

John P. Klus - A Remembrance by IACEE

Memories of John Klus by IACEE members and others.
If you would like to contribute to these memories, please email your contribution to louk@fennis.eu and your memory will be added here.

A Favorite Memory of John Klus

Sue Bray, USA, current IACEE Council member

My overall memory / impression of John is of a warm, passionate, friendly and outgoing individual who combined the best of engineering and humanism. In our shared field of Continuing Engineering Education, John was always warm and welcoming to newcomers and generous with his insights and experience. John related equally well to people of all age groups, cultures and professions.



But I have one salient memory to share. In June 2010, John and I were in Finland together for the Aalto University Camp for Societal Innovation. I spent 10 days in a group that John led and enjoyed our immersion in an amazing experience. One of our outings was to Nuuksio Forest. I had the chance to hike with John in the Forest and it was during that hike that he told me that he had

leukemia. I reacted with surprise and upset, but John said: “Don’t feel bad for me because I don’t feel bad about this. You learn from everything in your life and I intend to go on with my life and not let this get me down.” It was an amazing lesson in the power of intention, positive thought, and resilience. And John was true to his word. He was never defeated by the illness and lived every day fully until he died. Perhaps this was John’s last and best lessons for all of us.

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JOHN KLUS: a reminiscence - Fishing in Lapland

Mervyn Jones, UK, Former President and current IACEE Council member

Having put-on our sixth layer of clothing we ventured forth onto the frozen lake. The temperature, which may have been -30C on land, dropped with the wind chill to -40C (or F!), gusting from our side as we walked or rode on a ski-do across the lake ice to where we were going to fish. Above us the stars sparkled in the beautiful cold air of the Lapland night in a brighter way we normally do not see it.



Night fishing expedition at Jerisjärvi, Lapland, with (from l. to r.) Mervyn, Carlos, Alfredo, John and Markku. The camera flash catches our reflective patches.

John of course was in his element, a night fishing expedition in the Finish arctic, kindly arranged for us by Markku Markkula. What more could he want! We bored holes in the ice, saw how lines could be laid under it and fish caught. We caught some ourselves and, with pictures taken - and that was a challenge in its own right, retreated to a fisherman's hut by the shore of the lake. Here, more sheltered from the harsh outside and with an open fire, warmed ourselves cooked some food over it, including grilling fish to add to others. We celebrated with some wine. Although the hut was certainly warmer than outside, John noticed ice crystals - yes ice crystals - beginning to form in the red wine. The wine was at room temperature - but not the room temperature at which you normally drink it! - which added to make the evening expedition a memorable experience.

This came at the end of one of our days during the first DAETE meeting, a US-EU collaboration to develop a methodology for quality improvement in Continuing Engineering Education, an issue close to John's concerns. It was a very effective, constructive and enjoyable time, with John representing the US and Carlos Ripol, Alfredo Soeiro, Markku and I forming the European team.

Soma Chakrabarti - IACEE Council member

Unlike most people writing in this compilation, I came to know Dr. John Klus only three years ago during the Atlanta World Conference in 2008. We met

during a presentation and then he gathered a few of us from the conference in the second floor lobby to talk “anything other than work.” That was unusual! Weren’t we supposed to talk only about our work in a conference? “No, that’s not who we are. Let’s talk about what other things we do in our lives.”

We were people from various countries - USA, Russia and Indonesia for example - and the language was not a barrier in exchanging thoughts; we shared our interests and loves, and dislikes. Gerry, John’s wife, joined us during dinner, which was in a nearby place. We were sitting in the same table and we never talked about work, and that was the most important lesson I learned from John. Gerry seemed to be knowing everyone in the table and it felt family.

In the February 2011 San Antonio IACEE Executive Committee meeting, John sat next to me and very enthusiastically talked about the DAETE project (now IACEE Quality Program) that he so very believed in and how the University of Kansas Continuing Education could adopt DAETE for its self-assessment. Later, we had a long conversation on DAETE over a cup of coffee that he bought for me.

However, what he really enjoyed sharing were the apps on his iPad, which he showed like a child who had the most interesting toy in his possession. Later, he wrote a wonderful e-mail to me when we subscribed to DAETE, expressing his desire to work in future months. Unfortunately, his death didn’t allow him to do so.

In the short acquaintances that we had, he made me understand that life is more than the job we do; it is the passions that we live for. And John did live a life. A beautiful life!

