MEMORIAL RESOLUTION OF THE FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS JOHN A. NOHEL

John A. Nohel, Emeritus Professor of Mathematics, died on November 1, 1999 in Zurich, Switzerland. Born in Prague on October 24, 1924, he lived in Czechoslovakia until 1939 when his family was forced to leave their home. They eventually emigrated to the United States. He joined the U.S. Navy and became a citizen in 1943. After his military service, he completed his education, receiving a B.A. in Electrical Engineering (with distinction) from George Washington University (1948) followed by a Ph.D. in Mathematics at M.I.T. (1953). His thesis was written under the direction of the eminent mathematician, Norman Levinson. John then took a position as Assistant Professor at Georgia Institute of Technology. He left that institution in 1961 with the rank of Full Professor and joined the Mathematics Department at the UW--Madison.

Here at the UW, John led an extremely active and accomplished professional life, retiring in 1991. He wrote the bulk of his more than 80 research papers here, co-authored or co-edited 12 books, guided 10 students to their Ph.D.'s, and was a very successful mentor to postdoctoral fellows. He served as Chair of the Mathematics Department from 1968-1970, as Director of the Mathematics Research Center (MRC) from 1979-1987, and as founding Director of the Center for the Mathematical Sciences from 1987-1990.

John's earliest research involved the study of the qualitative behavior of solutions of differential equations, Volterra integral equations, and differential-delay equations. Eventually his interests shifted to mathematical problems for integrodifferential equations and their application to the theories of viscoelasticity, heat flow, and non-Newtonian flows. He made many important contributions to the questions of existence and asymptotic behavior of solutions, to energy methods, and to conservation laws with memory. His gregarious nature led to many successful collaborations, especially during his service as Director of MRC. In addition, his ever-positive and supportive attitude fostered a particularly congenial and much appreciated atmosphere at MRC, an atmosphere that helped to maintain MRC as a major international center for applied mathematics in the broadest sense.

In 1984, John was elected a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Three special issues of the Journal of Integral Equations and its Applications were dedicated to him in 1990 in commemoration of his 65th birthday.

John was an active member of many professional organizations including the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics, the American Mathematical Society (AMS), the Mathematical Association of America, and the AAAS. He served these organizations in many capacities: committees, editorial boards, and elected advisory bodies. He was especially proud of his service on the AMS Committee for Human Rights of Mathematicians (1977-85 and as chair 1979-81) where he helped politically persecuted colleagues in the Mathematics community.

John moved to Switzerland in 1991. Even in retirement, he continued his research, giving lectures about his work at many academic institutions in Europe and the US. He was particularly pleased to have served as the main editor of the selected works of his Ph.D. advisor, Norman Levinson, completing this demanding project in 1997.

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John's good humor, warmth and openness, and boundless enthusiasm for life and mathematics made a lasting impression on all those around him. He is survived by his second wife, Liselotte Karrer Nohel and his three children, Richard, Audrey, and Tom Nohel. His first wife, Vera Weisskopf Nohel, died in 1988.

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