

WFPPhC-Award-2012

Every two years one of the most honourable duties of our Federation is to hand over an award to a person having done an outstanding activity in physics education and in physics competitions for secondary school students.

Five members of the World Federation of Physics Competitions build an awards committee being responsible to find this distinguished person. In the year 2012 this committee awarded this prize to Maija Ahtee from Finland.



It was in 1982 that I met first Maija Ahtee. At that time former “West-Germany” was host of the International Physics Olympiad and Austria participated in the IPhO for the first time. I was leader of the Austrian team. In those days Maija was leader of the Finnish team, and 17 countries were present at that event on the whole.

During the following years we met every year and got to know each other better and better.

Maija Ahtee studied at the University of Helsinki, was a teacher of physics, mathematics and chemistry in secondary schools in Finland for six years and then she changed into teacher training at that university, becoming a professor in mathematics and science education at the University of Jyväskylä in Finland.

Maija started her activity in the IPhO in 1977. In 1992 Finland was host of the IPhO and Maija Ahtee (together with Jukka Mattila) was very active in bringing this Olympiad to a great success.

Maija Ahtee wrote about 50 research reports in physics in national and international journals and about 100 research reports in science education, also in national and international journals. She was a member of different Physical Societies and an editorial member of the mathematics and science teachers’ magazine “Dimenso” from 1987 to 2000.

Inside Finland Maija published a great number of very useful and well known booklets and text books for teaching physics in different types of schools and for the education of science teachers.

In 1990 Maija got the honorary credit to become a Lion of Finland Knight (SL R 1)

From 1999 to 2007 Maija Ahtee fulfilled the function of the secretary of the International Physics Olympiad.

In 2007 she was present when the former IPhO-president, Waldemar Gorzkowski from Poland, totally unexpectedly passed away on the second day of the IPhO in Isfahan/Iran. Hence Maija had to work as acting IPhO-president, and she did so in the current year and in 2008, when the new president, Hans Jordens/Netherlands, was elected. After that election Maija resumed into her role as IPhO-secretary and finished this work with the end of the IPhO-2009/Mexico.

With respect to all her activities Maija Ahtee was honoured by the Award of the World Federation of Physics Competitions in 2012.

At the beginning of the prize giving ceremony of the IPhO-2012 in Tallinn/Estonia there was a special ceremony to present Maija Ahtee the award of the Federation.



The president of the Federation, Helmuth Mayr, and the head of the former Award Committee, Matti Rajamäki, honoured the outstanding work and contribution of Maija Ahtee, and the audience gave her a huge applause.

Dear Maija, we have to say "Thank you very much!" for the outstanding job you did for so many years, always warm-hearted and in full command, and we want to congratulate you on the Award 2012 once more.

Helmuth Mayr

(Helmuth Mayr)
WFPhC-president