

IN MEMORIAM

Antti Arjas 1940–2025

A trusted man in the industry and a role model for paper engineers

Doctor of Technology, Professor Antti Arjas passed away on Saturday, March 8, 2025, in Espoo due to a rapidly progressing illness.

Arjas was born on December 16, 1940, in Helsinki to the engineer family of Olavi and Kaja Arjas. He graduated from Tampere High School in 1959 and began his studies at Helsinki University of Technology. Arjas was the first in Finland to earn a doctorate in paper technology under the legendary Professor Niilo Ryti in 1970. Antti Arjas married Anneli Höckert in 1962, and they got three daughters. After Anneli's death in 2006, Antti found a new partner, Marketta, with whom he shared a happy marriage for 18 years.

A long career in the forest industry took him to various leadership positions across Finland, including Valkeakoski, Simpele, Kajaani, Myllykoski, and finally Espoo. As a research-oriented and widely networked professional, Arjas took on significant responsibilities in the development of production units and research, including the development of new paper grades containing mechanical pulp.

From the late 1970s, he was also a trusted representative and influencer in several domestic and international cooperation organizations, including Finnapp, the Finnish Paper Engineers' Association, EUCEPA, CEPI, the Marcus Wallenberg Foundation, and the Paper Industry International Hall of Fame Honorary committee. Arjas was also a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences (IVA) and the Finnish Academy of Technical Sciences (TTA).

Arjas was first elected to the board of the Finnish Pulp and Paper Research Institute, KCL, in 1982 and later became CEO in 1993, a role from which he retired 10 years later. Arjas strongly promoted the utilization of KCL's research results in the industry and the cooperation between research and production, emphasizing the transfer of knowledge to the factories. He also promoted KCL's international networking and participation in Nordic and European research activities, including EU research programs. Throughout his career, Antti Arjas received numerous awards both domestically and internationally, including the TAPPI Fellow recognition and Zellcheming's Walter-Brecht memorial medal. One of the organizations close to Antti's heart was the Finnish Paper Engineers' Association, PI (now the Forest Products Engineers' Association), where he was actively involved from the 1960s, including serving as chairman of the board and editor-in-chief of the leading textbook on paper manufacturing, achieving all the highest recognition awards of the association. Antti Arjas was named an honorary member of PI in 2007. He was awarded the Order of the White Rose of Finland, First Class Knight's Cross, in 1996. Arjas held the military rank of major.

Freemasonry was also an important ideological home for Antti for over 50 years. He participated in various ways in the activities of the brotherhood and charitable work, achieving the title of honorary freemason.

Family was important to Antti. He always had time for his daughters and eight grandchildren. For Antti's family, the love of music and the family summer cottage on the shore of Lake Kallavesi were important. After the children grew up, Bernese Mountain Dogs became a new hobby.

Everything Antti undertook, he did with full heart. From the beginning of his career, Antti was a pillar of his community and a father figure who selflessly helped and supported younger scientists in their work and career planning. A widely educated, always friendly, bow-tied gentleman was a well-known and respected colleague among several generations of forest product engineers.

Jan-Erik Levlin, Antti Lindqvist, Pirkko Molkentin-Matilainen, Annikki Vehniäinen

The authors are colleagues and friends of Antti Arjas.