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Obituary Adelheid Klittich-Pfankuch

***30. September 1937 – †10. März 2026**



Adelheid Klittich-Pfankuch, Seiffen 2018

An obituary by Michael Negele

With the death of Adelheid Klittich-Pfankuch, the German antiquarian book trade loses a defining figure, who also became a dear friend and a caring hostess of over 25 years to CH&LS.

Adelheid Pfankuch grew up in a long-established bookselling family; her love of books was practically instilled in her from birth. She began her training at her parents' bookstore, Karl Pfankuch, in Braunschweig – a foundation that shaped her future. Early on, she developed not only a keen sense for literature and regional studies, but also a deep respect for the cultural value of books. Completing her training as an antiquarian bookseller at the Tenner auction house in Heidelberg broadened this perspective and laid the groundwork for comprehensive expertise and her later specialization. It was there that she met her future husband, Roger Klittich (June 3, 1936 – † May 1, 2015 [Obituary of Roger Klittich](#)) met and fell in love with her husband, and together they returned to Braunschweig and jointly ran the Karl Pfankuch bookstore and antiquarian bookshop from 1963 onwards.

Years of great dedication and an expansion of their business followed. As the sole owner of the antiquarian bookshop, she developed her own concept of making antiquarian books accessible to collectors. With great commitment and diligence, small collector lists and catalogs were regularly compiled, and an extensive research database for sought-after book titles was maintained for regular customers. In the 1970s, the focus shifted decisively to the antiquarian bookshop; the bookstore was sold to allow more time for antiquarian book fairs and auctions.

In the 1980s, she and her husband began building an auction house for the sale of collections and valuable books. The first auction featured a collection of paintings from the estate of the Braunschweig painter and Art teacher Sander's apprenticeship was followed by several specialized auctions of Russian icons. All of this facilitated the acquisition of book collections and valuable individual items, allowing the searches and desires of customers and collectors to be supported and fulfilled even more professionally. Her particular interest lay in regional studies and history, as well as decorative prints, historical steel and copper engravings, and maps. Both of these areas propelled the auction business forward. In parallel, the company regularly participated in antiquarian book fairs and exhibitions to stay at the forefront of current trends—especially in Stuttgart and Cologne.

At the end of the 1990s, with the dawn of the internet era, the business landscape underwent another profound transformation, which she followed with interest and actively promoted. Ultimately, however, she continued to cultivate her private clientele with great dedication, according to her own vision.

— Adelheid Klittich-Pfankuch, Roger and Karl Klittich, 2013

A new major collecting area, "chess and chess sets," was incorporated into the antiquarian bookshop's focus and developed into a significant new area of business, which the family now manages together with her son, Karl. She ran the business. This sometimes led to "generational conflicts between father and son," but with her authority, willingness to compromise, and subtle, conciliatory sensitivity, Adelheid Klittich-Pfankuch always managed to smooth things over. Occasionally, she would also lay down the law to remind everyone involved of the company's guiding principles.

What particularly distinguished Adelheid Klittich-Pfankuch was not only her expertise, but her attitude toward her profession. With diligence, tireless personal passion, and a keen sense of people, she managed her business for decades. "Always have a good book at hand"—this motto was not just a slogan for her, but a lived conviction. As a representative of the "old school," maintaining personal contact with customers, cultivating long-standing business relationships, and providing individual advice were especially important to her. Her antiquarian bookshop was not only a place of commerce, but also a place of exchange and encounter.

She revealed a multifaceted personality – humorous and warm, yet firm in her convictions. She firmly believed that "anyone who buys books must be able to read" – and equally that the "purchase of books and collections" should only be undertaken with passion and love. This attitude shaped her entire professional career. She didn't just practice her profession; she lived it. Until the very end, she remained active as

managing director of her company – with a sharp mind, vast experience, and an unbroken passion for the antiquarian book trade.

Her life's work will endure – in the collections and on the shelves of countless chess book collectors, in the history of the antiquarian book trade, as she was a co-founder of the German Antiquarian Booksellers' Association, and in the memories of many. People who knew and valued her. With gratitude and respect, we said goodbye to her. We will cherish her memory; we are grateful for the time we shared, for her warmth, her clarity, and her tireless dedication.



Marion Oeben, Adelheid Klittich-Pfankuch, Karl Klittich,
Trier 2015

I personally will miss "Heidi" Klittich-Pfankuch very much. As recently as November 22, 2025, we said our goodbyes with warm words and both looked forward to seeing each other again at the 90th auction at Theaterwall 17 on June 20, 2027. Unfortunately, a higher power prevented this; at her request, Ms. Klittich-Pfankuch's funeral took place on April 10, 2026, in the closest family circle.

Thus, a "Memento Mori" applies, but so does "Carpe Diem," dear friends.

During these difficult days of farewell, my thoughts were with her son, Dr. Karl Klittich, who, since his father's death, has worked tirelessly alongside his mother for the benefit of chess collectors and the CH&LS.

Thank you, dear Karl, and keep your chin up!

Yours, Michael

(Created by Michael Negele, based in part on information provided by Karl Klittich.)



Schmid, Forchheim 2004

Adelheid Klittich-Pfankuch, Roger Klittich and Lothar

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Pfankuch, Weimar 2014

Roger Klittich, Wolfgang Pätz and Adelheid Klittich-

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Altenburg 2016

Karl Klittich and Adelheid Klittich-Pfankuch,