

Friedrich-Wilhelm Bentrup – on the occasion of his retirement

The articles in this issue are dedicated to Professor Emeritus Dr. Friedrich-Wilhelm Bentrup in honor of his retirement on 30 September 2004. A large number of friends, colleagues, and former students from Germany, Austria, and the United States met to celebrate this event with him at a symposium held in October 2004 in Salzburg.

Friedrich-Wilhelm Bentrup was born in 1935 near Bielefeld (Germany) and studied biology, chemistry, and physics at the universities of Freiburg, Berlin, Vienna, and Tübingen, where he completed his studies with a PhD thesis at Erwin Bünning's laboratory. From 1963 to 1968 he assisted Wolfgang Haupt at the Botanical Institute of the University of Erlangen, and then he spent 2 years as post-doc at the University of Pennsylvania with Prof. Lionel Jaffe. Almost immediately after his habilitation in Erlangen, he was appointed a professorship in Tübingen and headed the Department of Plant Biophysics from 1968 to 1981. In that pre-patch clamp era, plant biophysics was almost unknown and an unploughed field. However, Friedrich-Wilhelm Bentrup filled it with life and, by making plant electrophysiology a well respected technique, inspired a large number of students to follow him into this "exotic" research subject. From 1981 to 1991 he accepted an offer by the Justus Liebig University of Giessen to head the Institute of General Botany and finally came to Salzburg, where he retired in 2004. Despite his heavy duties in administration, his meritorious function as referee and expert for the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, and his activities on the editorial boards of scientific journals like *Planta*, *Protoplasma*, and *Botanica Acta*, he always showed an interest in the work and the scientific progress of his students. His way to ask questions that right away got to the core of the problem and quickly showed up the validity of a hypothesis, was very much appreciated. His research interests cover a broad spectrum: polarity induction, membrane transport, signal transduction, ion and water relations. As such, the articles in this issue, which range from theoretical considerations on the cytoskeleton, biophysical experimental techniques, cellular biology, and plant defence responses to applications in agriculture and evolutionary aspects, in one or the other way all reflect his broad scientific interests.

We very much enjoyed the symposium and wish Friedrich-Wilhelm Bentrup all the best for his retirement, which permits him to focus on his hobby and almost second career as a pianist.

Hubert Felle and Gerhard Obermeyer