

Award Ceremony of The John Ericsson Medal

to

Stig B. Hagström
Professor Emeritus
Materials Science & Engineering
Stanford University, California, USA

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On December 6, 1999, in an informal ceremony, Professor Stig Hagström was awarded the John Ericsson Medal for 1998 for distinguished achievements in Science and Engineering. He was also named Honorary Member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences [Kungliga Ingenjörsvetenskapsakademien, IVA]. The ceremony took place at the offices of IVA in central Stockholm. Twenty people attended to honor Prof. Hagström; there were family members, colleagues and good friends of Prof. Hagström. ASSE was represented by Dr. Erik Thörnqvist, former President of ASSE (1968 -1971) and life member and Ingvar Olsson, representing Ulf Hammarskjöld, current President of ASSE.

In his opening remarks addressed to Prof. Hagström, Dr Björn Svedberg, President of the IVA, relayed that Prof. Hagström had been awarded the John Ericsson Medal for his achievement in Engineering and Science. As a recipient of this Medal, he is in good company as many other distinguished scientists have also received the Medal, Baltzar von Platen and Curt Nicolin to name just a few.

Dr. Svedberg also said, that besides the achievements in science, Prof. Hagström has made an important contribution in his efforts to apply the best of his experiences, not only from the American universities, but also Rank Xerox, into the Swedish System for higher learning. As a former member of the Swedish Government Commission for Information Technology, Prof. Hagström has come to an understanding, that information technology is not only about technique and technology, but it also presents a challenge as to how to teach it properly. For this reason Prof. Hagström has developed a strategy for education in the area of information technology.

Dr. Svedberg ended his speech with the wish that, by receiving the John Ericsson Medal for his distinguished achievements, Prof Hagström would be encouraged to continue to be "distinguished", and to continue his efforts to return his knowledge and experiences back to Sweden.

On behalf of the American Society of Swedish Engineers (ASSE), Dr. Eric Thörnqvist congratulated Prof. Hagström and confirmed Dr. Svedberg's acknowledgment of his achievements, and added that Prof. Hagström has been active in many different areas, and his work in each one of them deserves its own recognition. Dr Thörnqvist expressed his gratitude to the award committee for an excellent selection in Prof. Hagström.

Prof. Hagström responded by saying he was very grateful for the award, and was very happy to share this day with family members and good friends. He professed amazement over the many changes he has seen in Sweden over the last six or seven years. Most notably, that Sweden had taken a leading position in the area of Information Technology. Prof. Hagström stated it is important that Sweden realizes the significance of being one of the leading nations of a technology that is changing the world, and must take on responsibility for being in such a position.

Prof Hagström now holds the position of Professor Emeritus of Materials Science and Engineering at Stanford University, south of San Francisco, California. He told us that Stanford has a special meaning for the title Emeritus. First they say, Emeritus is something one is promoted to, and should not be taken for granted and that it is the last promotion before one gets "really" promoted. The second thing is, that an Emeritus can be "called back to active duty". Prof. Hagström said it with a big smile, showing us, that he was very pleased with the fact that Stanford has called him back to active duty.

Stanford wants Prof Hagström to help build a partnership between Stanford and Swedish Industry. He is also part of a project at Stanford involving a global learning network. In connection with this, Prof Hagström mentioned, that it is very important to help the Swedish University and College System --for which Prof. Hagström is Chancellor-- to become a participant in a global way of thinking. He believes that one of the most important reforms will occur within the basic university education or maybe even at lower levels. This reform Prof. Hagström summed up as a change "from a teaching style to a learning style". In discussions with Stanford regarding this change, Prof Hagström has received a very strong response. He stated that the president of Stanford University told him that Sweden is actually the only European country, with whom one could imagine a close cooperation in order to create a partnership for developing this idea of "learning". And in a more concrete way, Stanford is supporting putting "learning" at its center. With a donation from the Wallenberg Foundation and a house given by the Stanford University, which is situated in the central area of the university, Prof. Hagström and his staff will create a center for just this purpose.

Prof. Hagström also pointed out that a global research network is developing, and within the next fifteen years it will be important that Sweden create international research alliances. In doing so, Sweden and the Nordic countries will have a tremendous opportunity to take on a leading role in those areas where Scandinavia is already on the cutting edge. Prof Hagström said that he did not want this to sound like bragging, but that he was only acknowledging that a nation in the forefront has to take on its global responsibility.

With these words of wisdom about the future, Prof Hagström expressed his appreciation and gratitude for the awards and wanted to send a warm greeting to the American Organisation, ASSE.

A personal reflection by the undersigned.

After the informal ceremony, lunch was served in a beautiful salon that had painted

ornamentation and four built-in mirrors on each wall of the room. The ceiling was covered with exquisite stucco work, and from the middle of the ceiling hung a magnificent cut-glass chandelier. In this setting, one could feel history seeping from the walls. I cannot say what stories these walls could tell, but to me it was certainly a befitting locale for such a ceremony. Prof. Hagström's acceptance speech led us toward the future, and this setting connected our history to the future through a very special ceremony and a delicious lunch.

That day was held to honor Prof. Hagström for all of his well-earned achievements, and he received the awards with gratitude. But like the big mirrors in the salon, Prof Hagström reflected that honor back to us. He said he could see that a change in attitude had reached Sweden, a greater self-confidence and a willingness to do something. Prof Hagström's speech and his presence were very encouraging, and it is not difficult to understand why he has been recalled back to active duty.

ASSE wishes Prof. Stig Hagström all the best in his future work and many prosperous years to come.

Ingvar Olsson, for ASSE.