

55 YEARS IN ISPRS - THE AMBASSADOR OF OUR PROFESSION

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ABSTRACT:

Professor Dr. Mult. Gottfried Konecny is a primary force for guiding and leading ISPRS affiliations, membership, and structure. Throughout the past 55 years he has shared his vast knowledge and experience with the entire ISPRS community making ISPRS the foremost voice for our profession of the Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and Spatial Information sciences and technologies. This is a testimonial devoted to thank and honor him for his steadfast dedication to ISPRS and its Members. Through his capable leadership and diplomatic skills he has brought leading individuals and organizations from governmental agencies, national and international societies, academia and the private sector together to share and promote the common interests of our profession. As such he deserves to be honored as the Ambassador of our Profession.

THE AMBASSADOR OF OUR PROFESSION

The ISPRS is the foremost voice for our professions in the Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and Spatial Information sciences and technologies. The individual whose 90th birthday we celebrate this week, Prof. Gottfried Konecny, has very actively contributed to ISPRS growth and its influence for over the past 55 years. And - he continues to this day to share his knowledge and expertise as an active participant in our Society's symposia, conventions and meetings at events throughout the World. Unfortunately, these days I rarely see Gottfried as my personal involvement with the Society has diminished in my years of retirement, but I sincerely appreciate his devotion to continually promote the advancement of our profession. I believe you will all agree with me that this summary of his ongoing activities demonstrates that he deserves to be designated as 'The Ambassador of our Profession.'



My earliest recollection of personal interaction with Gottfried was at the 1978 Commission II Symposium in Paris where we

were both participants in a panel discussion on the future of analytical instruments. Then eight months later in May 1979 our paths crossed by chance at a restaurant in Rome, Italy. I was there with representatives of the photogrammetric instrument maker, Ottico Meccanica Italiana (OMI) to oversee design and development of the prototype NOSAP (National Ocean Survey Analytical Plotter) for the US Coast & Geodetic Survey. NOSAP was the first ever analytical stereoplottor to employ stereo-superimposition to accurately verify in real-time digitally compiled data with its source imagery. At that restaurant our discussion quickly evolved into sharing our mutual research interests in advancing developments in the hardware and software for analytical stereoplottors. It was a very timely and fruitful meeting as I will soon describe. But first let me provide you some of Gottfried's background and how the ISPRS has taken a predominant role in his career.

Gottfried's early school years during WWII were in Sudetenland (Czechoslovakia) and West Germany. In 1950 he was employed in survey drafting before entering the Technical University of Munich to study Surveying Engineering. His vocational interests evolved into mapping from photographs and in 1954-1956 he continued his education on a Fulbright scholarship to pursue Geodetic Science at the Ohio State University (OSU in USA). In 1957 he returned to Germany to complete his doctorate at the TU Munich in Surveying Engineering. Throughout his university days he was involved in the German Society for Photogrammetry eV (DGP) activities, including serving as its Treasurer during 1958-59. After teaching at TU Munich, in 1959 he went on to the University of New Brunswick (UNB, Canada) to become head of the Geodesy & Photogrammetry Department where he set up a new Survey Engineering Department with Canada's first English speaking degree program for surveying, geodesy,

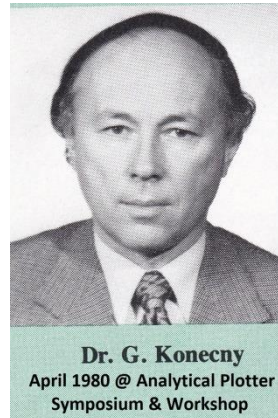
photogrammetry and cartography. It was during his tenure at UNB that he was enlisted in ISP activities with his appointment as 1964-1968 Commission VI National Member from Canada to the ISP Lisbon, Portugal Congress. Then in 1971 he became Professor and Director of the Institute for Photogrammetry and Engineering Surveys at the University of Hannover.

