

IUPsyS Past Presidents Pay Tribute to Kurt Pawlik

IUPsyS – *Psychology's Global Voice* – is honoured to count Professor Kurt Pawlik amongst its distinguished leaders, having served IUPsyS in many capacities, including as President (1992-1996) and Secretary-General (1984-1992). His long service in the IUPsyS Executive Committee began at the critical 22 July 1976 Paris Assembly, which protested “solemnly against any use of scientific data or of professional methods of psychology that impair” the “the inviolable rights of human beings, regardless of race, religion or ideology, these rights being guaranteed by the Charter of the United Nations,” protesting “any collaboration by psychologists – whether actively or passively, directly or indirectly – with the above-mentioned abuses, and it urges its members to oppose any abuses of this sort”.

Rainer Silbereisen (IUPsyS President 2008-2012) describes him as “the first, and for decades, the most important ambassador of psychology after WW II,” utilising “his great leadership talents to develop a special character for the many international scientific organisations he served in governance roles over the years. He was a builder of coalitions across political and cultural borders and divides... I will always remember him as a brilliant negotiator and mover.”

For Michel Denis (IUPsyS President 2000-2004) “Kurt Pawlik was undoubtedly one of the most remarkable, dedicated, and indefatigable promoters of psychology, both as a science and a profession. His achievements attest to a sustained and ardent mode of thinking, fully tuned towards the international dimension of our discipline.

“Clearly, since the early times of his presidential mandate, Kurt was committed to promote an ambitious international view of psychology, by supporting the implementation of international projects sponsored by the Union, some of them being funded by ICSU (now the International Science Council). He eagerly advocated for putting efforts into the exploration and documentation of what he termed *the psychological dimensions of global change*”.

“But at the same time, Kurt also defended the concept of regional development of psychology in forms adjusted to the specific needs of some countries or regions. This took the form of Regional Congresses, which were scheduled in between the Union’s regular quadrennial international congresses. The first Regional Congress was launched under his guidance in 1995 (Guangzhou, China). Under his leadership, Regional Congresses were complemented by the development of capacity-building initiatives, the so-called Advanced Research Training Seminars (ARTS), in collaboration with our sister organizations, IAAP and IACCP”.

“During his mandate, Kurt also supported initiatives to promote and illustrate the role of psychology in a multidisciplinary scientific environment. His actions contributed to make our discipline more visible and meaningful in the scientific concert at a time where other sciences expressed increasing demands for taking psychological knowledge into account for solving societal issues. Kurt’s presidential time was also marked by the strong implication of the Union’s EC members in the governing bodies of umbrella organizations like ICSU and ISSC. In 1998, he was elected President of the ISSC. One of his most noticeable initiatives and invaluable outputs as Union’s Past President was

the volume he co-edited with Mark Rosenzweig, *The International Handbook of Psychological Science* (Sage, 2000).

“Through all his accomplishments at the service of the Union, Kurt Pawlik remains one of the most eminent and faithful ambassadors of psychology in the scientific community and the society at large.”

Saths Cooper (IUPsyS President 2012-2018) recalls “I got to know Kurt fairly well since my first IUPsyS Assembly in July 1998 in San Francisco. We developed a growing mutual bond since then, sharing insights into his tenure in the IUPsyS leadership, followed by his presidency of the International Science Council, my accession as ISSC Vice President in 2013, and his involvement in creating the IUPsyS Past Presidents Forum in 2018. Kurt did not brook fools easily, yet possessed a strength of character and charm that evades most persons possessing his achievement and stature. He is sorely missed in these trying times that our fragile world confronts.”

The IUPsyS family thanks Kurt’s wife, Denise, for sharing him with us.