Bart De Moor Hedersdoktorer
Dr. Honoris Causa KTH Stockholm
April 17 2026

On Friday, KTH Royal Institute of Technology held its academic ceremony at Grand Hôtel Stockholm. New professors were installed, and honorary doctorates were conferred on Bart De Moor, professor at KU Leuven and Anna Rathsman, chair of EISCAT.



The KTH Great Prize was awarded to Carina Haak, founder of Fritidsbanken. Tomas Ireman, director of Research and Technology at Saab, received the Award for Industry Collaboration. The Janne Carlsson Scholarship was presented to Bengt-Göran Rosenén, professor at Halmstad University.

Congratulations to you all and thank you to everyone who participated!



Signing KTH's guest book upon arrival



Hilde and me: ready to go to the ceremony



Welcome by Rector Anders Söderholm



The parade of the flags by the students on the Superman Theme by John Williams



All guests formally dressed up in white tie !





Laudatio by Dekanus Sofia Ritzén: "*Bart De Moor, professor at KU Leuven, is an internationally leading AI researcher highly recognized for his major contributions in system identification, numerical methods, statistical signal processing, and data analysis algorithms, areas that are crucial for industrial AI applications, particularly in biomedicine. He has supervised more than 90 PhD students, holds an ERC Advanced Grant, and has founded several spin-off companies. As leader in the Flanders AI Program and through previous senior roles within the Belgian Ministries of Research and Education, he also demonstrates a strong social and societal commitment. Prof. De Moor has a longstanding relationship with KTH through scientific collaborations and as a scientific advisor to the Wallenberg AI, Autonomous Systems and Software Program (WASP). KTH has greatly benefited from this collaboration and looks forward to continuing it in the future."*

"Welcome, I great you and promote you by presenting the insignia: the hat, the ring and the diploma. May success be bestowed on you, esteemed honorary doctor !"











With my co-honorary doctor, Dr. Anna Rathsman, former director of the Swedish Space Agency



With my longstanding good friend and colleague, prof. dr. Bo Wahlberg



Very touching and considerate:The students presented me with an exceptional honor: On their *'teekkarilakki'* (student hat), they wear a *'tassel'*, with knitted rings in color, one per study year accomplished. The white colors here refer to my studying five years of electrical engineering!



Also Jakob and Sophie attended. Thomas, Naomie, Olivia, Oscar, Hannah and Thijs followed on-line….



… and all our friends were represented by these ambassadors (Bea, Bernard, Joke, Bart).



Grand finale of the Academic Session !





The formal but nice banquet with speeches, including mine:

Ladies and gentlemen,
In all your capacities and competences,

It is for me a big honour and privilige, to speak some words of gratitude for the honors bestowed upon us, on behalf of my colleague - from now on I can call her 'partner in crime' - Dr. Anna Rathsmann and myself. Yesterday, in the welcoming reception by the rector and some deans, both of us were addressed by pointing out several differences between us. But today, I would like to point out some striking ressemblances as well.

First of all, we are born in the same year, and, as in my country it is quite uncommon to ask for a lady's age, I will leave it up to you to guess what marvellous year that might have been!

Secondly, both of us have a lot of friends and colleagues from Sweden.

For Anna this is quite natural, as one might expect, when one is born, raised and educated in this splendid country, and she has been the director of the Swedish Space Agency.

But also for me, there are many friends and colleagues in Sweden, an interaction that started about 40 years ago as some of the founding fathers of modern control theory and system identification were and are Swedish, and during my postdoc in Stanford, there was a huge Swedish gang in the department of Electrical Engineering, some of which are also present here today. Since about 30 years I have been coming to Sweden in several roles, at least once a year!

But there are at least two more ingredients that Dr. Rathsmann and I share.

For sure, we are both proud to be engineers, a word that finds its ethymological origin in Latin, 'ingenium', meaning 'clever, creative solution' to some technological challenge.

Two specific words characterize the engineering endeavors we have both been working in, namely 'space' and 'data'.

In my work, I have always reserved a lot of space for data, space also meaning geometrical – spatial – approaches to develop algorithms to make dynamical models of data.

And in one of her interviews, Anna observed that modern space applications – space meaning here 'cosmos' and 'universe'- generate three important things, namely data, data and data.

So 'space' and 'data' for sure are two of the characterzing features of the field we have both been involved in.

But last but not least, we also share some deep concerns about the seemingly unstoppable role of technology in our modern societies.

On the one hand, we can be proud of all the engineering achievements over the last 250 years, since the first industrial revolution.

On the other hand, our modern, global society has to cope with what I would call, three important deficits that are induced by technology.

There are <u>ethical deficits</u>, that originate in delicate questions that arise from technological advances.

There are <u>legal deficits</u>, that increasingly require regulations, sometimes leading to under- or overregulation.

And last but not least, there are <u>democratic deficits</u>, think of fake news, which increasingly impact the basic operational modes of our democracies.

But nevertheless, Anna and I are extremely grateful for the honors we have received, because we know that also your renown institute, KTH, is one of the drivers of this modern technological evolution, on the one hand, but that on the other hand, you share our growing concerns about the ethical, legal and democratic deficits that are induced by our technologies.

And for all these reasons, from today on, both of us will be proud ambassadors of this broad, international and impactful mission of your university.

Thank you very much.

Tack så mycket.