

Helmut Paul (1929 - 2015)



On December 21, Helmut Paul, professor emeritus at Johannes Kepler University of Linz (JKU), former head of the Institute of Experimental Physics there, passed away peacefully at the age of 86 years.

Helmut was born in 1929 in Vienna, Austria. He studied physics and mathematics at the University of Vienna and at the Purdue University in Lafayette, USA, where he received his Master and his PhD (1954), with a thesis on nuclear physics. Back in Vienna, Helmut worked at the Institute for Radium Research, Vienna and spent two very fruitful years at CERN (1957 – 1959), where he participated in the search for the rare decay of the charged pion into an electron and a neutrino. From 1959 till 1971, Helmut worked at the nuclear research center in Seibersdorf near Vienna, and visited the Brookhaven National Laboratory on Long Island (1965/66). In 1971, Helmut accepted a call to the young University of Social Sciences, Economics and Business in Linz (from 1975: Johannes Kepler University of Linz) for the newly established chair of Experimental Physics. Since no chair for experimental physics had existed before, everything had to be built up from scratch (teaching, laboratories, electronics, mechanical workshop).

In Linz, Helmut's scientific activities changed to accelerator-based atomic physics: inner shell ionization together with Oswald Benka, Manfred Geretschläger, Alfred Kropf and Erich Steinbauer, and electronic stopping together with Dieter Semrad, Peter Bauer and Robin Gölser. To connect the Linz group to the international community, Helmut organized several international workshops in Linz and in 1995, Helmut enjoyed very much to bring 200 international scientists to Linz, when ICACS-16 (the Sixteenth International Conference on Atomic Collisions in Solids) took place in Linz. Two times, Helmut was elected Dean of the newly established Faculty of natural and technical sciences (1973, 1985), and was elected Rector in 1974.

All his life, Helmut contributed scientifically to his fields of interest and he was co-author of several reports of the International Commission on Radiation Units and Measurements (ICRU) and of a report of the International Atomic Energy Agency. To a broad community, Helmut is known for his collection of all published stopping power data for ions in matter, with many graphical displays, which he made accessible to all members of the community via the internet, and he kept it updated till his death. Thanks to Vivian Dimitriou and Claudia Montanari, the IAEA will keep the data base up to date also in future.

We are thankful for Helmut's contributions to our community and we will miss him!

All Members of the Institute of Experimental Physics
Johannes Kepler University Linz, 4040 Linz, Austria