

New Honorary Members of the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters 2008

The rules of the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters allow it to recognise particularly distinguished scholars or patrons of academic research by inviting them to be honorary members. A total of 33 persons have been honoured in this way since the inception of the practice in 1910, of whom 11 have been non-Finns but none so far have been women. The Academy has chosen to mark the occasion of its centenary by appointing four new honorary members, who are introduced here in order of their invitation to ordinary membership.

Professor **Paavo Seppänen** was professor of sociology at the University of Helsinki from 1969 until his retirement in 1988. His multiple talents have served him in many pursuits. Having won decathlon contests in his youth, he embarked on an academic career of great versatility in sociology. His research has ranged over working life, structural changes in society, religion and the relations between sport and culture. His own interests in sport combined with his research into the sociology of sport led to his appointment to a number of positions of trust, including the chairmanship of the national sports consultative committee. In the academic sphere he was head of the Department of Sociology, Vice-dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences

and eventually Dean of the faculty for many years, beginning in the mid-1970s, the most febrile period of student radicalism, during which he was outstanding in his defence of the university's academic principles and objectives against extreme communist pressures. He has devoted his retirement years to the writing of an extensive history of his home district of Sulkava. Paavo Seppänen was invited to membership of the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters in 1975.

Professor **Eeva Tapio** worked at the Agricultural Research Centre (now Agrifood Research Finland) until she took up the chair in plant pathology at the University of Helsinki in 1973, the position from which she retired in 1991. Her main areas of research were connected with viral, fungal and bacterial plant diseases and the biological prevention of plant diseases, and the results she obtained were of the highest international standard, so that they attracted considerable attention and led to significant practical applications. Alongside her research career, Eeva Tapio was actively involved in the work of associations and foundations in the civil society, in particular the work of the Lotta Svärd women's auxiliary defence organization and the various Karelian associations. She became a member of the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters in 1982.

Professor **Anna-Leena Siikala** was professor of folklore studies at the University of Joensuu from 1988 until 1995, when she moved to the equivalent post at the University of Helsinki, from which she retired at the end of 2008. She had one 5-year spell as a research professor with the Academy of Finland. Although her fieldwork in cultural anthropology and folklore has taken her to all parts of the world, including the islands of the Pacific Ocean, her principal object of interest has been Northern Russia and its Finno-Ugrian peoples. She has occupied numerous honorary academic positions, including a long period as editor of *Folklore Fellows Communications*, other duties within that network and the chairmanship of the Finnish Literature Society. She has also been a member of the National Council for Science and Technology. She was invited to membership of the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters in 1984.

Professor **Jarmo Visakorpi** was professor of paediatrics at the University of Tampere from 1975 until 1996, although in practice he served as Rector of that university for the periods 1981–1987 and 1993–1996. His main topics of research have been concerned with children's intestinal diseases, especially celiac disease, in which he has been a pioneer on the international scene. Through his research and public information he has also done much to improve the nutrition provided for Finnish children, emphasizing in particular the importance of breastfeeding and vitamin D. He has held numerous positions in the national and international scientific community and has continued his work in the evaluation of European universities even since his retirement. Jarmo Visakorpi was elected a member of the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters in 1987 and was its President in 1998–2000.

Kari Raivio