

Frankfurt am Main
23.11.2016

Dear Members,

On behalf of your Board it is my very sad duty to inform you of the passing away last week, after a short, acute illness, of our Ehrenpräsident, Werner Holzer.

Werner grew up in Rheinland-Pfalz and studied Philosophy, History and Journalism in Munich. After graduating he built a distinguished career in journalism, joining the Frankfurter Rundschau in 1953, for whom he then, in the USA in the early 1960s, covered a Presidential Election and the Vietnam War. About this time he also developed a strong interest in Africa and Southeast Asia, and travelled extensively in both, gaining a reputation as a lively liberal thinker. Werner became Editor in Chief of the Frankfurter Rundschau in 1973 and held this position until 1992, substantially raising both the profile and the circulation of that newspaper during this period. He also co-founded the Frankfurter Presseclub in 1980, became its Präsident in 1991 and its Ehrenpräsident in 1992.

Werner joined the Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft in the 1950s, was appointed a Director in 1981, then Chairman in 1990 and Ehrenpräsident in autumn 2015. He made an invaluable contribution over the years, as co-organiser, moderator and presenter to the Königswinter conferences, as well as winning a succession of excellent speakers for the DBG. He furthermore played a key role in the establishment of DBG Rhein-Main e.V., independent from Berlin and enjoying special Gemeinnützigkeit status, and became its Gründungspräsident in 2010.

In 1988 Werner was awarded the Ehrenplakette der Stadt Frankfurt. He was also appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in recognition of his services to British-German relations.

Werner was a charming lunch and dinner companion and had many wonderful stories to tell (not least, that of his return to Germany from Russia in 1945). He was a keen competitor at tennis and played well into his 80s. He also enjoyed swimming, especially in the Mediterranean near his flat in the South of France.

Werner had just celebrated his 90th birthday and we were looking forward to further years under his excellent tutelage as our Ehrenpräsident. We will miss his company, his wit, his sharp intellect, his energy, his leadership, his friendly and helpful advice, his instinctive sense of what was right in a given situation and his great ability to get things done. Difficult task though it is, my colleagues on the Board and I will strive to continue guiding the DBG Rhein-Main in as Werner himself would have done.

Werner leaves behind his wife, a son and a daughter. Our thoughts are with them in their bereavement. His funeral will take place on Friday, November 25th at the Hauptfriedhof, Frankfurt am Main.

Yours sincerely,
(Signed)

Nick Jefcoat
Chairman of the Board of Directors
Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft Rhein-Main e.V.