

Jaakko Nousiainen

* 20.12.1931 † 24.3.2022



Jaakko Ilmari Nousiainen, former Professor of Political Science and Chancellor of the University of Turku, passed away on 24 March 2022 in Turku. He was born on 20 December 1931 in Pälkjärvi, Karelia. He received his primary education in Joensuu, Eastern Finland.

In the early 1950s Nousiainen was enrolled at the University of Helsinki. His progress was rapid: he obtained his doctorate in 1956. At the same time, he worked as a journalist at the Finnish News Agency (STT). His academic teaching career began in 1961 as an associate professor at what is now known as the University of Jyväskylä. In 1963 he was nominated Professor of Political Science at the University of Turku, a chair he held until 1993. In the period 1994–1997 he was the Chancellor of the university. He was invited to the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters in 1974.

Nousiainen worked as a research professor at the Academy of Finland from 1987 till 1992. In its conferment ceremony in 2000, the Faculty of Law at the University of Turku bestowed the degree of Doctor Honoris Causa upon him. In 2016 the Finnish Cultural Foundation granted its Grand Prize to him for his significant cultural achievements, especially his research

on and advocacy of the parliamentary form of government.

Nousiainen's career coincided with a vast expansion of the Finnish system of higher education. He witnessed the deprivatisation of Finnish universities and the ensuing expectations of those in power as well as the general public for useful, applicable and reliable knowledge from the universities. While Nousiainen was first and foremost a scholar and an educator on Finnish political institutions and political leadership, he willingly made his services available to the general public as well. Thus, he became one of the pioneering election commentators in the Finnish news media. He played an important role as a constitutional expert in the 2000 reform of the Finnish constitution, its preparations and aftermath.

Nousiainen led his newly-established department into a new, more international, more cross-disciplinary and more transactional academic world. He spent long periods of time in the United States and Italy, but also made shorter study and lecture visits to several European countries and encouraged his PhD students and younger colleagues to establish national and international contacts. He was among the first Finnish participants at the World Congress

of the International Political Science Association. He also played a significant role in promoting Finland's membership in the European Consortium for Political Research and subsequently became a member of its Executive Board.

Under Nousiainen's leadership, a group of his former students formed an informal academic community of aspiring scholars in the field of political institutions and comparative politics. After being joined by colleagues from Åbo Akademi University, the group received the nickname "Turku School" of political science.

During Nousiainen's most active years, the preferred format of publication for a political scientist was a single-authored book. True to this tradition, Nousiainen's main works are books, many of them unfortunately available only in Finnish. His best-known book, *The Finnish Political System*, is an exception, as is his *Nine Decades of Finnish Presidency*. The former was a widely studied and consulted text covering the main institutions of governance as well as the primary political forces in Finland. Altogether ten editions were

published of the Finnish version of the book. Nousiainen also published books on the Finnish political parties, political leadership in Finland, eduskunta (Finnish Parliament), the presidency in Finland as well as the relationships between the central government institutions.

Nousiainen was a supportive and understanding supervisor of his younger colleagues and PhD students. Under his supervision, nine persons, most of whom later became full professors of political science in Finnish universities, obtained their doctoral degrees at the University of Turku.

Nousiainen took good care of his physical well-being. As a young man he used to run in the neighbourhood of his home, conveniently located by the Aura River. Later, his running slowed down to walking and wintertime skiing. The Nousiainens had a summer home and a sailboat in the Turku archipelago. Nousiainen enjoyed sailing and was much saddened at having to give it up in his later years. Nousiainen is survived by his son and daughter and their families. He is also deeply missed by colleagues, students and friends in Finland and abroad.

Hannu Nurmi and Heikki Paloheimo

Photo: Central Archives
of the University of Turku