

Dr. h.c. Laudatio – Prof. Gerhard Weiss, Chair of the Department of Knowledge Engineering (DKE) at Maastricht University, for Prof. Wolfgang Wahlster – 16.1.2015

Professor Wolfgang Wahlster has significantly and substantially contributed to the field of Artificial Intelligence, both research-, application- and education-wise.

-- His research contributions cover a broad range of topics, including, in particular, user modeling, speech-to-speech translation, multimodal user interfaces for cyber-physical systems, car-to-car communication, digital product memories, and smart factories/services/ devices. Wolfgang Wahlster is co-author/editor of more than 200 peer-reviewed publications and 12 books.

-- Professor Wahlster has managed on an enduring scale to bring latest research results very successfully, and in close cooperation with companies and industry, to real-world applications. Much of his work is, or has led to, key enabling technology for the ongoing so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Wolfgang Wahlster created the German Research Center for AI (DFKI) in 1988 as a Public-Private Partnership and he grew it, as its director and CEO, during the past 25 years to the world's largest non-profit AI research center. Many industrial partners are involved in DFKI as shareholders. The DFKI staff comes from 60 different countries – DFKI is truly international, much as our university is.

-- The topic of today's dies natalis is "engaging talent". Engaging talent – educating, supporting and attracting talents in his field – has always been a deep concern of Professor Wahlster. Since he became full professor of computer science artificial intelligence at Saarland University in 1984, he supervised 70 PhD students – 19 of them became professors – and more than 400 diploma/master and bachelor theses.

-- Wolfgang Wahlster is an international figurehead in the field of artificial intelligence who has shown how to integrate effectively research, education and applied technology based on artificial intelligence. This makes him a unique source of inspiration for the Department of Knowledge Engineering (DKE) of Maastricht University and for our University as a whole.

Professor Wolfgang Wahlster receives an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Maastricht for his achievements in the field of artificial intelligence and their far-reaching, positive impact on industry and society. We are very delighted and proud that he has accepted this honorary doctorate and we are sure this establishes a very fruitful and long-lasting link between him and Maastricht University.

I warmly congratulate you on this honorary doctorate!

By the authority vested on me by law and in conformity with the decision of the Board of Deans I hereby confer upon you, Professor Wolfgang Wahlster, the degree of doctor honoris causa and all the rights deriving there from by law and tradition. As evidence of this I present to you the degree certificate signed by the Rector, the dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Sciences, and myself, and affixed with the great seal of the University and I put on your shoulders the cappa which signifies the honor bestowed upon you.