Levallois Medal Awarded to Professor Reiner Rummel

The Levallois Medal was established in 1979 to honour Jean-Jacques Levallois for his long service from 1960 to 1975 as secretary general of the International Association of Geodesy (IAG), and is presented every four years "in recognition of distinguished service to the association and/or to the science of geodesy in general". This year the Levallois Medal was awarded to Reiner Rummel during the opening ceremony of the IAG symposia at the International Union of Geodesy & Geophysics' General Assembly, from 20 June to 2 July 2015, in Prague, Czech Republic.

After gaining his PhD degree in 1974 Reiner became a post-doctoral researcher in the Department of Geodetic Science at the Ohio State University, where he launched his geodetic career. Even at this early stage it was noted that uniquely his profile was "an amalgam of European geodetic theory and US geodetic practice".

After a period as a researcher in Munich, first with the German Geodetic Research Institute and then with the Geodetic Commission of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities, he was appointed professor of physical geodesy at the Delft University of Technology, where he served for 13 years. In 1993, he was appointed professor and head of the Institute of Physical and Astronomical Geodesy at the Technical University of Munich (TUM), a position he held until his retirement in 2011. He is now Professor Emeritus at the TUM and a Carl von Linde Senior Fellow of the Institute of Advanced Study.

Reiner's role in science has been that of a visionary, whose ideas and originality have greatly contributed to modern geodesy. Among his many contributions, three are noteworthy: his central role in the modernisation of the IAG, as an initiator of the IAG's Global Geodetic Observing System (GGOS), and his role in the realisation of the European Space Agency's Gravity field and steady-state Ocean Circulation Explorer (GOCE) satellite gradiometry mission. The GGOS is intended to monitor the Earth system by geodetic methods and by all the IAG entities. The GGOS concept is ambitious and its realisation is a major challenge. However, the original idea is due to Reiner Rummel.

Reiner Rummel devoted more than ten years of his career to the realisation of the GOCE mission. Reiner was its principal investigator and the coordinator of the GOCE HPF (High-level Processing Facility) of ten European institutions collaborating to provide the official GOCE products and to scientifically exploit the applications enabled by GOCE.

In addition, Reiner Rummel has been an outstanding teacher. His natural gift for lecturing inspires his audience with stimulating, and at times unconventional, presentations. His initiative and ideas led to the establishment of the ESPACE Masters Curriculum at TUM, providing fundamental knowledge in space engineering and satellite applications related to navigation, remote sensing and Earth system science.

His list of honours includes the Heiskanen Award of the Ohio State University (1977), the Vening Meinesz Medal of the European Geophysical Society (1998) and the Bavarian Order of Sciences and Arts (2010). He is a member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences (1989), the Bavarian Academy of Sciences (1997), an honorary member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (2001), the Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher Leopoldina (2004) and the Leibniz Sozietät Berlin (2008). He has been awarded honorary doctorate degrees from the Technical University of Graz (2005), the University of Bonn (2005), the Ohio State University (2013) and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (2014).

Reiner Rummel is one of the outstanding geodesists of the late-20th/early-21st century. The award committee concluded its report with the following statement: "It has been our pleasure and honour to write this citation for Reiner Rummel – an outstanding geodesist and a dear friend".