

Press release

Friedhelm Loh Group

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Friedhelm Loh awarded "Honorary Doctorate in Engineering"

Man of action and visionary: Friedhelm Loh receives honorary doctorate from the Technical University of Chemnitz

The Technische Universität Chemnitz has awarded the Hessian entrepreneur Friedhelm Loh an honorary doctorate for his outstanding contributions to science and technology. Representatives of research institutions and universities and from the worlds of politics, industry and trade associations honoured the industrialist as a resolute man of action and visionary. Friedhelm Loh is a driving force behind the networking of business and science, is actively helping to shape industrial digitalisation, and is thus inspiring future generations to think in new ways and to act responsibly.

Herborn, 24 March 2016 – His success is based on creative curiosity, hard and inventive work, his passion as an entrepreneur and his renouncement of things that others take for granted, that is how Professor Reimund Neugebauer described the newly designated Doctor Friedhelm Loh to a large audience in the ballroom of the Technische Universität (TU) Chemnitz. The President of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft and holder of the Chair of Machine Tool Design and Metal Forming stressed that Friedhelm Loh always achieved his goals, generating enthusiasm and displaying responsibility and humanity in the process. The Technische Universität Chemnitz was happily awarding the Hessian entrepreneur the honorary doctorate for his active work in networking industry and science, business and academia. His work had set priorities and opened up new horizons.

The Mechanical Engineering Faculty praised the broad involvement of the owner and chairman of the Central

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Hessian Friedhelm Loh Group and the CEO of the enclosure and system provider Rittal with the highest scientific honour that a university can award: “The award of an honorary doctorate to Friedhelm Loh characterises his outstanding and special achievements in science and technology, particularly in the field of mechanical and plant engineering,” said Professor Andreas Schubert, acting Rector of the TU Chemnitz: “Your life’s work is impressive.”

The globally established Friedhelm Loh Group with its 11,500 employees has been cooperating with the University since 2014 and has endowed a professorship. The research-intensive endowed chair in System Technology and Switching Modules at the Department of Lightweight Structures and Polymer Technology consults closely with the company. New technological findings are being assimilated into teaching at the University. Findings from the research are made available to the company. Science and industry were dependent on each other more than ever before, Professor Schubert added.

Recognition from business and politics

Representatives from industry and politics also expressed their appreciation of the entrepreneur Friedhelm Loh. For instance, Dr. Markus Kerber, the Chief Executive of Germany’s Federal Association of Industry (BDI) pointed out: “You are, essentially, a man of action who has been actively involved in making changes.” Courage, diligence and foresight were characteristics of the entrepreneur, a person who sees opportunities where others only see risks. Dr. Klaus Mittelbach, CEO of the ZVEI, the German Electrical and Electronic Manufacturers’ Association, a body of which Friedhelm Loh had been President until 2014, described him as the “Architect of the Internet of Things (“Industry 4.0”) from which strong impulses were emanating in a dialogue between

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politics, science, industry and society: “Inquiring doers and initiators such as yourself enhance our own certainty of being able to master the challenges ahead.”

Klaus Helmrich, member of the Managing Board of Siemens AG, looked back on the eventful past of the family business, which the newly honoured Friedhelm Loh built up from a smallish company with 200 employees to the world market leader in enclosure and system technology with 11,500 employees worldwide: “Yours was one of the first German companies to move into China and India.” Minimal solutions were not his thing, only the best result counted, even if the road there was longer and more strenuous. Frank Heinrich, member of the German parliament for the Chemnitz constituency, added, “There are people who are best honoured with their own words: What you can do is what you have to do.” Hardly anyone embodies these words better than Friedhelm Loh himself: “What he can, he does. And what he does is what he can do.”

