

# John P. Klus: A Remembrance (1935 - 2011)



IACEE and the Continuing Engineering Education (CEE) profession lost a "Giant" early this month with the passing of Prof. John P. Klus on 2 September 2011 at age 76. Born in northern Wisconsin on June 13, 1935, John was drawn to Michigan Tech to begin his academic career, where he received his BS in 1957 and MS in 1961, with US Army service as a Research Engineer in between. John then went to the University of Wisconsin – Madison, where he earned his Ph.D. in Civil Engineering in 1965. He began his distinguished career in CEE as an Assistant Professor at UW – Engineering Extension and later served for many years as Department Chair of what is now known as Engineering Professional Development (EPD). Early on he became a leader the continuing professional development of technical personnel in the US and in the early seventies broadened his focus to the international scene.

In the mid-seventies he and two other notable ASEE Continuing Professional Development Division members (Joe Biedenbach and Chuck Sener) envisioned a series of international conferences on CEE. In 1979 the First World Conference on CEE (WCCEE) was held in Mexico City as the first of what has now become a biennial series of World Conferences on CEE, the thirteenth of which will be held next May in Valencia, Spain. During the eighties it became apparent that a permanent organization might well be necessary to, among other things, foster the continuation of the World Conferences on CEE. This activity came to fruition with the founding of our International Association for Continuing Engineering education (IACEE) at the Fourth WCCEE in Beijing in 1989. John Klus was assigned Member #2 in IACEE and became the association's first President, serving for six years in that capacity until 1995.

John officially retired from his post at UW – Madison some years ago but has continued to work part-time for UW EPD and IACEE until just days before his passing. What is recounted above are mostly facts about an outstanding professional contributor. Those facts do not begin to measure the affective aspects of John's personality, drive, and impact. He has been a tremendous force for good in the development of CEE around the world. He has mentored many, if not most, of today's CEE leaders, always sharing himself and his experience in an honest and forthright manner. As these words

are written five days after his death, tributes from colleagues around the world continue to pour in at IACEE Headquarters. He has, in a word, earned the stature of a "Giant" in our field. Those privileged to have worked with him admire him as a thinker, an innovator, a mover and a shaker, but also as a pretty "ordinary guy" who came to be loved and appreciated by those around him. He was always among the first to offer an "attaboy" or a "great job, keep up the good work" to those with whom he worked. His continual encouragement of others will be sorely missed.

He has been widely recognized in professional circles for his outstanding work, including being named a Fellow of the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) in 1989 and being twice honored (1976 & 1996) with the Joseph M. Biedenbach Distinguished Service Award of ASEE's CPD Division. The European Society for Engineering Education (SEFI) honored him with its 1987 Leonardo da Vinci Medal and IACEE honored him in 2001 with its Joseph M. Biedenbach Distinguished Lectureship Award. He also received two Fulbright Research Awards (1966 and 1985) during his career.

John had a long-term relationship with the Helsinki University of Technology (HUT), now Aalto University, that caused him to travel to Finland approximately four times per year over a long period of time and led to his long collaboration with Markku Markkula, who served as IACEE Secretary General for our first 12 years and presided over our IACEE headquarters in Finland from 1989-2001. HUT presented John with an Honorary Doctorate in 1994 for his contributions to continuing education, technology transfer, and new product development. John often embraced new projects and challenges with contagious enthusiasm. It was important to him to "always leave a place better than the way you found it," which is exactly how he lived. The world will be a bit of a lesser place without him.

John loved the land of the upper Midwest and was most at home hunting or fishing in the wilds of that region of middle America. He leaves behind a devoted and loving family consisting of his wife Geri, four children and their spouses, six grandchildren, and three sisters. IACEE is deeply indebted to the Klus family for sharing John with all of us for so many years.