

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Werner Otto is celebrating his 100th birthday

Establishment of “Werner and Maren Otto Foundation“

First biography about the “Man of the Century“

Berlin/Hamburg, August 11, 2009 – He is considered to be one of the most remarkable and successful personages of social market economy: The entrepreneur and patron Professor Dr. h.c. Werner Otto will be celebrating his 100th birthday on August 13. On this occasion, Otto’s wife Maren has announced the establishment of the “Werner and Maren Otto Foundation“ in Berlin today. The foundation, which is endowed with five million euro, has the aim of supporting indigent seniors in Berlin and Brandenburg.

Maren Otto also seized this opportunity to present the first biography about the “Man of the Century“ Werner Otto. As an acknowledgement of his outstanding merits, Werner Otto will also receive the honorary citizenship of Berlin from the hands of the capital’s Governing Mayor Klaus Wowereit this afternoon in the city’s Red Town Hall (Rotes Rathaus).

The founder of the Otto Mail-Order Company (now renamed Otto Group) and ECE as well as numerous other enterprises all over the world is one of the very few still living economic pioneers, who have been shaping the economic, sociopolitical and social development of the Federal Republic of Germany for the past 50 years with visionary power, distinct inventiveness and great entrepreneurial courage. It was also Otto, who brought the concept of shopping centers from the USA to Germany.

The Otto Group (founded in 1949) as well as ECE (founded in 1965) are owned by the Otto family to this day and are managed by Werner Otto’s sons Dr. Michael Otto (Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the Otto Group) and Alexander Otto (Chairman of the ECE Board).

As early as in the 1960ies, Werner Otto committed himself to what he considered to be the entrepreneur’s social responsibility, encouraging business leaders to take long-term oriented and sustainable approaches and calling upon his executive personnel to adopt modern forms of employee leadership.

At the same time, he committed himself to social aims early on and has remained a generous patron to this day. The projects supported by him include the Werner Otto Foundation for Medical Research, the Werner Otto Institute in Hamburg, the reconstruction of the Belvedere on the Pfingstberg hill in Potsdam, the rebuilding of the

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Concert House in Berlin (Werner Otto Hall) and the redevelopment of the Jungfernstieg Avenue in Hamburg.

Otto has received numerous awards in honor of his achievements, among them the Grand Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany.

On the occasion of Otto's 100th birthday, the biography "Werner Otto – Der Jahrhundert-Mann" ("Werner Otto – The Man of the Century"), written by the Hamburg historian and journalist Dr. Matthias Schmooch (ISBN: 978-3-7973-1170-2; 24.80 euro), is published by the publishing house Societäts-Verlag in Frankfurt. In this book, which comprises 236 pages and includes many previously unpublished photos, Schmooch recounts Werner Otto's life course, also demonstrating how modern Otto's views and ideas still are – especially against the backdrop of the worldwide financial and economic crisis. Schmooch talked to Otto's family members and to people who have accompanied Otto during his career. He reviewed historic documents in the archives of the company headquarters - and not least drew on his own experience from numerous personal encounters with Werner Otto.

Werner Otto is going to celebrate his birthday within his family circle in Berlin. Among the high-profile congratulators, who have announced themselves, are Federal President Horst Köhler, Chancellor Angela Merkel, Governing Mayor of Berlin Klaus Wowereit and Prime Minister Matthias Platzeck.

Please note that this is a private, not a public celebration. Werner and Maren Otto will not be available for interviews or photo and film shootings on August 13.

For more information and current as well as historic picture and audio material about Werner Otto, please go to:

www.presseplattform.de/wernerotto

or

www.werner-otto-stiftung.de

www.ottogroup.com

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