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IN MEMORIAM: KLAUS SCHMIDT-KOENIG, 1930–2009

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Klaus Schmidt-Koenig, an Honorary Fellow of the AOU since 1992 and a member since 1984, died on 18 February 2009 at the age of 79. Born in Heidelberg, Germany, on 21 January 1930, he attended high school at the Kurfürst-Friedrich-Gymnasium and then moved on to the University of Heidelberg. After a brief introduction to chemistry in Munich, he switched to biology at the University of Freiburg. He then spent two years with Gustav Kramer at the Max-Planck-Institut Verhaltensphysiologie at Wilhelmshaven and received his Ph.D. *summa cum laude* in 1958. His thesis was on the effect of clock-shifting on the orientation of homing pigeons and demonstrated that homing pigeons used the sun as a compass reference.

After receiving his degree, Klaus moved to Duke University as a postdoctoral fellow. He married Inka Rauch in 1959, and they had three children: Ariane was born in 1960, Martina in 1963, and Roland in 1967. At Duke, he and Inka formed lifelong friendships with Martha and Peter Klopfer. In 1963, Klaus accepted a position at the University of Göttingen, and in 1971 he was appointed a professor of zoology at Duke University. Although he continued to live in Germany, he made frequent extended visits to Durham and other parts of the United States. Finally, in 1975, he moved to the University of Tübingen, where he led the division and held the professorship of behavioral physiology until his retirement in 1996.

Klaus wrote many scientific papers and at least two books on orientation: *Avian Orientation and Navigation* (1979) and *Das Rätseldes Vogelzugs* (1980). He edited numerous volumes and was the chair of the committee that planned the Wallops Island symposium in 1970. In 1995, the Deutschen Ornithologen-Gesellschaft awarded him the ornithology prize and later named him an Honorable Member of the society, of which he was president from 1986 to 1991.

Klaus was an expert botanist of woody plants, continually picking up samples to grow in his garden at Oberkirch. As he selected release points for his homing pigeons, he was often guided by the presence of a good cheese maker, a fine vineyard, or a pond to swim in. He was generous in his collaborations with students and professionals. When William Keeton (*Science* 165:922–928, 1969) showed that Cornell pigeons were well oriented under overcast skies, Klaus wrote a strong rebuttal. Subsequently, Keeton invited him to visit Cornell and a lifelong friendship resulted. In my visits to his laboratory, I was struck by his flexibility and support of students working on a wide variety of projects—a most unusual situation in German laboratories at the time. One student later wrote: “Klaus Schmidt-Koenig was for us a revolutionary teacher. He created in his institute for behavioral physiology . . . an atmosphere of mutual trust, in which we had the freedom to develop our scientific thinking. He valued our society—and this lasted beyond the closing of the institute until his death.”