

Walter Kegel Christensen

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Our friend and colleague Walter Kegel Christensen died prematurely at the age of 60 years, at the peak of his career. This commemorative volume gathers the tributes from a wide range of his scientific friends and colleagues.

Walter was always at the very centre of *'die Kreidefamilie'*, at its outset a very informal grouping, comprising a number of comparatively young and energetic scientists who became engaged in the study of the excellent outcrops of Upper Cretaceous strata in northern Germany, southern Scandinavia, and Britain. The group reached its peak in the 1970-ies, but unlike some members Walter remained completely faithful to his early choice of research: Coniacian to Maastrichtian belemnites, with the Campanian of Scania as his base. From this platform he gradually established a solid and central position not only within *'die Kreidefamilie'*, but also in the scientific community in general with his profound insight into Upper Cretaceous belemnites and biostratigraphy. His dedication and determination in combination with a well-developed flair for statistics, systematics and taxonomy gradually made him a leading international expert in his field. Early in his career he realized the fundamental importance of biometrically

based population studies, which in his later publications provided some of the best documented examples of gradualistic evolution in the fossil record.

Among his many contributions to the scientific community almost ten years of highly competent and effective editing of the *Bulletin of the Geological Society of Denmark* (1993–2002) takes up a prominent position. Other administrative chores included active membership of numerous international committees, particularly on Upper Cretaceous stratigraphy, as well as several terms on the board of directors for the Geological Museum, including 6 years as director of the Museum.

Walter's outspoken dedication and determination also extended to his engagement in music, where he became one of the best banjo players in the New Orleans jazz community in Copenhagen, as a central and highly valued member of a number of bands from the age of 13 until his death.

As a friend and colleague Walter was unique, always present and always ready to listen. He will be missed.

Friedrich Schmid, Eckart Håkansson & Finn Surlyk



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