The 1960's and 70's were transitional years for the photogrammetric community led by the adoption of computers' birthing algorithms, computational programs, and the beginning of replacement of traditional analog restitution devices with analytical and hybrid instruments. It was during the time Gottfried was at UNB that he had significant interaction with Dr. Uki Helava, the inventor of the first analytical stereo-plotter (AP), and at that time was advancing development of the AP1 prototype at the National Research Council of Canada. Furthermore, in 1966 Gottfried had the opportunity to work at NASA during a nine month sabbatical on the Apollo program mapping lunar sites where he gained significant computer expertise. (Konecny, 2009) These Helava and NASA interactions prompted Gottfried to bring his hardware and software knowledge to the University of Hannover where he prompted the advancement of AP's and development of Bluh software for aerotriangulation. This all led to his positive influence on the German Space Agency to develop metric cameras for mapping Earth from Space. (Verduyn, 2009)



During the 1972-1976 period he served as President of DGP, the German Photogrammetric Society, and also as Chairman of ISP WG III/1 on the "Geometry of Remote Sensing Systems." He then followed on as Vice President of the 1976-1980 renamed German Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (DGPF). His active promotion of the mapping and imaging sciences was 'rewarded' with his selection by the German Society to be nominated for the 1976-1980 ISP Council term (Ackermann, 1998). At the 1976 Helsinki ISP Congress he was elected by the ISP General Assembly to serve as the 1980 ISPRS Congress Director in Hamburg. I highlight 'rewarded' as he subsequently shared with me that being Congress Director is like leading a three-ring circus – I later learned this was a very sage, true and valuable observation!

This brings us back to our May 1979 meeting in Rome. At that time, I was Director responsible for preparing the Analytical Plotter Symposium and Workshop (APSW) slated to convene in April 1980 for the American Society of Photogrammetry. It was immediately clear to me that Gottfried's extensive knowledge and experience with AP's was unique and invaluable. I suggested that it would be wonderful if he would give a keynote tutorial on AP's at the APSW. (Konecny, 1980)



He promptly, unselfishly and willingly agreed to do so even though his enormous responsibilities as the July 1980 ISPRS Congress Director would be at their utmost intensity as the Congress would occur in less than two months hence. His leadership and dedication in sharing his knowledge with others was exemplified and led to the success of not only these events but also to many other endeavors of the ISPRS.

During his 16 year tenure (1976-1992) on ISPRS Council, as Congress Director, Secretary General, President, 1st Vice President and ever since, Gottfried has been instrumental in fostering cooperation between organizations and in building bridges with developing countries and regions for technology transfer and education in the theory, applications and status of our profession. After his 16 leadership years on ISPRS Council, Gottfried continued as 1992-2000 Chairman of the ISPRS InterCommission IV/2 & IV/4 Working Group on Mapping from Space." Gottfried's leadership style has set an example for others in ISPRS to emulate. In his 1988 Presidential Address Kennert Torlegard stated very aptly about his predecessor: (Torlegard, 1988)



ISPRS KYOTO CONGRESS
1st-10th, July, 1988

"Gottfried ... I have now had the privilege to work with you in Council for four years. I have learned very much under your leadership. I have learned to work for the ultimate goal, to look for the essential not to get lost in detail. I have learned to find the largest common dividend among everybody's interest on what they have in common."

Gottfried has been instrumental in bringing Remote Sensing into the ISP scope. In 1986 he single-handedly brought together representatives of international societies, regional associations, national aerospace agencies, United Nations organizations, national academies of science, private corporations, and other related organizations with an interest in remote sensing into a common umbrella organization, JOBRESA, the Joint Board of Remote Sensing Activities. These early collaborative efforts were invaluable for ISPRS leadership in joining Sister Societies into formation of the

International Union of Surveys and Mapping which has now evolved into the UN-GGIM, one of the 3 networks formally recognized by the UN Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management.

Through the years his personal diplomacy has influenced many developing nations into joining ISPRS as Ordinary or Regional Members. He has been the mentor for all subsequent Council members.



