued during the Dutch breakfast by Grzegorz and lunch having Maja’s “monograph soup” as the main course. Wilfried’s experience and personal connections were invaluable for the success of our book series. Especially in delicate matters he was able to provide us with important information by contacting appropriate referees.

Wilfried did not attend the last Bilthoven meeting in 2007. We sent him a picture of owls with the text *Bilthoven owls miss the other wise owl*.

Wilfried and Ute became our close family friends. For instance, they wrote a paper about the jeep problem with the subtitle *How to bring a birthday present to Salosauna*. The present, a small teddy bear, became the most precious toy for Arto’s granddaughter and was named Wilfried. Wilfried and the bear Wilfried appeared together at the ICALP in Vienna in 1992, as seen from photos in the EATCS Bulletin. The bear Wilfried is still in good shape.

Wilfried was a great fan of classical music and attended concerts and opera performances with Ute. If there was an interesting performance in another country, the distance constituted no obstacle for them. Wilfried explained that it is often difficult for him to get rid of thoughts concerning work. During the overture of an opera he might still think about phone calls he has to make. But then everything else vanishes, and he is in the world of the opera. It was a superb present for Arto when Wilfried hosted his visit to the Bayreuth Festival in 2005.

Our dear friend Wilfried, we miss you. We miss your wise advice and your relaxing dinners where fish dishes had to be excluded. We miss our discussions about professional, as well as other matters. *Sit tibi terra levis*.

Boulder and Turku, March 2014

*Grzegorz Rozenberg*

*Arto Salomaa*