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Leipzig, 01.07.2024

In Memory of Dr. h.c. Günter F. Thiele: A Life Dedicated to Public Relations

The Günter-Thiele-Foundation for Communication and Management announces with deep sorrow that its founder, Dr. h.c. Günter F. Thiele, has passed away at the age of 90. His visionary work has significantly shaped modern communication consulting.

Through his generous support, research and education in corporate communication at the University of Leipzig have gained national and international recognition. In May 2002, Günter Thiele received an honorary doctorate from the University of Leipzig, honoring his contributions to the development of public relations in both academia and practice. Projects such as the Günter-Thiele-Prize, the Günter-Thiele-Research Fellowship, and various initiatives like the Academic Society for Corporate Management & Communication, the Center for Research in Financial Communication, and the Center for History & Corporate Communication are testaments to his lasting impact.

“His death leaves a significant void in the world of public relations. Günter Thiele will be remembered as a visionary thinker, generous patron, and wise mentor. We will deeply miss our founder and friend,” said Prof. Günter Bentele, Vice Chairman of the Günter-Thiele-Foundation.

“The legacy of Günter Thiele lives on through the numerous projects and initiatives he initiated and supported. The Günter-Thiele-Foundation will continue to promote the transfer of knowledge between research and practice and advance education in corporate communication in his spirit,” said Prof. Christof Ehrhart, Chairman of the Günter-Thiele-Foundation. “We mourn the loss of a wonderful person and honor his life’s work, which has laid the foundation for many future generations of communication professionals. Our deepest sympathy goes out to all who have lost a great patron and advisor.”

Günter F. Thiele was born on February 12, 1934, in Bitterfeld. His interest in language and communication became evident early on. After graduating from high school and working as an assistant smelter, he studied German studies, psychology, and philosophy at the Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg, which laid the foundation for his remarkable career.

His professional journey began at DDR Radio in Leipzig, where he established himself as a journalist. In 1959, Thiele moved to the Federal Republic of Germany and initially worked at Henkel in Düsseldorf before honing his skills as a copywriter and chief copywriter at the R. W. Eggert advertising agency.

In 1968, he founded the PR agency ABC Presse-Information, which he built into Germany’s largest and leading communication agency over the following decades. Under his leadership, the agency grew not

only in size but also in influence and reputation. Many of his former employees, including Bernd Schuppener, Ralf Hering, and Egbert Deekeling, later became prominent figures in the industry themselves.

After selling his agency group to the international Eurocom Holding, Thiele increasingly dedicated himself to promoting research, particularly PR research, from the 1990s onwards. He co-founded the “Foundation for the Promotion of PR Science at the University of Leipzig,” which evolved into the Günter-Thiele-Foundation in 2014. This foundation supports research and teaching in communication management and aids young academics in the field.

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