In a good memory of Prof. John Piter Klus

Prof. Yury Bocharov - Former IACEE Council member

In 1997-98 Prof. John Klus initiated and implemented together with a team of Finland Espoo TU and Russian Project managers from Bauman State TU the first IACEE international “East-West: Distance Education Project”. Twelve Distance Education Computer Centers were established at Universities of Moscow, St-Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Yekaterinburg, Kiev, Tashkent and other cities of the USSR due to the Project.

Thousands of engineers have been retrained for market economy needed managers, accounters and other specializations with a help of US Universities’ video courses translated into Russian and adapted to local requirements. Prof. John Klus personally have guided Project managers, visited some of the Centers and helped in course management. We are grateful to him and well remember his wisdom and energy he devoted to the Project.

Wim van Petegen, IACEE Council member

Three years ago, I was working in Helsinki for a couple of months over the summer. By coincidence, John was there as well. Having received an honorary degree from the Helsinki University of Technology (now merged with two other institutions into Aalto University), he was still actively involved in innovation and societal impact projects. Our common friend, Markku Markkula, invited us once for a small workshop in Laurea, one of the universities of applied sciences in the Helsinki area. As I had my car there, and John not, he decided to join me in my car. We had interesting talks together on our way to Laurea. I still remember us 'changing the world', he as a wise man, me as a young academic. One thing I will always keep in mind since then, is his question 'what's the impact of what you are doing?' Not simply objectives, nor goals, were on his focus, no - he was more interested in how to make a real difference in society. That was typically him. A real challenge to follow in his footsteps! Though, I doubt if this would be a good idea - as a navigator in my car, John was not that brilliant (we had a bit of trouble in finding the right Laurea building), or was it just because we were so occupied with our discussion that we lost track with reality? I will never know... John, the impact of what you did, leaving us, is certainly something that will puzzle me for longtime!

Fernanda Ramalhoto, past SEFI Council Member

I wish to express my profound sadness. I have met John on several occasions namely in European countries and in China (1989, foundation of IACEE) and got the opportunity to discuss the importance of Continuing Scientific and Engineering Education and Training in the Future of our World, as well as the ways to enhance International Cooperation between Industry and Academia. I precious John's encouragement during the preparation of the Second European Forum for Continuing Engineering Education, hosted by the Technical University of Lisbon (IST) in 1992, organized by myself, supported mainly by SEFI, IACEE and UNESCO, and sponsored mainly by European Union-COMETT and industry, academia and governance participation fees. John's foreword as the President of IACEE is part of the 615 pages Proceedings and one of the most relevant concerning international requirements.

Linda Krute, current IACEE Council member

John Klus was a softspoken man who humbly served others in the profession. He was always willing to share his knowledge and experiences. I remember his kindness, his gentile way of speaking to others, and his smile. No one could be

around John very long without a sense of pleasure of being in his presence. He not only served as a great representative from his beloved university but also for our international organization as a model of a service and dedication to engineering education.

In memory of John P. Klus

Javier Jimenez Espriu, Former President of IACEE

I received an invitation to write a remembrance of John Klus. The request shocked me emotionally. It meant that we had lost - I had no news of his death - a figure of great stature, "a giant" as he was called by the IACEE Remembrance accompanying the invitation.

John was indeed a person of great virtue, a man of integrity in all aspects and an exceptional friend.

I first met John in 1978 in connection with the organization in Mexico of the First World Conference on Continuing Engineering Education (WCCEE), which I presided over while I was Dean of the School of Engineering at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM).

John and Joe Biedenbach, another major leader in Continuing Engineering Education, had worked greatly at the international level to achieve the necessary support for the WCCEE and what came after, the International Association for Continuing Engineering Education (IACEE). John Klus presided over the first six years of IACEE's existence with great success and the dynamism which was always characteristic of him. John operated with long-term vision, with full commitment, with a passion for continuing education that sought a preferential place in the education of professionals and with an enthusiasm which spread to all.

His personal touch, his gentle way of persuading, his serenity and tolerance, his arguments, always solid, were the building blocks for the construction of this magnificent organization that is now IACEE.



First World Conference in Continuing Engineering Education, Mexico, 1979
Rodolfo Felix Valdes, Javier Jimenez Espriu, Gerardo Ferrando and John Klus

My personal relationship with him ended up being a strong friendship that included Geri and their children - my son Javier spent even a "Thanksgiving weekend" with the Kluses in Madison . Our friendship was enriched with time and let me know the man, the friend, the husband and an exemplary father, facets on which John was at least as exceptional as he was as a professional educator.

