Joe Rotman

Everybody here in Champaign-Urbana knew Joe as a mensch. But in the mathematical world, Joe was known as one of the most respected and influential authorities in algebra. At international math conferences, if anyone from here said they were from Urbana, someone would reply that they studied from one of Joe's books in graduate school.

Even though I didn't study algebra as a grad student, I'd heard of Joe before I arrived here, and as my research became more algebraic, I started talking and learning from him. He was both cheerful and very patient in helping me deal with the many gaps in my understanding. He and Marga had me over to their house with Ella and Danny more times for more wonderful meals and seders than I can count.

Joe chose an old-fashioned approach to mathematical scholarship: rather than write shorter papers on new results, he devoted his life to organizing and summarizing what was known in a series of comprehensive textbooks which became standard references.

Every serious research contribution is recorded in *Mathematical Reviews*, which keeps a record of the bibliographies. The two editions of Joe's book *An Introduction to Homological Algebra* have been given as a reference 678 times. Let me repeat that. There are 678 different books and papers which include *An Introduction to Homological Algebra* as a reference. Forty-three of these, so far, are dated 2016. In addition, almost 400 books and papers have cited various editions of *An Introduction to the Theory of Groups*. Overall, Joe's books have been referenced almost 1300 times, by almost 1500 different authors.

The last time I talked with Joe, he was in the hospital. His major concern was getting the latest revisions into the manuscript he was working on.

But beyond the mathematical, and above all else, I'll remember Joe's friendship and his beautiful crinkled grin.

Sinai Temple

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