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WMU in the News

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Sebastian Hjerten

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Translation of two articles from "Arbetet", 3 December 1985.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MALMÖ

Admiral Sheldon H. Kinney leaves Skåne to become a UN adviser.

by Sebastian Hjertén

MALMÖ: - The University of Malmö? - Yes, we really have a university in Malmö, the World Maritime University, WMU.

Interim Rector since April 1985 has been the American Sheldon H. Kinney, formerly an admiral in the US Navy. Sheldon Kinney has been living among us since that date. He has been (not least because of personal modesty) as anonymous as the Malmö university of which he has been the Rector. WMU, the only university in the world for maritime matters, with two-year courses in subjects like international maritime laws and conventions, marine environment issues and the like.

The only one in the world

This the only university in the world specializing in such subjects is thus located in Malmö and only students from developing countries (with few exceptions) may obtain their degrees here. With two days' notice and at the request of the creator of the university, C.P. Srivastava, Sheldon Kinney took the plane to Malmö when he was called. He took up his duties as acting Rector with immediate effect; a lion was needed to hold the fort until a permanent person of the right calibre could be appointed. This requirement has now been met in a most satisfactory way through the appointment of Erik Nordström of the Swedish Ship-owners' Association.

The just "retiring" Rector Sheldon Kinney once (1932) began as a deckhand on the yacht Vamous but had his eyes set high, became an admiral and is now, after retiring, a UN consultant and special adviser to the Secretary General of IMO, the International Maritime Organization in London.

He has taken the hard way up in his career, has had many commands at sea, been awarded several medals for valour and unfortunately partaken in many wars. But many universities and membership in illustrious yachting societies are also part of the picture. In one of these yachting clubs in New York he met Nils Yngvesson of Malmö who became his friend.

We are a group of friends who have met Sheldon Kinney on and off since his first visit here in 1981 and we followed him to the taxi to the ferry when it was time to say goodbye this time. He was going to London to continue to Washington.

Illah Nimrodsdotir, who took the picture to the left, from the island of the sagas, Iceland, was there. Iceland, by the way, is an exemption from the university's entrance requirement "developing country". There were also friends from the maritime world and a little boy, Louis, who usually questions Mr Kinney about diving in the Caribbean waters where his 30 yd ketch Allied Seawind is anchored.

Will be visiting us

One can say about very few people that they are of the Hemingway type but Kinney is one of them and we hope he will come back soon as he has promised. As a UN consultant with the world as his place of work he will be visiting us now and then, particularly as he often and with pleasure expresses his love for Swedish things and in particular for what is Scanian. Among other things there is talk about a remarkable donation to the University of Lund for which Kinney himself has raised the money. But more about this later. And this should make us native and immigrant Scanians feel good. One thing is for sure: When Admiral Kinney recently left for London, the city by the Sound lost a breezy personality.

He takes over the helm

Erik Nordström is the man who has taken over the helm as Rector of the World Maritime University in Malmö. He is 55 years old and comes directly from the Swedish Shipowners' Association in Gothenburg.

The school is a fine example of the UN idea of international exchange. It also provides an opportunity of raising the educational level in the developing countries, something that I have very much at heart, says Erik.

He has also a great deal of experience of maritime matters internationally. During the last few years he has held the post of Deputy Chairman of the Swedish Shipowners' Association with special responsibility for international issues. He has travelled back and forth between the world's metropolises.

Erik Nordström has also had a number of other assignments in addition to his regular job. Among other things in the 70's he was a lecturer in the Middle East on behalf of SIDA.

- I have many contacts abroad, something which I believe is a great asset for a Rector of this, to say the least, international school. Our 150 students come from 74 different nations, says Erik.

In addition to his commitment to maritime matters Erik Nordström is an assiduous poet of daily verse. Over 1.000 daily poems of his have been published in Göteborgs-Posten and within the next few days his second collection of poems will appear in the bookshops.