



ISAAC Remembers Gunnar Fagerberg, AAC Pioneer and ISAAC Leader

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Toronto, Canada – October 19, 2021: The International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC) joins the rest of the AAC world in mourning the loss of Prof. Gunnar Fagerberg of Sweden, who played a major leadership role in the founding of ISAAC in the early 1980s.

Shirley McNaughton and Penny Parnes, both of whom knew Gunnar as an ISAAC colleague and friend, said, “We remember with fondness Gunnar's contribution to the early days of ISAAC. In serving as the president preceding [*Shirley*], and the president following [*Penny*], Gunnar's tenure as president, we appreciated his knowledge and humour, and his forward-thinking and collaborative spirit. He played an important role in ISAAC's formative years. The fact that he knew multiple languages and was active in collaborative activities in both Europe and North America helped us to foster and develop our international focus. Gunnar was not just a great professional, he was a delight to know as a person. He always had a sense of fun: being first ready at the piano at our executive meeting sing-songs and planning interesting places for us to meet. Once in February, when we held a meeting in Sweden, Gunnar had us on an island off the coast of Stockholm. We got there on an ice-breaker!! [*Penny*: All I could think of was the Titanic!] We will cherish our fond memories of our Swedish colleague and friend.”

Prof. Fagerberg served on the ISAAC Executive Board as the organization's President from 1988-1990. He was a contributor at the first Research Symposium in AAC, held in Stockholm, August 1990, organized by ISAAC and the Swedish Handicap Institute. In addition to his role with ISAAC, he was also past president of the Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe (AAATE). Over his long career, he led research and development work on assistive

technology and accessibility at the Swedish Handicap Institute, The University of Western Ontario, Canada, the Royal Institute of Technology in Sweden, and Stockholm University.

Prior to the founding of ISAAC, Prof. Fagerberg was part of the International Project on Communication Aids for the Speech-Impaired (IPCAS). In the early 1980s, IPCAS commissioned a state-of-the-art study, published in 1985, to create a collective information base from the participating countries of Sweden, England, Canada and the United States, and to provide direction for future clinical and research efforts. Prof. Gunnar Fagerberg held a degree in electrical engineering from Chalmers Institute of Technology, Gothenburg, Sweden. He was most recently Principal Scientific Officer in the unit Elderly and People with Disabilities in the Information Society Directorate-General of the European Commission.

On behalf of the ISAAC Executive Board past and present, Council, and staff, we express our sincere condolences to Prof. Gunnar Fagerberg's family, friends, and many colleagues around the world.

ISAAC is an international membership organization with head offices in Toronto. ISAAC's goal is to create worldwide awareness about how AAC can help individuals without speech. ISAAC accomplishes this by sharing information and promoting innovative approaches to research, technology and literacy through AAC. Activities include hosting the ISAAC biennial conference, sponsoring projects, and offering awards and scholarships.

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