Prof Shunji Murai often credits Gottfried as his ‘father’ whose leadership skills had a major influence on how Shunji had founded, activated and organized the Asian P&RS community to become an effective and leading contributor to the ISPRS mission. I believe 2020 marks the 30th year of success for the Asian Remote Sensing Conference. Shunji is now the Asian Ambassador of Our Profession!

A significant global news breaking event convened in Leipzig, DGR as a result of the 3-6 September 1987 ISPRS Inter-Commission Working Group I/II Colloquium "Use of Space Photographic Data for Mapping the Earth Surface." (Broad, 1987)



This event was conceived by Gottfried and hosted by Prof. Klaus Sangolies in the waning years of the cold war. It was attended by Russian and Eastern Bloc country representatives and four ISPRS representatives from the West (President Konecny, Treasurer Giovanna Togliatti, Past President Fred Doyle, Commission II President Larry Fritz). It was at this ISPRS event that both sides shared openly for the first time their high-resolution images and discussed technological capabilities for the benefit of peace for humankind. The conference was a scientific and diplomatic success due largely to Gottfried’s bridge building efforts.

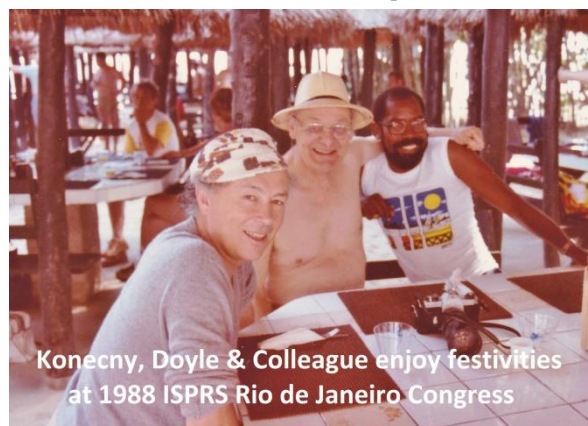
As well as being an outstanding professor at UNB, Canada and University of Hannover (where he has been Emeritus Professor since 1998), Gottfried has served as German Delegate or as an international consultant for the German Ministry of Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the German Space Agency(DLR), and the German Federal Ministry of Research & Technology, as well as for numerous agencies, companies and projects in many countries such as Argentina, Cambodia, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Guatemala, India, Italy, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mexico, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey, USA, Venezuela, Vietnam, Zimbabwe and many others. For many decades Gottfried has been a German representative to the UN Regional Cartographic Conferences and he has and still gives lectures on ISPRS topics in innumerable countries.

On a less professional note, I can attest to Gottfried’s social skills and antics such as:

— In a Glasgow, Scotland meeting, getting banished to a far corner of the meeting room by his Council colleagues when the smoke from his Cuban cigars became overwhelming. (1992)

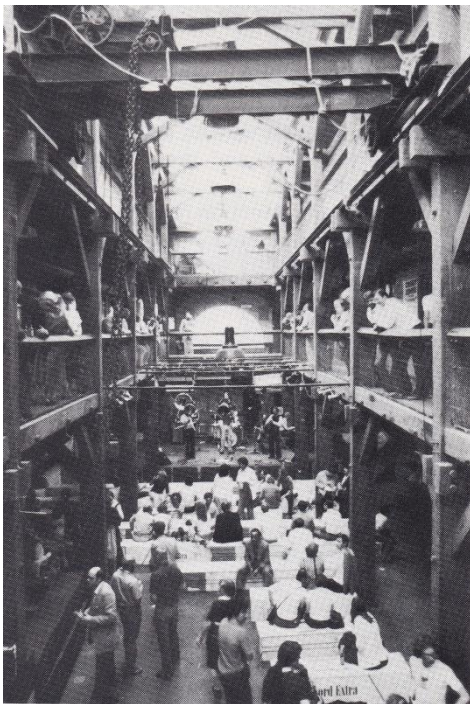


— In Natal, Brazil, Zipling backwards down several hundreds of meters from a very high sand dune into a Brazilian lake to the amazement of all present. (1997)



