

König + Neurath

Mourning for Egon König

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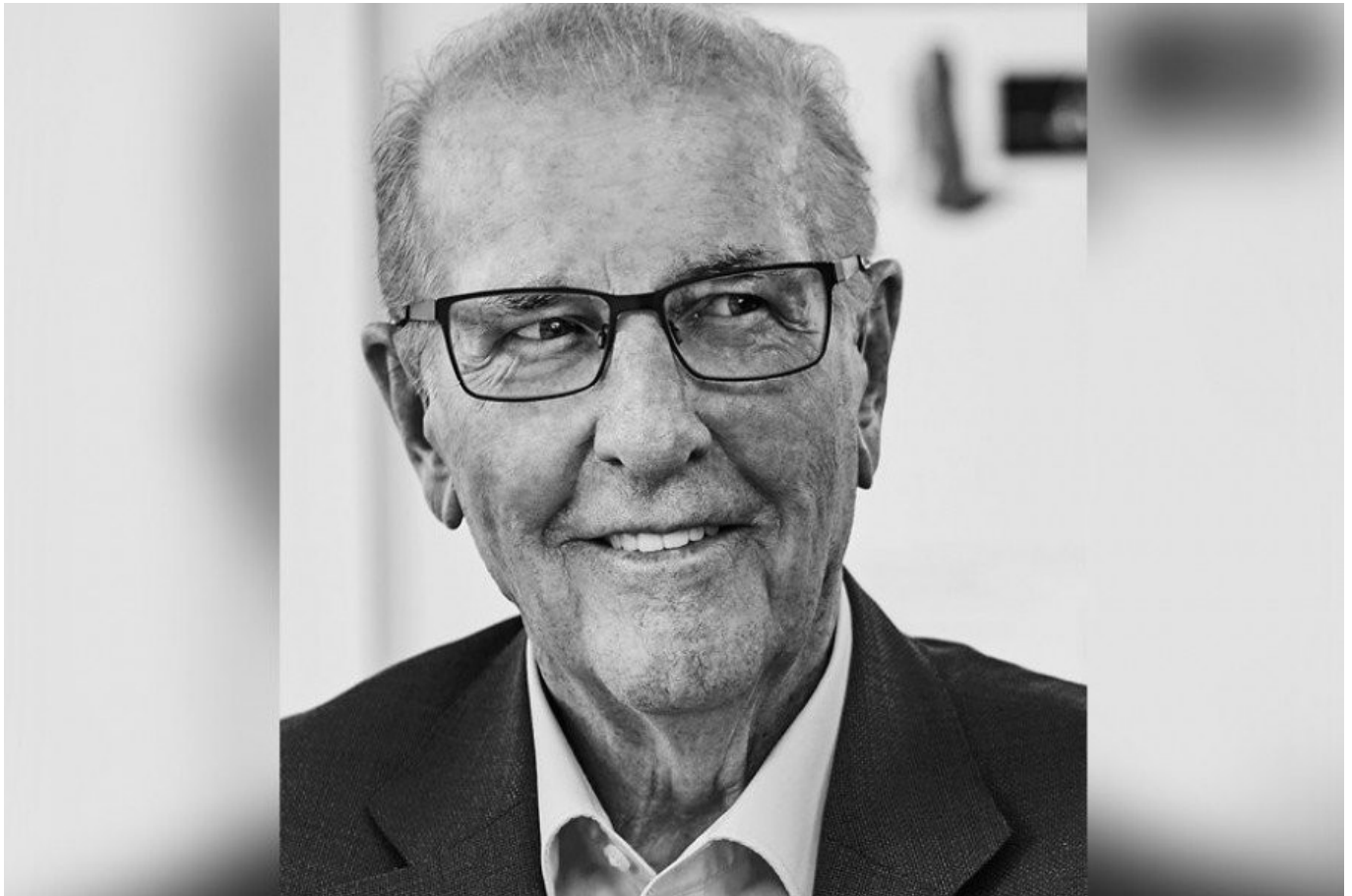


Photo: König + Neurath

The longtime owner and chairman of the supervisory board of König + Neurath AG, Egon König (photo), died after a serious illness on 15 May 2019, a few days after his 86th birthday. Over the past 72 years, Egon König has developed the company with passion, courage and entrepreneurial vision to become one of the leading office furniture companies in Germany and Europe, thus making a decisive contribution to the office furniture industry.

"With him, König + Neurath loses a wonderful person who had a special, close relationship with his employees, specialist trade partners, customers and suppliers and was always aware of his social responsibility. Despite the serious illness, he actively supported the company until last week and provided future-oriented impulses in his function as Chairman of the Supervisory Board. Following his strategic vision and drive for innovation, last month Mr. König co-developed the concept of the construction of a new high-bay warehouse at the Karben site, thereby driving millions of euros in investments," the company's obituary states.

Egon König had already joined his father's company in 1947 as an apprentice. At just 26, he became a

partner, since 1978 he was the sole owner. Egon König dealt early with the topic of rational production. With new product innovations and investments, he has always been able to stay one step ahead of the market - both in manufacturing and in the product offering. In the market of high-quality office furniture, it was a minor sensation in 1978 that Egon König completely switched the production process from order-related production to series or mass production and thus clearly distinguished himself from the competition. The establishment of new business areas were further steps to continuously increase market shares. For example, seating furniture was integrated in 1986 and the service portfolio was expanded in the following years to include room systems and steel furniture. During the transformation to a public limited company in 1996, he assumed the position of CEO.

In 2007, he handed over the operative business to a non-family management board and assumed the position of chairman of the supervisory board. His ideas about the further development of the company were always very concrete. In recent years, Egon König has set the course for the sustainable alignment of König + Neurath AG as a family business. The shares of the AG holds 100% a family holding in which its four grandchildren in the third generation are involved. Three of the four grandchildren currently hold various positions in König + Neurath AG. His longtime companion Otmar Stein has been with the company since 2005. In recent years, the family-owned company has been able to successfully expand its position in the German and European markets and increase sales to EUR 176 million in 2018. With an equity ratio of around 60% and a robust balance sheet and financial structure, the company is sustainably positioned for further positive development.

Egon König was considered an entrepreneur "through and through". Despite or because of the experience of many ups and downs in his private and professional life, he remained down to earth and his home, the Wetterau, connected. With his keen sense for market developments, his perseverance and his affinity to technological innovations, Egon König was an exceptional entrepreneur who also managed to react humorously in critical situations. On the one hand he was a man with rough edges, on the other hand he was also a very warm person and always a reliable partner. He knew most of his more than 1,000 employees by name. Sentences such as "Entrepreneurs come from business and not from neglect" shaped his everyday actions. Thus, with his human skill and pragmatism, he was also a highly valued bargaining negotiator. Within the industry, he was for many years on the board of today's Industry Association Office and Work e.V. (IBA) active and has played a significant role in the association's work. Likewise, he has been involved in the Association of Wood + Plastics Hesse-Thuringia for many years at the Board level.

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