

In Memoriam Erika Schnyder (1912–2008)

HANS-JÖRG HEUSSER

On 17 March 2008, our great benefactor Erika Schnyder died in Küsnacht ZH at the age of 96.

Mrs. Schnyder, a generous and entirely unselfish patron of our Institute, was closely involved with us for many years and regularly supported SIK-ISEA with major donations.

Always elegant, alert and versatile in her interests right up until the end, she was a lively and cultivated partner in conversation, with a strong and impressive personality. She had a completely original, unmistakable style and, in the face of the perils and infirmities of ageing, displayed an uncomplaining fortitude worthy of the highest admiration.

Born as Erika Seibert in Germany in 1912, she became a key industrialist and business-woman in Switzerland after her marriage, building up an impressive career. She is regarded as the founder of CWS, with the company name comprising the initials of her late husband, Conrad Wolfgang Schnyder (1906–1975). Together with him, she established CWS in a strong market position in the field of washroom hygiene in four European countries. After the death of her husband, Mrs. Schnyder continued managing the company, highly successfully, on her own, eventually selling it to the German Haniel Group in 1981. Afterwards, Mrs. Schnyder withdrew into private life, spending time in Paris, London and the USA, where she maintained an intermittent second home. From this time onwards, she was predominantly interested in art and culture, as well as in the foundations she was building up.

We will miss Erika Schnyder greatly – not only because we have lost an exceptional benefactor for SIK-ISEA but also on account of the long and pleasant conversations that I enjoyed with her on frequent occasions over the many years of our acquaintance. Both our Institute and I, personally, owe a great debt of gratitude to her. We will always hold her memory in the highest esteem.

