

Dear Mr. Toennies,

I regret very much that I am unable to attend the celebration of your 95th birthday. Nevertheless, I would like to send you my heartfelt congratulations and best wishes for this special occasion.

Looking back, I am deeply grateful for the time I spent at the Max Planck Institute in Göttingen working on my diploma thesis. Although I eventually left the field of research to become a patent attorney, I continue to benefit from the broad range of techniques and scientific approaches I was exposed to during that formative period. It was particularly valuable to be so actively involved in the life of the Institute, including the obligatory and always insightful Friday seminar.

What has also stayed with me is the sense of community we shared – how much we were not just colleagues but a real team, connected by genuine friendship. Some of those bonds still exist today, and this becomes especially vivid when I look at the old photos I recently rediscovered while reminiscing about that time.

I still remember your concern when I told you which professor I would go to for my doctoral studies and your comment, "That poor man.". I am happy to tell you that, fortunately, those worries did not come true. I had a rewarding and successful time as a PhD student working in the field of femtosecond spectroscopy.

I wish you a wonderful celebration and all the very best for the years to come.

With warmest regards,
Dirk Schulz

