50th IAA HISTORY OF ASTRONAUTICS SYMPOSIUM (E4)
50th Anniversary of IAA History Symposium (3B)

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50 YEARS OF HISTORY OF ASTRONAUTICS SYMPOSIUM

Abstract

Luminary Fred Durant, IAF President, passed away a few months before the venue of the 50th edition of one of the most impressive aerospace history endeavours, the History of Astronautics Symposia, held by the International Academy of Astronautics (IAA) since 1967, in the frame of the IAC.

The ball was set rolling by giant Theodor Von Karman back in 1961, when he created a Committee on the History of the Development of Rockets and Astronautics, belonging to the IAA, that he also had founded barely one year before. His vision led to the establishment in 1967 of a History of Astronautics Symposium, which today has delivered an astounding 750 papers, covering the rockets and space endeavours of no less than 42 countries in the world.

From a single session, it went up to 4 sessions in 2002, during which a pleiad of giant pioneers have told their story, like Ananoff, Bredt, Chertok, Crocco, Damblanc, Draper, Feoktistov, Gavin, Gazenko, Koelle, Konyukhov, Malina, Merkulov, Mishin, Nebel, Oberth, Pickering, Pobedonostev, Ponomareva, Rauschenbach, Schmiedl, Shepherd, Singer, Stuhlinger, Tikhonravov, Truax, Van Allen, Vassy, Young, Zwicky... not counting noted international historians.

A feat unique in IAF and IAA, all these symposia have their proceedings published, a remarkable 33 volumes so far published, which are the best history of rockets and space activities ever produced, a unequalled source for all space historians. The first volume was edited by Fred Durant and George James. A very useful detailed index 1967-2000 also has been published.

In the wake of the presentation of Fred Durant, Fred Ordway Viktor Sokolsky in IAC 1996, the full story of the Symposium, and the corresponding History Committee, will be told for the first time in this paper, including its impact on space history, together with statistics.