Dear colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have met here today in order to bid farewell to Professor Dr. Siegfried Prößdorf who has left us, on July 19, 1998, much too early. As the Director of the Weierstrass Institute, the institution to which Siegfried Prößdorf belonged almost 23 years long in leading positions, but also as a scientist, it is a sad duty and – at the same time – a real concern and great honour to me to stand here to pay tribute to the merits and to the achievements of the life of this outstanding researcher, colleague and human being.

I will confine myself to talking about his activity in the Weierstrass Institute. Other colleagues are in a better position to give a comprehensive appraisal of his scientific work; Prof. Silbermann will take the floor after me in order to do so.

First I would like to give a short summary of the developing of Siegfried Prößdorf into the outstanding scientist that he has been. Born on January 2, 1939, in Baldenhain in Thuringia, he went to primary school until 1953, then to secondary school. In 1957 he passed his school-leaving examination in Ronneburg in the district of Gera.

After that he took up the study of mathematics, first at the University of Leipzig, and afterwards from 1958 to 1963 at the University of Leningrad where he graduated with the mark “summa cum laude”. From 1963 to 1966, he got a training for university lectureship in the field of mathematical physics at the Leningrad University in the chair of W. I. Smirnov. His tutor was Professor Mikhlin. In May 1966, he received his doctor's degree (Dr. rer. nat.).

From 1966 to 1968, he worked as a head scientific assistant at the Mathematical Institute of the Technical University of Karl Marx Stadt. It was there that he habilitated in July 1967 and was appointed university lecturer for mathematics on February 1, 1968, and full professor for analysis on September 1, 1969.

On September 1, 1975, he started working at the then Karl Weierstrass Institute for Mathematics of the GDR’s Academy of Sciences in Berlin. From 1975 to 1984, he lead the section for applied analysis and numerical mathematics. Since 1984 he was head of a department and later, after a restructuration, head of a research group. In 1980, he received the GDR’s National Award for Science and Technology for his scientific work.

After the reunification of Germany the Weierstrass institute was newly founded and he became one of the leading scientists of the institute and head of the group “Integral Equations and Pseudodifferential Equations” right from the beginning on January 1st, 1992.
His extraordinary many-sidedness and his high productivity made Siegfried Prößdorf one of the internationally leading scientists in his fields of research. A total of 152 publications in the fields of operator theory, integral equations, pseudodifferential equations, boundary value problems, numerical analysis, boundary element methods and approximation theory are his scientific legacy for us. I would like to mention here only his monographs some of which have been translated into several languages:

- Einige Klassen singulärer Gleichungen (1974) (Some classes of singular equations),
- Projektionsverfahren und die näherungsweise Lösung singulärer Gleichungen (1977, together with Prof. Silbermann) (Projection methods and the approximate solution of singular equations),
- Singuläre Integraloperatoren (1980, together with Prof. Mikhlin) (Singular integral operators),
- Linear integral equations (1991),

More than 100 of these publications were written during his time at the WIAS and at its predecessor institute. In addition, he leaves more than 20 scientists who graduated with him and six who habilitated under his guidance. He was co-editor of a number of internationally renowned mathematical journals and he gave invited plenary talks at many international conferences.

His international contacts were manifold. He co-operated with outstanding colleagues in Germany and abroad; colleagues like Hsiao, Wendland, Meister, Gohberg, Maz'ya, Sloan, Plamenevskii, Koshelev, Gilbert, Saranen, to name only a few, answered his invitation to the Weierstrass Institute, and the reputation of the institute in the international community profited enormously from their names.

The conferences organized by Siegfried Prößdorf were very important for the Weierstrass Institute, too. I only want to mention

- the International Symposium “Operator Equations and Numerical Analysis” (1992), held in Gosen near Berlin,
- the Oberwolfach Conference “Singuläre Integral- und Pseudodifferential-Operatoren und ihre Anwendungen” (1994) (“Singular integral operators and pseudodifferential operators and their applications”),
- the Workshop on “Multiscale Methods in Numerical Analysis” (1995), at WIAS,