

Obituary: Walter Hans Eysel · 1935–1999

W. H. Eysel, our good friend and colleague, an enthusiastic crystal chemist and Professor of Crystallography at the Ruprecht-Karls-Universität of Heidelberg, passed away on Saturday, 23 October 1999 in Heidelberg.

Walter Eysel was born in the village of Langenselbold in Hesse. He studied mineralogy at the University of Frankfurt from 1955–1962. He then became assistant to Theo Hahn at the Institute of Crystallography at the RWTH in Aachen and in 1968 he received a Ph.D. for his thesis on “Kristallchemie, Polymorphie und Mischkristallbildung von Silikaten und Germanaten der Verbindungstypen A_2BO_4 und A_3BO_5 .” In 1971, he defended his habilitation thesis on “Strukturelle und Kristallchemische Verwandtschaft bei Verbindungen $A_2[BX_4]$ und $A_2[BX_3]$.” In 1973, after one year of research at the Pennsylvania State University, he became a lecturer in Mineralogy and Crystallography, and the following year became Apl. Professor at the RWTH. The German Mineralogical Society, DMG, honoured him in 1975 with the V. M. Goldschmidt-Preis for his outstanding crystal chemical research. He was Professor of Crystallography and Mineralogy at the University of Heidelberg since 1978.

Walter Eysel continued his way of research in crystal chemistry of minerals and especially of synthetic compounds. He still focused his studies on solid solubility, phase transformations and their driving forces in many systems, and about 75 students worked with him for their Ph.D. or diploma theses very successfully. All were inspired by his engaging personality and friendly character. Numerous publications emerged from these studies, many of them involving germanates as models for silicates. He planned to write a monograph on germanates after his retirement. It is a pity that this book, which is overdue, could not be finished.

Walter Eysel has always contributed to the development and improvement of methods in X-ray diffraction, as well as in thermal analysis. He was an active member of many scientific societies. Among his many commitments, he served on the ICDD Board of Directors, and in 1999 he became a Distinguished Fellow of the ICDD. His group contributed about 500 patterns to the Powder Diffraction File.

Walter was a man of many interests. He was a famous pisciculturist and wrote scientific papers in this field. Several extended trips to Lake Tanganyika with diving excursions enabled him to study the behavior of his preferred species.

His friends, colleagues at his university, as well as at the ICDD, and former students will never forget his enthusiasm, his competence, his friendly character and gentleness. He will be truly missed.

Horst Joseph Pentinghaus
Michael Tovar