

Obituary for Prof. Aurelius Patscheider

Source: Bernd Späth, Author, Bonn: (<http://www.cip.physik.tu-muenchen.de/~grg/bspaeth.htm>)

There was, of course, the incomparable "Mumin." I don't know who gave him that name. Originally, it belonged to a comic character in certain tabloid newspapers. One day, my former bank neighbor Krois Klaus brought him in, and we enthusiastically welcomed him. - Thus, Prof. Aurelius Patscheider had his nickname for the rest of our school days.

He taught mathematics and physics, always combing his ash-blond hair back with a ruler over his broad face. He wore a huge watch and almost always very wide ties, which he seemed to match to his white teacher's coat.

I have traveled a lot in the world since then, with 100,000 flight kilometers in the last 12 months alone. However, I have never experienced a man of such final correctness again. His almost religious ceremony was typical, which he held the day before a written exam. Solemnly, he handed out his checkered paper and lectured in his entranced chant: "Turn the paper over to the fourth page. Fourth printed line from the bottom: draw a line with ink, also on the margin. Nothing should be written below this line during the exam..." Interestingly, the rumor circulated among students that "Mumin" had been transferred to our school due to excessive sloppiness. I thought it was just juvenile talk. People like him are born that way. His almost bizarre correctness rituals, however, did not change the fact that he was an excellent teacher.

"Rhythm provides stability!" a Bonn chief physician told me 20 years later when he tried to persuade me to exercise regularly. If there has ever been living proof of this simple truth, it was "Mumin." Among the teachers, there were cynics, laments, exaggerated self-presenters, yes-men, or cool job administrators (besides the nice guys who can't all be named here), but "Mumin" was the embodiment of psychological stability and justice. And that was it: His strictly calculated system not only produced consistently high-quality education, but also something extremely rare for students: justice. He was simply too involved in his mathematically delineated rituals to ever allow himself to take a break.

In my memory, he is the only teacher where everyone had the same chance. The role model of such a personality should not be underestimated! (Furthermore, he was the only teacher in my entire school career who recognized an injustice to a student and immediately corrected it in front of the class.) The way he could present mathematical and scientific facts was as dry as it was illuminating. The precision with which he presented his physical experiments was unbeatable. (With one exception, where "the cleaning lady probably" treacherously unplugged his power cord. At the time, his face did not betray anger, but deep puzzlement that an element of chance had taken hold in his well-thought-out arrangement.)

Moreover, he was a very kind person who cared about his students, even though he tried to hide it behind his official distance. - Unsuccessfully, he was still respected.

"Fifteen years later, I met him at a teacher's get-together at Hotel Post. 'Yes, ah, now I can't remember your name, but you're the Arctic man!' He had read my series of articles in the 'Süddeutsche Zeitung' about one of my expeditions."