

Prof. Dr. Rolf Clasen

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In Memory of Prof. Dr. Rolf Clasen

On July 17, 2025, Prof. Dr. Rolf Clasen, who headed the Chair of Powder Technology for Glass and Ceramics at Saarland University from 1997 to 2013, passed away after a serious illness that he endured with great strength.

Professor Clasen was born in Hamburg in 1948. He obtained his university entrance qualification from the Taunusschule Königstein in 1966 and subsequently studied physics at the University of Frankfurt am Main. He completed his diploma thesis at the Institute of Applied Physics under Prof. Dr. Haase on the production of lead chloride single crystals for nuclear track detection. He received his doctorate in 1974 from the I. Physics Institute of the RWTH Aachen under Prof. Dr. Grosse on the lattice dynamics and electronic structure of the iodides of arsenic, antimony, and bismuth. From 1975 to 1992, he was a researcher at the laboratories of Philips GmbH in Aachen. His research areas included electroradiography with PbO coatings, TiN corrosion protection coatings, glass and carbon technology, PCVD coating processes for the production of optical fibers, and new processes for the production of pure and doped silica glasses via a sintering process. Rolf Clasen received his habilitation in 1988 at the Faculty of Mining, Metallurgy and Geosciences at RWTH Aachen University in the field of the production of silica glasses by sintering submicroscopic glass particles and received his "venia legendi" in glass science from RWTH Aachen University in 1989.

In 1991, Rolf Clasen accepted a professorship in the Department of Materials Science and Production Engineering at Saarland University, combined with the position of Director at the Institute for New Materials (INM) in Saarbrücken and Head of the Glass Technology Department. After the Glass Technology Department was spun off from the INM (1997), he continued his work as Chair of Powder Technology for Glass and Ceramics at Saarland University. One of the material technologies in which Rolf Clasen played a key role worldwide over the years was electrophoretic deposition (EPD). He was a highly respected member of the international EPD community and, through his influential publications and his ability to translate basic research into practical applications, made a significant contribution to increasing the visibility of this process technology. Rolf Clasen was appointed Fellow of the American Ceramic Society in 2004.

His extensive work impressively combined fundamental approaches with precise application-oriented procedures. With his exceptional commitment to the German Glass Technology Society and the German Ceramic Society, his broad interdisciplinary expertise, and his unfailingly friendly and inspiring manner Rolf Clasen tirelessly promoted the exchange between the two disciplines. He was also a founding member of the joint DGG-DKG working group on glassy-crystalline multifunctional materials and significantly supported the intensive, open, and constructive exchange of ideas at the working group meetings for over two decades.

Rolf Clasen was the speaker for three consecutive graduate programs for doctoral students in the aforementioned fields, which were funded by the German Research Foundation. This opened up additional doctoral opportunities for 45 PhD students and research stays for 30 postdoctoral researchers and visiting scientists. In addition to his lectures, this also demonstrated Rolf Clasen's commitment to academic teaching and international exchange.

With Rolf Clasen's passing, the Saarland University loses a distinguished professor whose work contributed significantly to the current importance of materials science and engineering in Saarbrücken. The colleagues of the department, as well as all former employees of the Chair of Powder Technology of Glass and Ceramics, will always honor his memory.