

Introducing James Allen Dator: A Great Friend, Scholar and Teacher

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Jim Dator has been a great friend, and is a great scholar and teacher.

He has been influential in futures studies for many around the world, including myself. His teaching is centered in Hawaii as professor and director of Hawaii's Center for Futures Studies Department of Political Science, since 1972.

The term *futures*, in the plural, has been widely disseminated by Dator, and as the first scholar in the area, thus stressed the plurality of futures—depending on the different choices or events in the present, as well as, many times, in the past. Dator is also Adjunct Professor in the Program of Public Administration, the College of Architecture and the Center of Japanese Studies of the University of Hawaii at Manoa; Co-Chair, Space and Society Division, International Space University, Strasbourg, France, former Secretary and President of World Futures Studies Federation, and Fellow of the World Academy of Art and Sciences.

He became Secretary General of the WFSF in 1982 at the WFSF meeting in Stockholm when I was president. WFSF held the next conference in Costa Rica in 1984 and a regional conference in Hawaii in 1986 and then the World Conference in Beijing in 1988, always with Jim Dator as secretary general and myself as president. It was a very difficult conference to organize although we had the help of one of our Chinese members. Both he and I travelled to China, but more Jim Dator than myself due to his proximity in Hawaii to China with myself in Rome. In Beijing's General Assembly he was elected president of WFSF, The next conference was held in Budapest in 1990 and Dator was confirmed president of WFSF and Pentti Malaska, from Finland, was elected secretary general. Pentti was later president of WFSF, sadly who died in 2012.

In WFSF Dator and I worked together closely and with great understanding between us.

Dator also worked with a group of people working or interested in futures studies, including myself, that had met in Bucharest in 1972 where we, as well as other future members, also started working on preparing the aims and legal bases for WFSF. He then participated in 1973 at the Conference held near Rome, in Frascati on Futures

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Studies, which I organized with the support of IRADES, the institute where I was working, and he brought from Hawaii and presented some unique films on Futures Studies, which were highly anticipated at the time.

Dator from then on participated in all WFSF conferences and contributed to the formulation of *futures* in the plural in the WFSF's name. He also taught in different Universities in the US, and in other parts of the world including Canada, Tokyo Rikkijo University, and in Korea (working also for the government as well as on the futures of Korea.)

Dator studies and teaches Political Science, governance, and tourism and space thus showing his worldview and beyond, into space. Futures and beyond humans, are also his interests as shown clearly in his unique endeavors in his work, for example, on ethical relations between humans and robots. Much of his writing and speaking has also been in Futures Studies and Political Science, thus enlarging his principle interests, even if he also goes beyond these.

Dator has held conferences in many parts of the world (in 40 countries), as examples, recently in Romania and Finland. He has written many books and articles, on Politics of Futures and Political Futures Studies such as "Democracy and Futures" with Mika Mannermma, who sadly left us also in 2012, and Paula Tiihonen, 2006. He is an editorial member in various well-known futures journals and such as Futures, Foresight, the Journal of Futures Studies and Technological Foresight and Social Change. Dator also participated in the courses which were held by WFSF at the Dubrovnik Center in the 1970s and 1980s. I was one of the director's of the courses in futures studies as was he. The students came mostly from countries in the region, many at the time from countries behind the Iron Curtain, such as Romania and Poland, and many also from Northern Europe, such as Sweden and Norway.

This is just a brief overview of Jim Dator's many activities, writings, and teaching that offer only a small picture of his work. He is a very large figure in terms of the influence of his activities related to teaching, lectures around the world, as well as his great capacity to clarify the area of futures studies with ample descriptions as well as use futures studies approaches and techniques. I wish to personally add that he has a great capacity for interpersonal communication and great effectiveness in his writings, and his influence on futures studies and on those people that practice it, is considerable.

I have known Jim Dator since the early 1970s and I keep learning from him even though I am older than he is. I think I shall go on learning from him. I heard, on my computer, a lecture he recently gave in Finland and it was, as usual, interesting, easy to follow and stimulating for all those that wish to go on thinking about futures in terms of studies, research, teaching and beyond: human and robot relations and

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humans in space exploration. I hope to continue reading his writings and listening to his different approaches to futures, be it in relation to humans, humans and space, humans and robots from different points of view, ethical as well as artistic.

This brief introduction is insufficient to capture of all Jim Dator's capacities, but I hope I have given some idea of his great contribution to people and to futures studies for those who have not met him, as yet.