

IN MEMORIAM

Wolfgang E. Burhenne

In the early hours of 6 January 2017, the world lost one of the true heroes of environmental protection and humanitarianism. At the age of 92, Dr Wolfgang Ewald Burhenne, the founder and Editor-in-Chief of *Environmental Policy and Law*, died peacefully on that day, surrounded by loved ones. Over the past 43 years, Dr Burhenne shared his intensity, enthusiasm and commitment with the staff of *EPL*. His passing leaves an empty place in our hearts.

The extraordinary life journey of Dr Burhenne included brief service in the German Army in World War II – a service that was quickly interrupted when he was wounded shortly after his induction. While recuperating in a military hospital, he began to communicate with prisoners from the nearby concentration camp in Dachau, leading him to begin to participate in armed resistance against the Nazi regime. When apprehended by that regime at the age of 17, he was himself imprisoned in 1941 until he escaped near the end of the war.

Influenced by this experience, he became a lawyer after the war and went on to spend his life as an outspoken champion of social and environmental causes around the world, willing and able to take his concerns before even the highest levels of government. His parliamentary work in Germany earned him the Knight Commander's Cross (badge and star) of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Internationally, he is perhaps best known for his work with his wife of 40 years, the late Françoise Burhenne-Guilmin, as the primary forces inspiring, and helping to bring to fruition, some of the world's most important multinational environmental agreements including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, the Convention on Migratory Species, the World Charter for Nature, the Africa Convention on the Conservation of Nature, and many others. His work was recognised through many international awards, including the Elizabeth Haub Prize for Environmental Law in 1975, the UN International Environmental Prize (UNEP Sasakawa Prize) with Françoise in 1991, and the Harold Jefferson Coolidge Memorial Medal for outstanding contributions to conservation of nature and natural resources in 2012. He was active both in IUCN, where he was the founder and first chairman of its Commission on Environmental Law and Policy (now known as the World Commission on Environmental Law) and in WWF, as one of the signatories of the 1961 Morges Manifesto that brought it into existence.

Since founding *Environmental Policy and Law* in the early 1970s, he has been committed to the goal of international sharing of environmental legal and policy reports, information and scholarship from and with professionals around the world. Under his leadership, *EPL*'s policy included a major commitment of time and effort to help law and policy professionals from all countries to share their research and ideas, and significant efforts to expand our readership to key legal professionals and government officials from as many countries as possible.

Dr Burhenne remained deeply engaged throughout his life – a major luminary in the field of environmental law. He continued to work in the field until the last few weeks of his long life. He leaves behind not only children and grandchildren, but also a large number of environmental, legal, policy and diplomatic professionals around the world who view him as both mentor and role model, as well as friend.

His colleagues and the staff of *EPL* over the past 40 years wish to express their sincere affection and respect for this wonderful man, and gratitude for the chance to share in his extraordinary life and commitment.

Tomme R. Young, Editor, on behalf of all *EPL* staff members, past and present