



Congratulations, Franz P. Gruber!

On November 27, we celebrated the 80th birthday of our friend, colleague, and mentor Franz Paul Gruber, a tireless advocate for alternatives to animal testing, whose impressive career has been fully dedicated to serving the best interests of animals. Franz is an iconic figure in the field of alternative methods, who has worked long and hard to earn the field the recognition it deserves.

Franz realized early on in his career how difficult the position of animals is in our society. He studied veterinary medicine and practiced as a veterinarian for a couple of years. After earning his doctorate, he accepted a position as a research associate and assistant professor at the department of laboratory animal sciences at the Free University in Berlin, where he qualified as an expert veterinarian and earned a habilitation degree. In 1977 he moved to the University of Konstanz to plan and set up the animal research facility as its academic director. A revolutionary principle of this time was the inclusion of cell culture laboratories to produce antibodies by animal-free methods.

Franz' interest in the 3Rs (replace, reduce, and refine) started in the early 1980s. Besides being active as an animal welfare officer and a member of the animal welfare commission of the regional council of Freiburg, he started to work for the nascent journal ALTEX in 1986 and joined the scientific board of the Foundation SET in 1987. In 1993, he decided to focus entirely on alternatives to animal experimentation when he moved to Zurich and accepted the position of editor-in-chief of ALTEX and scientific advisor of Animalfree Research (then FFVFF). During his time as editor-in-chief of ALTEX until 2010, Franz professionalized the journal and worked tirelessly to grow its recognition. What started rather like an educational leaflet written in German grew into one of the most influential, open-access journals in the field. Franz has been the president of the Doerenkamp-Zbinden Foundation for animalfree research since 2005, and in 2006 he established ALTEX Edition, the society that publishes the journals ALTEX, ALTEX Proceedings, and TIERethik, and functioned as its CEO until 2018.

Franz is an inspiring figure who has showed us how, with patience, dedication, integrity, and passion for a good cause, to make a positive change and move things forward. He personally introduced some of us to the world of alternative methods and guided our path into this community. His lecture series on alter-



native methods provided background and opportunities for young post-docs to join in and teach about their research on alternatives. It has always been important for him not only to grow his own knowledge and experience but also to share them with others. Thomas Hartung often recalls how he first shared his idea for a human pyrogen test with Franz the same evening over a beer, and he replied, "Write this up for ALTEX!" His principle of sharing and spreading the gospel was implemented formally by the establishment of professorships to teach the young generation about alternative methods. Franz' greatest success is the implementation of the 3Rs in academic curricula of renowned universities around the world. This was achieved by the Doerenkamp Zbinden

Foundation sponsoring endowed chairs at Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore, US), the University of Utrecht (NL), the University of Konstanz (D), in Chennai/Tiruchirapalli (India), and at the University of Geneva (CH). For several of these professors this was instrumental in allowing them to build a career on new approach methods. Franz accompanied and enabled their continuous growth over two decades and extends this support until today.

For several decades, Franz has represented both evidence-based science and animal welfare, allowing both "worlds" not only to profit from one another but to grow together. The 3Rs field would never be what it is now without this determined pioneer advocating for better, animalfree science. "Retirement does not exist in my dictionary," he said once. He is still fully engaged in promoting alternatives to animal testing as the president of the Doerenkamp-Zbinden Foundation for animalfree research, the president of ALTEX Edition, the co-president and board member of the society Doctors for Animal Protection in Medicine, and member of the scientific committee of EUSAAT.

Thank you, our dear Franz, for being such an inspiring and dedicated colleague and a genuine friend to many of us. It is a true privilege to work with you. We wish you all the best and look forward to enjoying your company and collaborating with you for many more years to come. Together we are stronger and every day closer to reaching our common goals!

Your colleagues at ALTEX Edition and the Doerenkamp Zbinden Foundation