PRESS RELEASE

Prof. Dr. Adolf Goetzberger, Founder of Fraunhofer ISE Has Died

The solar pioneer and founder of the Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems ISE, Prof. Adolf Goetzberger, passed away on February 24, 2023 at the age of 94. In 1981 as the then director of the Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Solid State Physics IAF, Goetzberger pushed through to spin off a working group and form an independent institute devoted to solar energy systems. Thus, the Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems ISE was founded. In the same year, the physicist developed, among other things, the idea of agrivoltaics, the dual harvesting of crops and energy, which is now experiencing its breakthrough in Germany. He contributed his visionary work to numerous expert committees, boards of trustees, commissions and working groups and was honored with many renowned prizes and awards.

"I am often asked how I came across solar energy in particular, which at the time was not taken seriously at all as an energy source," Adolf Goetzberger wrote in a 2018 retrospective on his life. "Above all, I was fascinated by the Club of Rome's study on the 'Limits to Growth.' It seemed obvious to me that, since fossil fuel resources are finite, an inexhaustible source of energy, like the sun, could not be disregarded." Adolf Goetzberger headed Fraunhofer ISE in Freiburg from its founding in 1981 until his retirement in 1993. The institute, where solar energy generation and energy system technology were jointly conceived and worked on from the start, grew rapidly to become one of the leading institutes for solar research, and today is the largest in Europe.

"We bow to the life's work of Adolf Goetzberger and are grateful for his exceptional contribution to solar energy systems development and the global energy transition," says Prof. Dr. Hans-Martin Henning, one of the two current institute directors of Fraunhofer ISE. Institute Director Prof. Dr. Andreas Bett adds: "In him, the solar industry loses an esteemed scientist and visionary mastermind, who accompanied our institute with lively interest until his old age."

After studying experimental physics, Adolf Goetzberger received his doctorate in 1955 from the University of Munich for his work on the crystallization of vapor-deposited antimony layers. He then moved to the USA to work with William Shockley, Nobel Prize winner and co-inventor of the transistor, later moving to the famous Bell Laboratory in Murray Hill, New Jersey. In 1968, he returned to Germany and became director of the Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Solid State Physics IAF. In 1971, he was appointed

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honorary professor at the Faculty of Physics by the University of Freiburg and in this capacity supervised numerous diploma and doctoral theses.

Adolf Goetzberger was the holder of more than 30 patents. His original idea of "agrivoltaics", developed together with Armin Zastrow as early as 1981, is experiencing a breakthrough today. His cooperation and expertise were highly appreciated in the many expert committees, boards of trustees, commissions and working groups in which he participated throughout his life. For example, he was president of the German Society for Solar Energy (DGS) from 1993 to 1997.

Adolf Goetzberger's outstanding contributions to solar energy utilization have been recognized many times over. In 1983, Adolf Goetzberger was the first German to receive the J. J. Ebers Award from the American IEEE Electron Devices Society for the development of the silicon field-effect transistor. In 1989, he was awarded the Medal of Merit of the State of Baden-Württemberg and in 1992 the Order of Merit First Class of the Federal Republic of Germany. In 1993, he received the Achievement through Action Award from the International Solar Energy Society ISES, and in 1995 he received an honorary doctorate from Uppsala University as well as the Farrington Daniels Award, also from ISES. This was followed in 1997 by the distinguished Karl Boer Medal, the Becquerel Prize and the William R. Cherry Award. In 2006, Solar World AG awarded him the Einstein Award and EUROSOLAR the European Solar Award respectively. In 2009, he was awarded the European Inventor Award by the European Patent Office in the category "Lifetime Achievement".

Fig. 1 Solar pioneer and founder of Fraunhofer ISE, Prof. Adolf Goetzberger, passed away on February 24, 2023 at the age of 94. © Fraunhofer ISE

Fig. 2 Adolf Goetzberger founded the Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems ISE in 1981 and headed the institute in Freiburg until his retirement in 1993. © Fraunhofer ISE