

## OBITUARY - KENNERT TORLEGÅRD - 1937-2016



The global photogrammetric community is saddened by the sudden passing of Kennert Torlegård who was one of the pillars of the international photogrammetry and remote sensing community.

Anders Kennert Ingemar Torlegård was born on 21 January 1937. He undertook military service from 1956-57 as photo interpreter, and then studied for an engineering diploma (MSc) at the School of Surveying, the Royal Institute of Technology, (KTH) Stockholm Sweden from 1957-61. He then undertook PhD studies as a research fellow at the Department of Photogrammetry under the guidance of Professor Bertil Hallert at KTH from 1961-67. He was subsequently chief photogrammetrist at VIAK AB Consulting Engineers and Surveyors, in Gothenburg from 1967-74.

Kennert was the successor to Professor Bertil Hallert as Professor of Photogrammetry at the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) in Stockholm. Professor Hallert had been a well-respected international photogrammetrist in the 1950's and 1960's, and was instrumental in shaping the 1956 ISP (International Society of Photogrammetry) Congress in Stockholm. Following the death of Professor Bertil Hallert in 1971 a government search committee for his successor was formed in 1972, consisting of several prominent photogrammetrists from Europe and Scandinavia, which recommended the appointment of Kennert Torlegård in 1974. Kennert held the position of full professor for photogrammetry at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm from 1974-2001 until his retirement.

During his term at KTH, Kennert was appointed Provost (equivalent to 2nd vice president) and chairman of the Faculty, responsible for research program planning from 1987-90 and a member of the Board of KTH from 1991-97. From 1993-95 he was Chairman of the Local Organizing Committee for the 1995 summer session of the International Space University, ISU, that was held at KTH in 1995.

In 2001 Kennert retired from his responsible post at KTH and became "Emeritus Professor". Unfortunately the Swedish system of support for an Emeritus Professor did not permit him to continue his international activities, but he devoted his time to learning French, playing classical music and also enjoying his summer house outside Simrishamn in the south of Sweden. He started playing the trumpet as a teenager at home in Vetlanda, but after moving to Stockholm the trumpet was soon replaced by a French horn. He said that the technology of the French horn is similar to the trumpet, but the horn has a softer, rounder and more beautiful tone and it is better suited to the music he wanted to play. Kennert played in two symphony orchestras, St. Erik's Society Orchestra and St. Thomas Orchestra Society in Vällingby. The repertoire consisted of both classical and popular music. His favourite music was *Alpensymfonie* by Richard Strauss, but he thought Gustav Mahler very good as well.

Following his appointment at KTH, he soon impressed the photogrammetric community as a leader in the development of the discipline of photogrammetry, which led to his participation as the Swedish delegate to the European Research Organization of Photogrammetry OEEPE (now renamed EuroSDR) from 1977-2001. When, in 1976 Sweden was elected to host ISPRS Technical Commission V covering Close Range Photogrammetry from 1976-1980, Kennert became Commission President and thus established himself as a leader in ISP. After the Hamburg Congress in 1980 Kennert was chair of the working group on photogrammetric data capture for digital elevation models for ISPRS (renamed the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing). Following the ISPRS Congress in Rio de Janeiro 1984 Kennert became Secretary General of ISPRS. Preparations for the 1988 ISPRS Congress in Kyoto, Japan, involved an intensive period of cooperation between Kennert Torlegård as Secretary General, Shunji Murai as Congress Director and Gottfried Konecny as ISPRS President since it was a period of change in the orientation of ISPRS from its former Euro-American orientation into a global

society. Such discussions also laid the foundations for the ISPRS “White Elephants Club” of senior photogrammetrists, which was established in 2004 and of which Kennert was an inaugural member.

When Kennert became President of ISPRS in Kyoto in 1988 ISPRS seemed ready for the hosting of an ISPRS Technical Commission in Africa by Nigeria. Unfortunately the Nigerian Government withdrew support for the Commission President Olayinka Adekoya so Kennert invited her to the ISPRS Council meeting in Stockholm and led several important discussions at the Nigerian Embassy in Stockholm, which confirmed that governments have responsibilities to their scientific community. This activity was typical of Kennert’s convictions as a scientist and as a global citizen. He continued to influence ISPRS Council with his convictions as First Vice President from 1992-1996 and Chairman of the ISPRS working group on geometric modelling and object reconstruction during the same period. As well, he was President of the Science Committee of OEEPE from 1996 to 2000. In 2010 Kennert was awarded the rank of an ISPRS Fellow at the 100 year ISPRS Celebrations in Vienna. Kennert has made a fundamental contribution to ISPRS, which is appreciated by his contemporaries and the ISPRS community. From 1964 Kennert active participated in 10 ISPRS Congresses, more than 30 ISPRS Symposia, seminars and workshops, 8 FIG Surveyors' Congresses, 5 ICA Cartographic Conferences. He will be missed at future ISPRS Congresses.

Asked why he became involved in ISPRS Kennert replied: “As a PhD student and a young photogrammetrist in the 1960s and 70s I visited congresses and symposia so as to meet colleagues who worked with the same or similar problems and applications as I did, for discussions and exchange of experience and information. The way to contact them was to present a paper. It was also very interesting to visit the exhibition and see new instruments and products from manufacturers and vendors. Later when I became Professor there were other reasons for my involvement in ISPRS affairs; I wanted to find colleagues for joint projects in R&D; I used my international relations when supervising my PhD students, i.e. through my contacts I knew who was doing what and where in R&D, or I could it find out. Then the students could make their own contacts.”

To the question on why he committed himself to a management role in ISPRS, he said the President of the Society Dr Fred Doyle had invited him to become Secretary General of ISPRS because he believed that I would be able to do the job, and he also said the he thought that it would be good for my career. Kennert replied “And so it was. My reward has been a lot of wonderful experiences and many good friends from all over the world”.

Kennert Torlegård was indeed a gentleman and an excellent scientist. While Secretary General, President and First Vice President of ISPRS he was totally committed to the cause of ISPRS and did an outstanding job in advancing its future. His work for ISPRS is celebrated by the whole community of ISPRS. His passing is a sad loss to his lovely wife Margaret, family, friends, colleagues, the ISPRS community and beyond.

John Trinder  
Gottfried Konecny  
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