



# UNICA

UNION INTERNATIONALE DU CINÉMA

MEMBRE DU CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DU CINÉMA, DE LA TÉLÉVISION  
ET DE LA COMMUNICATION AUDIOVISUELLE AUPRÈS DE L'UNESCO

## UNICA mourn the loss of its Honorary President Max HÄNSLI

**On Tuesday, 9 January 2024**, Max HÄNSLI passed away in Zurich, in Switzerland, the country he loved so dearly and where he was born ninety-one years ago.

Max was a great supporter of UNICA, which he chaired for fifteen years, from 1994 to 2009. UNICA has lost a great friend, and I was deeply saddened when a message from his daughter Ursula arrived on Wednesday morning telling me the news I had been dreading, but unfortunately expecting for some time...



UNICA2006 - Photo Rolf Leuenberger

For me, Max was not only the President of UNICA, of which I had the pleasure of being Vice President for twelve years – from 1994 to 2006 –, he was part of the soul of our UNICA. I remember our first meetings, in the early 1970s... Max had already been practising his hobby as an amateur filmmaker in Switzerland since the mid-1950s (he started out in 9.5mm and then pioneered in Super 8 by making a film in this format as early as 1964, even though Kodak had not yet launched Super 8 on this side of the Atlantic!), but it was in the early 1970s that he discovered UNICA and became passionate about it. He became a UNICA film librarian in 1974 and a juror at the Torun Congress (Poland) in 1975... He settled down at UNICA and embarked on half a century of passionate service to our hobby. It was then that I met him, and I was immediately impressed by his drive, his concise wit and his joviality... With his wife Erika and daughters Ursula and Doris, he was one of three families at UNICA... along with the Michel family from France and the



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Viljamaa family from Finland! And Max's first films were short scripts featuring members of his family.

In December 1984, I joined the UNICA committee at the request of President Jupp Walterscheidt, and the first meeting I attended was held at Max's home in Zurich. His whole family was there to welcome us, and I have fond memories of that studious but very convivial meeting, which included an evening at the Zurich velodrome where a cycling competition was taking place. Another time, a few years later, it was in the snowy Swiss mountains that the committee met at the invitation of Max, who was an outstanding organiser. It's hard not to remember the UNICA Congress he oversaw in 1980 in Baden near Zurich... certainly one of the finest congresses in UNICA's history, with him and his family being dedicated to offering the best to each and every one of the 500 or so delegates, from start to finish! One of Max's great qualities was his ability to roll up his sleeves and inspire those who worked for and with him. He organised other congresses to his credit, including St. Gallen in 1991 and Einsiedeln in 2010, but he also played a key role in making the 2006 congress in South Korea a reality.

And then I remember his arrival by air at the opening of the Zillertal congress in 1998... Max was a sportsman and a sports lover, as well as being athletic enough to carry the heavy, state-of-the-art film equipment he always brought with him. He was always a filmmaker, a committed filmmaker whose distinctive voice often accompanied the highly polished images of his films. Some of his films were included in the Swiss selection at UNICA, and if I had to name just one, it would be "Die Fischer".

When I took over responsibility for running UNICA's Circle of Friends in 1984, Max, Erika and Ursula were among the first supporters, and Max, who became President of UNICA, remained a constant supporter. He loved UNICA, and UNICA loved him.

It's impossible to sum up half a century of commitment in just a few lines, and there are so many other memories I'd like to share... I would like to conclude by underlining the precise and firm manner, often clear-cut but always kind, in which Max led the meetings of the UNICA Committee, always displaying efficiency, rigor and enthusiasm throughout his presidency.

You were, my dear Max, a great President of UNICA, but above all you were a great lover of amateur film and a very fine and great friend of UNICA.

On behalf of UNICA, I offer Ursula, Doris, Moritz, your grandchildren, your family and your friends our most sincere condolences. Dear Max, we couldn't and won't forget you.

*Serge MICHEL*  
*Honorary member of UNICA*

Original text in French