Professor Kurt Just (+6/19/2016)

Kurt Wolfgang Helmut Just was born on May 19, 1927, in Oels bei Breslau, in the region of Silesia, Germany. He was the only child of Johann and Maria Just.

At the very end of the Second World War, while still a teenager, Kurt was drafted by the German Army for the final defense of Berlin, but served just long enough to become a prisoner of war for a few months.

After the war, he finished high school and studied at several universities in Eastern Germany. He then completed a Doctorate in Natural Sciences at the Free University of (West) Berlin. While studying in Berlin, he met and married Sigrid Walther, and they had three sons.

In September 1961, shortly after the Berlin Wall was built, the Just family immigrated to the United States. They settled in Tucson, AZ, since Kurt had accepted a position as Professor of Physics at the University of Arizona, where he taught and did research for almost 40 years.

A life-long Catholic, Kurt attended Mass weekly, read the Bible and religious books regularly, and often discussed issues related to science and religion with colleagues and friends.

He was an avid hiker, swimmer, and cyclist. He was often seen in Tucson riding his bicycle to and from the university; even the week before his death, he was still riding his adult tricycle for shopping trips and to visit his wife in her Assisted Living home.

He also enjoyed traveling, especially to scientific conferences in Europe or Mexico and to reunions of his childhood friends and school classmates from Breslau. His final trip to Germany was just last summer—traveling alone, at age 88!

Kurt remained active and alert to the very end. He had just celebrated his 89th birthday on May 19, and he was looking forward to a family reunion on June 23. But God's timing was evidently different, calling Kurt home to himself on June 19, Father's Day!

A family friend had spent the morning with him on Saturday, June 18; but when another friend came to pick him up and take him to church on Sunday morning, June 19, he was found dead in his own bed at home. So he evidently died peacefully in his sleep overnight.

Kurt chose to have his body donated to science, which caused a friend to remark: "He was a teacher to the end!" The burial of his cremains will take place later this summer.

He is survived by Sigrid, his wife of 62½ years, and three adult sons—Stefan (and Rebecca), of Running Springs, CA; Klemens, of Berlin, Germany; and Felix, of Anaheim, CA—as well as two married grandsons and two great-granddaughters.

The family asks that memorial donations be made in Kurt's name to Amnesty International.

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