From his academic leadership many records are in excellent books, in excellent lectures, in memorable academic meetings and certainly in the hundreds of students who have certainly improved their lives through the teachings of John, convinced by him that they had not studied an engineering career for life, but had a lifetime to study to become engineers and had to find permanent joy in learning.

I was, by his invitation, the second President of the IACEE and I note with deep knowledge and with great respect that IACEE was born, grew, matured and exists, through the work and grace of John Klus.

I think as an elementary act of justice and recognition that IACEE must create a new and special AWARD, with the name of John Klus, to preserve his memory as the great leader he was, for the continuing education for engineers.

His memory is indelible for those who enjoyed his friendship and we hope to overcome, with his memory, the sadness that his departure leaves with us today.

For his family, the most beautiful memories and the greatest affection from the Jimenez family.

Leizer Lerner, current IACEE Council member

In 1973 UNESCO created the "WGCEET - Working Group on Continuing Education of Engineers and Technicians", extending this initiative, in 1974, by the creation of the "Working Group on Engineering Education/Industry Cooperation". I met John P. Klus in 1974 in Venezuela (Caracas), at the beginning of these UNESCO's efforts to stimulate the Continuing Engineering Education. Then at the seminar that UNESCO had co-sponsored with UPADI, I met the Klus couple. In January 1977 the meeting took place in Mexico that decided to promote the "WCCEE - World Conference on Continuing Engineering Education".

The first WCCEE took place in Mexico (DC) in 1979, thanks to the commitment primarily of John Klus, Joe Biedenbach and Charles Sener. There followed the second, in Paris (1983); the third was in Lake Buena Vista - Florida (1986); and, finally, in 1987, the WGCEET presented to UNESCO the plan for creating an international entity dedicated entirely to the relevant issue of CEE - IACEE.

Therefore in May 17, 1989, in the course of the fourth WCCEE, in Beijing, IACEE was formally created. In the new organization the presidency was occupied by John P. Klus, having as Secretary General Markku Markkula. The first headquarters of IACEE was organized by Markku, in close cooperation with John, in Helsinki University of Technology, TKK.

Since the Dean of UFRJ, Sergio Neves Monteiro, attended the historic meeting of the founding of IACEE in Beijing he proposed to John Klus to organize the following conference in Brazil. Since it was already decided that the 5th WCCEE, to be held in 1992, would be in Espoo - Finland it was agreed to initiate preparations for the 6th conference application. Finally the 6th WCCEE took place in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro in 1995.

During this large period between the preliminary initiatives of UNESCO and the beginning of IACEE we were able, even recently, the permanent enthusiasm and commitment of John Klus to the cause of CEE to which he dedicated his life and his unquestionable leadership.



Rio de Janeiro working meeting, 1994
Anders Hagstrom, Nelson Maculan, John Klus, Markku Markkula and Leizer Lerner

John Klus' Generosity

Alfredo Soeiro, Former President and current IACEE Council member

I met Jon in May of 1989 in my first IACEE Conference in Beijing, China. I was young and had just finished my PhD in Structural Optimization. I was in the conference because I had attended a course on HE management and my final project was about continuing education. John's speeches and discourses about CEE made me wonder. Is CEE that important for Engineering and Education? John opened spaces and highways in my view of a professor role that derailed, after some years, my objectives in the academic life.

I have been involved in these twentytwo years in CEE mostly because of the Klus' effect. During these years there are many stories but the one I would like to tell was about his generosity and open spirit. My wife and I were saying goodbye to John and his wife, Geri in the lobby of the Sao Paulo hotel during the Brasil 1995 conference in 1995. We mentioned we were going for a tourist trip and could not find a disposable camera (no mobiles then!) in Brasil. John turned to Geri and said "Why do not give them ours?". Geri agreed and we were able to have our souvenirs. That was John, always willing to help and to improve the world. In this moment I just wish that he, wherever he may be, has the at least the treatment he has given to others. Thank you John!



John 's Usual Fishing Place, Madison, Wisconsin
John Klus, Mervyn Jones and Markku Markkula

Source: Esa Kokka, Finland, IACEE Member



19th May 1989, Beijing, China: John Klus, Anders Hagstrom and Markku Markkula