

## **Werner Franke: Google Before Google**

To us, Werner has always been (and will continue to be) a Natural Phenomenon (analogous to a soaring mountain peak or mighty flowing river) and a Dear Friend. We spent an academic year (1979/80) in his lab on the second floor of the DKFZ Hochhaus. He had assembled a group of excellent scientists (including Ulrich Scheer, Herbert Spring, Michael Trendelenberg and Hans-Walter Zentgraf). All were as passionate about nuclear architecture as we were.

Vivid in our memories, we recall numerous discussions in his office/library. We would ask a question on some topic about nuclear or chromosome structure. Werner would rise from his chair and walk along the rows of books and journal shelves, running a finger along each book/journal cover. He suddenly would stop walking, remove a book/journal from the shelf and open to an article remarkably relevant to our question (Google Before Google). We were transfixed in awe. It was like a cabaret performance.

After our discovery of the nucleosome in 1974, we had increased contacts with Werner and members of his laboratory. We did not know Werner before the discovery. By 1977/78, we learned about his planned “Second International Congress on Cell Biology”, to be held in Berlin from August 31 to September 5, 1980. In discussions with Werner, it was decided to create two historical exhibitions for the Congress: 1) Development of the Light Microscope. 2) Development of the Electron Microscope. We were already planning an exhibition on the history of the light microscope for the Museum of Science (Oak Ridge, Tennessee). Don was chosen as chairman for “Development of the Light Microscope” by the Organizing Committee of the Second International Congress. We had help from many of Franke’s colleagues, especially Herbert Spring. Ernst Ruska was chosen as chairman for “Development of the Electron Microscope “. An operating replica of his original electron microscope was built for the Congress, with Ernst Ruska giving breathtaking demonstrations of how it worked. A beautiful catalogue for the Microscope exhibitions, entitled “Three Centuries of Microscopes and Cell Biology”, was filled with excellent photographs of historically important microscopes and objects of interest. A Foreword was written by Peter Giesbrecht (Berlin), Hans-Georg Schweiger (Ladenburg) and Werner W. Franke.

The “Second International Congress on Cell Biology” was a product of Werner Franke’s dreams and energy. It was a beautiful blending of contemporary and historical cell biology. We felt that this Congress was infused with Werner’s spirit and enthusiasm. For us, it was a “high-point” in our relationship with Werner.

Werner introduced us to Heidelberg, to the DKFZ and to many scientific treasures, including Peter Lichter, Harald Herrmann, Jörg Langowski, Kati Toth. These DKFZ scientists served as our hosts over many years of fruitful collaborations and friendships. Our studies of nuclear structure have been greatly enhanced by our many visits to Heidelberg and other regions of Germany.

Werner’s interest in history extended far beyond the history of science. He always showed exceptional interest in Ada’s family history which included their emigration to Palestine when Hitler came to power.

Ada's ability to speak German led to an awkward situation at first. She could not imagine using the formal "you (Sie)" with someone 2 years her junior. He expected a formal "Herr Professor" from his guest, so Ada and Werner often spoke to each other in English. In later years, as German society became less formal and even store clerks would address everyone with "Du", Ada and Werner spoke German to each other. Werner showed respect to all his colleagues regardless of gender or nationality. He was a very fair man.

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