

Ralf Kötter

by Wolfgang Utschick

We, his friends and colleagues at the Department of Electrical Engineering and Information Technology are terribly saddened to share the news that Professor Ralf Koetter passed away in the early hours of Monday morning after his heroic fight with cancer.

Ralf Kötter received a Diploma in Electrical Engineering from the Technical University Darmstadt, Germany in 1990 and the Ph.D. degree in Electrical Engineering from Linköping University, Sweden. After short appointments as a visiting scientist at the IBM Almaden Research Laboratory in San Jose, California (1996-1997), visiting assistant professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (1997) and visiting scientist at CNRS in Sophia Antipolis, France (1998), Ralf joined the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1999.

In October 2006 Ralf Kötter returned to Germany and joined the Technische Universität München as head of the Institute for Communications Engineering. All of us, the President of TUM, the Professors, the students, and the researchers all over the country were enthusiastic knowing him with us now, and the research community felt so much pushed.

Just started at TUM, Ralf Kötter was involved in numerous initiatives and cooperations at TUM, in Europe, and still with his colleagues and friends all over the world which he regularly brought to Munich establishing new contacts and partnerships. As the director of the Master of Science in Communications Engineering Programme and as Professor he was admired and loved by his students for his deep commitment to their concerns and his unique type of teaching. As a colleague he was loved for his brilliance, warmth, kindness and enthusiasm towards both research and life in general. He was a great source of inspiration for many of us.

I was always stunned by his constantly caring smile and his positive vibrancy even in the last weeks despite his painful situation. Everytime I met Ralf I was depressed to see him weaker and weaker, but when I left him after a few hours of inspiration and laughter I felt confident and optimistic.

The Technische Universität München, the scientific community, his colleagues and friends all over the world have lost a great scientist and a wonderful friend. It is very hard to imagine and accept that Ralf is no more with us.

In this moment all our thoughts are with his wife Nuala and his son Finn.

Ralf Kötters funeral mass will be Thursday, Feb. 5th, at 11am at the St. Theresia Kirche at the corner of Dom-Pedro-Str. and Landshuter Allee (<http://www.st-theresia-muenchen.de/>). His burial will be in Kronberg, the town where he grew up, on Friday, Feb. 6th.

Note: Wolfgang Utschick is head of the Fachgebiet Methoden der Signalverarbeitung at the Technische Universität München.