
Farewell Hermann Zapf

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I met Zapf for the first time at a T_EX conference. That time I was too shy to come close and make any conversation. I was impressed how a kind and bright gentleman he was, despite his fame and age. Before that, I only knew the name Hermann Zapf from his typefaces which I used and admired.

Then, through the work on HZ extensions for pdfT_EX I learned more about Hermann Zapf and also had the opportunities to contact him. During testing of the HZ extensions I sent the sample output to him, asking for his opinion. Zapf answered with a letter in his unique style, with beautiful typography, very kind and contented words. I was encouraged by his letter very much; before that I was having doubts if my work makes any sense. Later the faculty asked Zapf whether he would be willing to review my thesis.¹ Zapf accepted. I could only be thankful.

During another T_EX conference in Darmstadt I met Hermann Zapf again, and was lucky enough to have a dinner with him, together with Hans Hagen and Volker Schaa. I forgot that I was having dinner with a legendary person. I was simply enjoying the time being there, for Hermann Zapf was such a pleasant person to be with. It was like being with a wise and kind uncle.

When I read the news that Hermann Zapf passed away, I had an empty feeling. I said to myself, it's an unavoidable ending of a great story. Then slowly after that I realized what a loss it was, and how sad I am.

Farewell Hermann Zapf, we will miss you until we meet again.

¹ Hàn Thế Thành, “Micro-typographic extensions to the T_EX typesetting system”, dissertation, Faculty of Informatics, Masaryk University Brno. *TUGboat* 21:4, 2000.
<http://tug.org/TUGboat/tb21-4/tb69thanh.pdf>