

Obituary Dr. Günther Keil

On February 18, our long-time employee and friend Dr. Günther Keil passed away completely unexpectedly shortly after his retirement. Günther Keil had worked as a scientist at the Institute since 1981, first in Tübingen and since 1995 as deputy director of the Institute of Molecular Virology and Cell Biology on the Isle of Riems.

Günther Keil studied biology in Constance and graduated in 1978. During his doctoral thesis at the University of Erlangen, he already dealt with herpes viruses, which have remained his major field of research for a long time. Starting with Herpesvirus saimiri in Erlangen, he continued his molecular biological work in Tübingen with Murine Cytomegalovirus as part of basic studies on the molecular characterisation of this model pathogen. He then turned his attention to research into bovine herpesvirus-1. His much acclaimed results included the clarification of the functions of viral structural and non-structural proteins, the development of deletion and vector vaccines, and the improvement of antigen presentation for the induction of optimal T-cell immunity. In recent years, he has focused his research activities on African swine fever virus.

More than 100 publications in international journals testify to his successful scientific work. In addition, he has been intensively involved in the training of a large number of young scientists through his guidance and supervision. Since his diploma thesis with the nestor of German genetic engineering research, Prof. Rolf Knippers, biotechnology and genetic engineering have been a particular focus and concern of his work. For many years, he headed the Senate working group and the Biosafety Committee at the Institute.

Günther Keil was always on hand to provide advice and support, and selflessly shared his enormous wealth of experience with others. For many years he supported the Institute's management in a friendly and always loyal manner. With Günther Keil we are losing a committed scientist, a highly esteemed colleague and a good friend. Our sympathy goes to his family and friends.