— At his 1980 Congress, demonstrating his generosity by handing out wads of event ‘fun money’ for food and drinks to delegates from developing countries and eventually showering the atrium of the Fabrik music hall

with surplus fun money to the pleasure of those that attended. (1980)



Jazz evening in the "Fabrik"

— In Vancouver, Canada when he convinced a dozen or so of us to go to his favorite Chinese restaurant to eat king crab legs with black bean sauce only to find that their supply was limited. Gottfried promptly demonstrated his best diplomatic skills to have the proprietor convince his competitor restaurant to send over more crab legs for our eating pleasure. (1989)

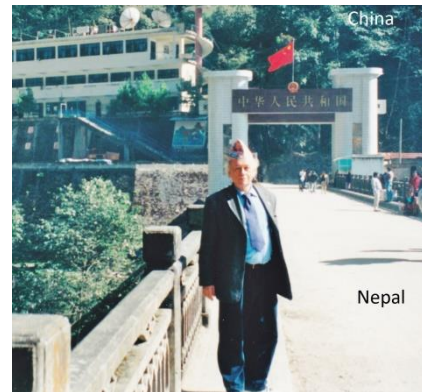
— Showing his sentimentality by taking home a travel gift for his lovely wife Liesel such as a hand-made quilt every time he went to a UN meeting in New York City, or



even sending home a several hundred pound, Life-size! Replica terra-cotta warrior from Xian, China. (2002)

— Magically showing his ingenuity in managing multiple passports to enter nations without getting proper visa such as to Saudi Arabia from USA or to Brazil from Argentina. I recall well how he convinced border guards to

allow us to cross from Nepal to Tibet and back without our passports! (2002)



Obviously, he has traveled worldwide extensively as an educator, lecturer, representative and delegate as those who have served on ISPRS Council can attest. I recall how John Trinder and I would compare notes of where we had traveled in our Council days. We would marvel and speculate as to which countries we might have been where Gottfried had not been. As I recall we believe that the only place he may not have traveled to is Easter Island. A few years ago, we heard that Shunji and Armin had traveled to Bhutan and accompanied, of course, with Gottfried.

I could go on for many hours in identifying his influential presence in serving our global community. No matter the time or the place, Gottfried has always been willing to answer the call. When as 1996-2000 ISPRS President, I convened the ISPRS Strategic Planning Meeting with Council Members representing the 6 major continents, it was Gottfried who answered my call for a meeting facilitator to keep us on track and help consolidate our varied views on the future path of ISPRS. I sincerely thank him for serving so brilliantly as an independent, unbiased and guiding moderator.

These are just a few of Gottfried's many contributions to our Society which support my assertion that demonstrates that he truly deserves to be honored as the "Ambassador of Our Profession." Thank you, Gottfried, I and we are blessed to have you as a dear friend and colleague!



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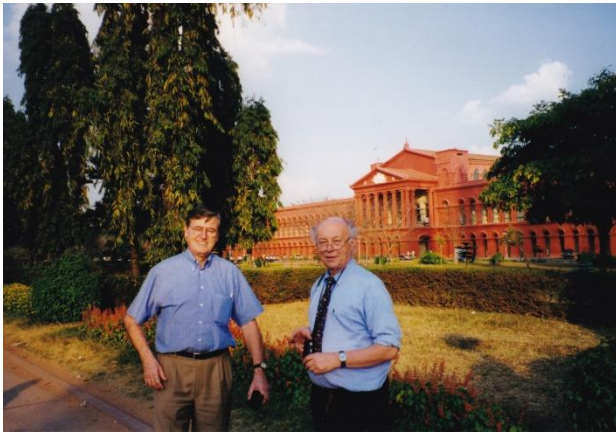
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Dance lessons in an Urumqi, China yurt (2007)



Klass Jan Beek with Gottfried in Bangalore, India, 1998



Gottfried and Ana Maria Coutinho on Great Wall of China, 1994



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