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IN MEMORIAM: KURT SCHÜTTE
1909–1998

On August 18, 1998, Professor Dr. phil Kurt Schütte died at the age of nearly 89. He was famous as a proof theorist but his interests were much broader. His work includes articles in algebra, geometry and graph theory.

Kurt Schütte was the last doctoral student of David Hilbert. In his thesis, mainly supervised by Paul Bernays, he worked on a decision problem. Later, he focused on proof theoretic problems. He became famous for his consistent use of infinitary proof figures in proof theory. Concurrently with Solomon Feferman, but independently, he succeeded in finding the precise ordinal bound for predicativity. He reported this result in a one hour lecture at the International Congress of Mathematicians in Moscow 1966. Another highlight of his research was the paper "Syntactical and semantical properties of simple type theory" (THE JOURNAL OF SYMBOLIC LOGIC **25**, 1960) which paved the way for the later proofs of Takeuti's fundamental conjecture for simple type theory by Tait, Takahashi and Prawitz. The theory of ordinal notations was a persistent focus of Schütte's interests.

Schütte has written four monographs; "Beweistheorie" in the Springer Grundlagen series (1960); "Vollständige Systeme modaler und intuitionistischer Logik" Springer (1968); "Proof Theory" Springer Grundlagen series (1977) (which is much more than a translation of the former "Beweistheorie") and, together with Wilfried Buchholz, "Proof Theory of Impredicative Subsystems of Analysis" Bibliopolis (1988). He was a member of the "Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften", a corresponding member of the "Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften" and belonged to numerous other scientific societies among them The Association for Symbolic Logic. From 1968 until his death he served on the editorial board of the Archive for Mathematical Logic.

Schütte was born on October 14, 1909 in Salzwedel, Germany. He studied mathematics, physics, chemistry and philosophy at the universities in Berlin and Göttingen and got his doctoral degree in 1933 at Göttingen. In 1935 he passed the government examination for high school teachers and worked as "Studienreferendar" from 1935 until 1936. Because of the poor professional prospects for mathematicians, he started a second career as meteorologist during World War II. After the war he returned to mathematics as a high school teacher and simultaneously as "tutor" at the university of Göttingen.

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In 1950 he got a position as "wissenschaftlicher Assistent" at the university in Marburg, passed his "Habilitation" in 1952 and became "Dozent" in 1955 and "apl. Professor" (which is just a title without a position) in 1958. Kurt Gödel invited him to the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton and Schütte accepted the invitation for the academic year 1959/60. In 1961/62 he was visiting professor at the ETH Zürich and in 1962/63 visiting professor at the Pennsylvania State University. In the spring of 1963 he was appointed "ordentlicher Professor" by the university of Kiel. In 1966 he accepted an offer from the university in Munich. He stayed in Munich until his retirement in 1977. Even as Professor Emeritus he continued his work. He followed and commented on the work of his students and also their students. His last paper—a problem in graph theory revisiting a theme from his doctoral dissertation—is accepted and supposed to appear in 1999/2000.

Besides his scientific work Schütte was also a successful teacher. He had numerous doctoral students. Today, many of them hold chairs either in Mathematical Logic or in Computer Science.

Schütte was a genteel and gentle man. Quiet, modest, open and friendly to everybody regardless of his position. His eyesight, already bad when he was active, deteriorated with increasing age. Though he was practically blind in his last years he never complained. He was always cheerful and full of ideas. His last paper reached me not in written form but spoken on a tape.

Mathematical Logic and especially Logic in Germany has lost one of its pioneers.

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