



### Two Alumni from the 90s inspire DSP learners about Mathematics

Wilhelm von La Chevallerie studied Actuarial Mathematics and is a qualified Actuary (FIA) and Managing Director of CIB, an insurance company. Dr Michael Flegel studied in Hamburg, obtained his Doctorate in Mathematics in Würzburg and works for the European Space Agency (ESA).

Mathematics and the ability to logically work with or without figures is central to their day-to-day activities and responsibilities. Michael is a “taxidriver-in-space” or officially known as a Flight Dynamics Engineer at ECOS, the European Space Operations Centre of the ESA in Darmstadt. He uses pure mathematics to direct probes etc. in space.

For Wilhelm statistics and in essence applied mathematics play a significant role. It is all about analysing and understanding numbers to enable correct decision-making.

Both are passionate mathematicians and took the initiative to do a presentation to our learners about the career opportunities that are available if one majors in mathematics.

“We have profited from our time at the DSP and wish to ‘give something back’. We had great teachers who, through their teaching methods, prepared us in a very different manner than most schools in SA at the time. We both completed our Matric in 1993 and in addition completed the Abi year in 1994. In this way we had the benefit of both approaches to learning”, said Wilhelm.



Wilhelm von La Chevallerie





**Dr Michael Flegel**



**Wilhelm and Michael in Grade 9.**

Michael describes his feeling during the presentation to the Mathematicians, Engineers and Managing Directors of the future as follows: "It was awesome to see the old Aula, how it slowly filled with learners. It was somehow comforting that so little had changed. It brought back memories of my days at school. I hope and believe it is motivating to see somebody who sat in the same classrooms talking about what he does 25 years after leaving school. I for one would have been astounded if I knew back then what Wilhelm and other fellow-students would later do in life."

Ever since he started studying Michael has realised how much his time at the DSP has taught him to handle things. The pure factual knowledge takes a back seat. "We learnt how to approach problem-solving and that one sometimes needs to sit down and really focus on the problem at hand in order to master it. I do not like to use the word 'discipline' but sometimes it feels like those of us who attended the DSP simply get it much better than our peers in Germany from the same generation", explains Michael.

**We are always grateful for Alumni who are actively involved in the school, sharing their experiences and knowledge. If you can contribute kindly contact us on [alumni@dsp.gp.school.za](mailto:alumni@dsp.gp.school.za).**

