



Press Release

Federal Cross of Merit for Dr. h. c. August Oetker

<Bielefeld, January 31, 2023> Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier has awarded the entrepreneur Dr. h. c. August Oetker the Cross of Merit 1st Class of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in recognition of his decades of commitment in the professional, cultural and social fields.

From 1981 to 2009, Dr. h. c. August Oetker was General Partner of Dr. August Oetker KG, one of Germany's largest international family-owned companies, and served as Chairman of its Advisory Board from 2010 to 2017.

He has been closely associated with the private University of Witten/Herdecke for over three decades. In addition to his membership in the Shareholders' Meeting, he was Chairman of the University's Board of Directors from 2001 to 2007. In this function, he was committed to the sustainable development and success of this first German university under private sponsorship. His material commitment in the form of individual donations and permanent sponsorships is outstanding. Of particular significance was his willingness, as chairman, to assume the entrepreneurial risk in the event of the university's economic failure. Even after his retirement from the shareholders' meeting, he has remained closely associated with the university to this day, and his commitment as a supporter and advisor continues unabated. Most recently, he supported the realization of the university's extension building, which was built in timber construction according to the latest ecological and sustainable findings.



From the founding of “Freundeskreis Luther” in Wittenberg in 2008 until the end of the Reformation anniversary year in 2017, Dr. h. c. August Oetker also served as chairman of the group that renovated the “Schlosskirche zu Wittenberg” and the entire ensemble of buildings associated with it in preparation for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017.

Dr. h. c. August Oetker chaired the board meetings and general meetings in Berlin and Wittenberg and raised substantial donations for the overall project. With a high level of personal commitment, integrative power, inventiveness, and humor, he and the members of the “Freundeskreis Luther” raised almost one million euros.

Since 2008, Dr. h. c. August Oetker has been personally committed to supporting the SOS Children's Village organization through Dr. August Oetker Nahrungsmittel KG and Dr. August Oetker KG. The company continuously funds SOS Children's Villages projects in Germany and abroad to the tune of several million euros. The company helps finance the construction and renovation of family homes and makes a long-term contribution to the maintenance of existing homes. It also supports learning and educational projects and pedagogical measures. Dr. h. c. August Oetker demonstrates his deep interest in the work of SOS Children's Villages during his numerous visits to the organization's children's villages and facilities.

Since 2012, Dr. h. c. August Oetker has also been a member of the Board of Trustees of the “Annette von Droste zu Hülshoff-Stiftung”. One of the aims of the foundation is to preserve “Burg Hülshoff” near Münster. As a founding benefactor, he made a large financial contribution from his private assets to the foundation's capital at the time and won over further sponsors and benefactors for this important cultural project. As a member of the board of trustees, he actively accompanied the further development of the foundation into the “Center for Literature”, which was opened at “Burg Hülshoff” in the summer of 2018.



Since 2014, Dr. h. c. August Oetker has also been involved with the “Center for Sustainable Governance” (CSG) at the University of Applied Sciences for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses, based in Bielefeld. The CSG was able to be established as a foundation institute of the East Westphalian-Lippe business and administration community. Dr. h. c. August Oetker took the initiative in introducing the topic of sustainability as an entrepreneurial ambassador in the process of establishing the institute. Without his personal commitment, the institute would not have been able to develop its impact among companies, students, and the scientific community immediately after its founding. He is also to thank for the increased importance of the topic of sustainability among the student body, since as a successful entrepreneurial personality he credibly represents his value system and is thus convincing. In 1998, Dr. h. c. August Oetker was one of the founding members of the “Förderzentrum Mensch & Pferd e.V.” and served on its board. Furthermore, he is a member of the board of trustees of the association “Schule Schloss Salem e.V.”.

The owners, the Group Management and all employees of the Oetker Group congratulate Dr. h. c. August Oetker on this prestigious award and are delighted at the recognition of his many years of commitment in the cultural and social spheres.

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