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To whom it may concern

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Proposal to distinguish

Dr. Thomas Thomsen (* 23rd July, 1936)

Dr. Thomsen is undoubtedly one of the most important ambassadors of chess, its history and culture of our time. He was president of Chess Collectors International (CCI) for more than 20 years from 1992 to 2014, and is still honorary president of the organisation, which unites today about 2000 members from more than 34 countries (see: www.chesscollectorsinternational.org). The aims of the society are defined as such:

- To sponsor research projects on the history of chess and chessmen.
- To explore the relationships between chess and history, culture, the arts, literature and other sciences.
- To initiate publications.
- To organise conferences and exhibitions on an international scale in conjunction with recognised museums.

In keeping with these aims, he initiated and organized (and still does), especially within the national meetings and international congresses held by CCI, exhibitions about chess in various major museums of international renown. Through his international experience and his gentlemanly appearance, he not only convinced the museums' directors to lend their exhibition halls to these exhibitions, he also managed to engage scholars of international rank to author the catalogues edited on the occasion. St. Petersburg 1994 (with an important tournament held there) and Vienna 1998 deserve particular mention:

- “Шахматы из собрания Государственного Эрмитажа”. “Chess from the State Hermitage Museum”, Sankt Petersburg. Exhibition Catalogue. Edition “Chess Forum”, Saint-Petersburg, 1994.
- “Spielwelten der Kunst – Kunstkammerspiele”. Catalogue of the exhibition in the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, ed. by W. Seipel and H. Holländer, originally planned for 21-05 to 02-08-1998, which was twice prorogated.

Moreover, Dr. Thomsen generously lends pieces from his collection to other exhibitions as well as to illustrate and enrich chess related publications. In this context, one should mention the first temporary exhibition organized in 2017 by the newly founded “House of European History” in Brussels, entitled “Interactions: centuries of commerce, combat and creation”, to which he contributed all the exhibited chess games. Earlier, he contributed to “Schachpartie durch Zeiten und Welten”, by Hans and Barbara Holländer, Heidelberg 2005, published on the occasion of the 175th anniversary of the “Hamburger Schachklub von 1830” and the exhibition in the “Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe” Hamburg connected with it. Catalogues such as the ones from Vienna and Hamburg became standard publications about the history of chess, its culture, literature, and art.



Thomas Thomsen (centre) at Yurij Averbakh's 90th birthday

On the occasion of the annual German Chess Collectors' meetings, he edits on his own account the relative exhibition catalogues dedicated to a particular subject, as for example “Chess Sets form the Erzgebirge” (by Marion Faber, J.-F. Mücke and Th. Thomsen, Erzgebirgisches Spielzeugmuseum, Seiffen, 2018), “Porcelain and Chess” (by

Barbara Flügel and Thomas Thomsen, Porzellanikon, Selb, 2017), "Eisenkunstguss und Schach" (by Thomas Thomsen, Schloss-und Spielkartenmuseum Altenburg, 2016), "Chinesische Schachfiguren/Chinese Chess Sets 18th to 20th century" (by Barbara Holländer, Kunstgewerbemuseum Schloss Pillnitz, Dresden 2012), "Miniature Chess Sets" (by Thomas Thomsen and Ulrich Schädler, Swiss Museum of Games, La Tour-de-Peilz, 2011), "Cast Iron Chess Sets by E.G. Zimmermann" (by Peter Christian Reuel and Thomas Thomsen, 2006).

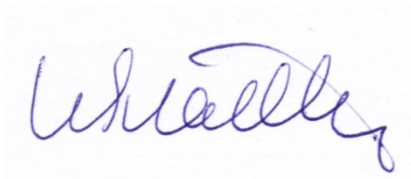
August 2-4, 1991, Dr. Thomsen, who always ascertained the collaboration of renowned scholars and scientists from different disciplines, welcomed 14 chess historians at his house in Königstein (Germany), to discuss issues of the origins and early history of chess. Among the participants were GM Yuriy Averbakh, IM Ricardo Calvo, Irving Finkel, GM Lothar Schmidt, Isaak Linder and Egbert Meissenburg. From this first meeting originated the so-called "Initiative-Group Königstein", dedicated to research in the early history of chess. Since then, members of the group have undertaken and published important studies on chess history and drawn attention to the importance of chess historical research (see: Egbert Meissenburg, "Some facts, dates and bibliographic informations concerning the Initiative group Königstein (IGK)", in: G. Josten, On the origin of chess, Cologne 2006, <https://www.gerhard-josten.de/schach/>). To be mentioned here the "Okkasioneller Rundbrief" edited by Egbert Meissenburg, as well as "Scacchia Ludus", edited by H. Holländer and U. Schädler (Aachen 2008).



August 1991: First meeting of "Initiative Groupe Königstein"

Since more than 30 years now, Dr. Thomas Thomsen, with passion, expertise and not unimportant private financial input, brings chess, its history, art and culture not only to chess players and enthusiasts, but to a wider audience – including people, who do not even play the game. The exceptional quality of the exhibitions, the colloquia and the publications launched and directed by Dr. Thomsen contributed decisively to awakening the interest in chess as a game, in the beauty of the pieces and boards (from prisoner-of-war chess sets to luxury games), in the intricacies of its history, and in its importance for human society and culture. Thousands of visitors and readers had, still have and will have the opportunity to admire the universe of chess and to grasp an idea of the cultural and civilizational impact of the game, thanks to his indefatigable efforts. Not to forget the artists and designers he inspires, and the historians and scholars he encourages.

I strongly support the proposal that FIDE may distinguish Dr. Thomsen's lifetime achievements as ambassador of Chess.



Prof. Dr. Ulrich Schädler
Director
December 2020

For additional information see a portrait of Thomas Thomsen in "Karl":

https://karlonline.org/103_5?cli_action=1609157082.377