

Obituary: Dr Jürgen Weitkamp

A role model and pioneer

It is with great sadness that we remember Jürgen Weitkamp, Dr med, Dr med dent. President of the German Dental Association from 2000 to 2008 and recipient of the Federal Cross of Merit, First Class. He passed away on 30 January 2025 at the age of 86 after a short but serious illness.

Jürgen was much more than an honourable functionary. For many years, he shaped professional policy with far-sightedness and tact. In particular, the importance of the German Dental Association (Bundeszahnärztekammer, BZÄK) grew during his term as President to become an important institution for German dentists. However, Jürgen was also a helpful colleague who, despite his voluntary duties, took great care to ensure that scientific dentistry was practised in the dental office.

Jürgen Weitkamp was born in Bielefeld, Westphalia, on 15 July 1938. After graduating from high school and studying medicine and dentistry, partly in the USA, he set up shop in his father's practice in Lübbecke in 1967. He became involved with his local colleagues very early on.

His offices, memberships, initiatives and implementation of new institutions, projects and promotion of careers and young talent over the decades are innumerable. The development of the dental profession on many levels was always important to him.

In 1990, he was elected President of the Westphalia-Lippe Dental Association, a position he held until 2001. He relinquished this position after being elected President of the German Dental Association in 2000, a position he held until 2008. Not only did he fulfil his duties and functions, but he also raised them to a new level through his work. The list of his achievements is extensive: he was Hon-

orary President of the Westphalia-Lippe Dental Association and Honorary President of the German Dental Association. He was decorated with the Federal Cross of Merit, First Class. And he was awarded the Badge of Honor of the German Society of Periodontology and the Golden Badge of Honor of the German Society of Dental, Oral and Maxillofacial Sciences. In 2009 he was awarded the Apollonia zu Münster—Foundation of Dentists in Westfalen-Lippe prize and was made an honorary citizen of the city of Quedlinburg in recognition of his work in restoring and revitalising a number of historic buildings there. He was also made an honorary citizen of his home town of Lübbecke.

He was an early adopter of developments in dentistry and helped shape the change from the reparative and reconstructive dentistry of the 1970s and 1980s to multi-stage prevention and conservative restoration through the project to scientifically redefine preventive dentistry, which was carried out in conjunction with the German Association of Statutory Health Insurance Dentists (Kassenzahnärztliche Bundesvereinigung, KZBV) and the scientific community. We are still benefiting from these successes today: oral health studies show that prevention is a top priority in Germany and that the country's dental health is among the best in the world.

As the then President of the Bavarian Chamber of Dentists and chief organiser



of the Bavarian Dentists' Congress, I have fond memories of his visits to Munich as a highly esteemed guest of honour, which he combined with visits to his daughter.

On more than one occasion he was a speaker at our professional policy symposia for the BDIZ EDI. I fondly recall his keynote speech "Guidelines for prevention-oriented dental medicine" at our 2007 Annual Symposium in Berlin, in which he took us on a journey into the future of dentistry with impressive foresight.

There are not many people left like Jürgen, wholeheartedly committed to the German dental profession. He was a role model and pioneer. We will miss his dedication to the profession and him personally as an always courteous and gentle person and friend. He will be remembered with affection and respect. Our thoughts are with his family.

Christian Berger
on behalf of the BDIZ EDI Board