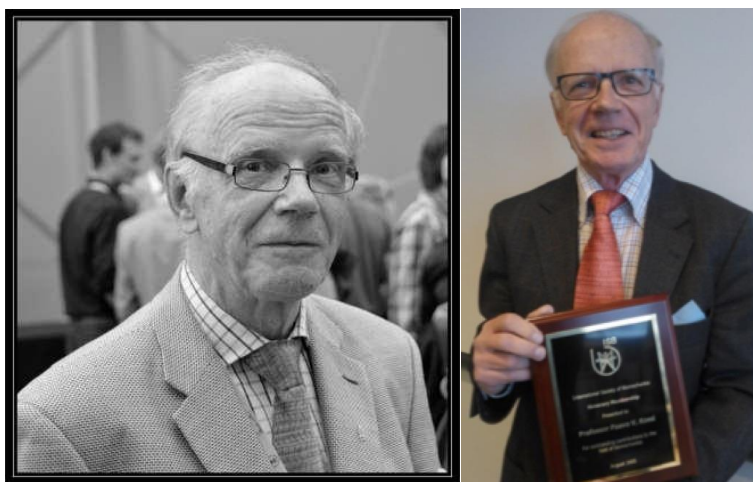


Obituary - Prof Paavo Komi



The loss of Prof Paavo Komi on October 10th, 2018



Paavo Komi (1939-2018)

Honorary member of ISB International Society of Biomechanics

Paavo Komi, a long-time member and contributor to the ISB has died at the age of 78. Paavo died peacefully when sleeping at his home. Coincidentally at this time of his passing an annual international symposium, which he initiated, was being hosted at his home institution the University of Jyväskylä.

Paavo was born in Kauhajoki, Finland. In 1963 he earned his BS degree from the University of Helsinki, followed by his MS from the University of Jyväskylä. He then pursued his studies in the US, obtaining his PhD from Penn State University in 1969. He eventually returned to the University of Jyväskylä where he was an Associate Professor from 1971 until 1979, he was then promoted to Professor of Physiology of Exercise. At the University of Jyväskylä he served as the head of the Department of Biology of Physical Activity from 1979 until 2004. He founded the Neuromuscular Research Center and served as its Director from 1977 until 2007. He formally retired in 2005, but remained active with his research activities.

Paavo had a large international influence including research visits to: the Biomechanics Laboratory, Penn State University, USA; the August Krogh Institute, Copenhagen, Denmark; the Laboratorium fur Biomechanik, ETH, Zurich, Switzerland; the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Freiburg, Germany; and the University of California, Los Angeles, USA. His engagement in biomechanics on a worldwide scale, and prolific research productivity made a major factor making the small city of Jyväskylä in the middle of Finland be known by sport scientists and biomechanists globally.

Paavo served as the Secretary General of the ISB from 1977 to 1981, and President from 1981 to 1983. He twice brought the ISB Congress to Jyväskylä (1975, 1995). In light of his many contributions to biomechanics and to the ISB he was made an Honorary Member in 2005. In light of his many accomplishments in biomechanics, in particular his research he was awarded the Societies highest award, the Muybridge Medal, in 1999. His award lecture was titled "*Stretch-shortening cycle: a powerful model to study normal and fatigued muscle*".

His long list of achievements includes an Olympic Order Award from the International Olympic Committee awarded in 2001, and seven honorary doctorates. Independent of his awards he was a committed teacher. He trained his students for writing scientific articles, and admonished them that "*...it will be the 11th version that will be ready for submission*". Congress presentations were fine-tuned until the story was solid and the fonts were big enough for the audience even in the last row of a big auditorium.

Paavo's research contributions are manifold, and his publication record long. He was awarded a Citation Award from the American College of Sports Medicine in 1999. He was the first human to have in vivo force transducer fitted to his Achilles tendon. His enthusiasm and scientific curiosity were contagious and his students continue his scientific quest to understand and explain the basic neuromuscular function, and the factors influencing performance.

The ISB has lost one of its leading contributors, the ISB and the scientific community are in his debt. He will be mourned by his wife Raija and three children.

Taija Finni, University of Jyväskylä
John H Challis, Penn State University