Value-driven leadership: “Ora et labora”

In his speech, Professor Dr. Stephan Holthaus, rector of the Giessen School of Theology, explained why it pays to be driven by Christian values: “What has mechanical engineering got to do with prayer, and what do have switching modules in common with moral values?”, he asked the audience. In his reply, he recalled the founding of the Benedictine order in the sixth century. Its rules, including “Ora et labora – pray and work”, were more relevant today than ever before: “We live in a time when the meaning of work is overstressed. He added that work nowadays was not embedded within a larger horizon of meaning.” What are needed are moral rules and ethical guidelines, which Friedhelm Loh and his family exemplify. Loh was a “hard worker of the old school, who is determined and works hard, who is willing to accept

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responsibility and does not make it easy for himself,” said Dr. Holthaus: “This is admirable in an era that yearns for values and orientation.” Dr. Holthaus not only outlined Loh’s economic success but also focused on how it was firmly rooted in the Christian faith: “You adhere, in word and deed, to the rules laid down Saint Benedict,” he said in praise of the prize-winner.

Friedhelm Loh: “We face challenges”

“Your praise leaves me speechless”, added the newly honoured industrialist in his speech of thanks. He described the award of the honorary doctorate as the highlight of his career, and something which would have been impossible without years of support from his family, friends and staff all over the world. “I owe them my deepest gratitude. Everything that I have been able to experience is a gift.” He was especially indebted to his parents: “They taught me very clearly about taking on responsibility, about Christian values and the meaning of faith, things which influence my life like nothing else.”

He promised the representatives of the university that in future, he would “fulfil my mission to create added value and implement innovation for people, making use of my working experience.” This would also call for a high level of cooperation: “We have to form many more alliances and bring universities and companies closer together. The power of the individual is important. But the power of the networks will decide on the success of German industry. Networks? That’s us – entrepreneurs, and the worlds of science and politics. We need to take responsibility.” Loh therefore called for “radical rethinking and a willingness to change that will make us strong.”

The art of science is to develop solutions for the benefit and protection of the people, Friedhelm Loh added. He emphasised the fact that science and industry also bore

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responsibility: "Industry 4.0 is the technology that is developing itself, gaining new insights from its own data and so changing our lives. Despite all the euphoria about self-organising technologies, one ought not underestimate the dangers of cybercrime or of humans becoming 'transparent': There is a great danger that we will not only to lose the freedom anchored in our constitution but also the right to well-being, to hold our own opinions, and to act individually." He feared that the personal right of liberal individuality would perish through the access of technology to human beings: "Data not only creates free spaces but also prisons." In terms of their responsibility before God and Man, science, industry, government and justice are required and obliged to protect human dignity.

Rector Andreas Schubert summarised the recognition of all those present for the new Honorary Doctor of Engineering with a quote from Oscar Wilde – "It is personalities, not principles that move the age."

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Caption(s)

Fri162004400.jpg: Professor Thomas Lampke (left), Vice Dean for Research, International Affairs and Equality at the Department of Mechanical Engineering, and Professor Andreas Schubert (right), Acting Rector of the TU Chemnitz, respectfully awarded Friedhelm Loh his honorary doctorate before a well-filled auditorium.

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Friedhelm Loh Group

The globally active Friedhelm Loh Group (FLG) invents, develops and produces customised products and system solutions for industry,

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commerce and trade. The Friedhelm Loh Group's companies belong to the top addresses in their respective industries – as inventors and competent producers. They include Rittal, the world's leading system provider for industrial enclosures, power distribution, climate control and IT infrastructure; Europe's number one supplier of software solutions for mechanical and plant engineering and industry, as well as integrated manufacturing expertise with state-of-the-art materials – steel, aluminium, and plastics.

The family business is active world-wide with 18 production sites and 78 international subsidiaries. The proprietor-run Friedhelm Loh Group employs 11,500 people and generated revenues of around €2.2 billion in 2014. For the seventh time in succession, the Group won the accolade "Top German Employer" in 2015. For more information, visit www.friedhelm-loh-group.com.