

In Memoriam

Wilson Zaring, 1926-2016

Wilson Miles Zaring passed away on Friday, July 1, 2016, at his residence in Sun City Center, Florida. Zaring was born in Finchville, KY, on Nov. 9, 1926. He received his PhD in mathematics from the University of Kentucky in 1955 and joined the faculty of the Department of Mathematics at the University of Illinois that same year. From 1979-1991 he served as Director of Graduate Studies, retiring from the department in 1991. His Erdos number was 2.

He published seven mathematical textbooks. Zaring was the co-author, with Gaisi Takeuti, of the books *Introduction to Axiomatic Set Theory and Axiomatic Set Theory* in Springer's Graduate Texts in Mathematics series (volumes 1 and 8). In recent years, he also published seven short stories.

Zaring was trained in classical analysis with an interest in number theory. For most his career he was very focused on teacher training in mathematics.

In response to the unexpected Soviet launching of Sputnik in 1957, the Federal government initiated a massive program of reform in K-12 math education. Part of this program was the funding of curriculum development projects on a national scale. A companion part was funding professional development opportunities to prepare teachers to teach the new curricula.

For many years, Zaring was the director of an NSF-funded Academic Year Institute (AYI). This nation-wide program was an opportunity for experienced high school math teachers to come to the U of I and in one intensive year of study, obtain a Master's degree in mathematics. The AYI stipend paid participants full tuition costs, as well as housing costs for themselves and their families. He was also director of the Sequential Summer Institutes (SSI) program, which was a program that enabled college math teachers to obtain a Master's degree in math over a period of four sequential summers. Under Zaring's directorship, both these programs attracted national attention for their quality, and directly impacted several hundred teachers.

Zaring was awarded the Max Beberman Mathematics Educator Award in 1976 from the Illinois Council of Teachers of Mathematics (ICTM) and named an Outstanding Educator of America for 1974-75.

He was a member of the United Methodist Church, Sigma Xi honorary fraternity, Pi Mu Epsilon honorary fraternity, American Mathematical Society, Mathematical Association of America and International Hospitality Committee, and he was a volunteer at Carle Foundation Hospital in Urbana, IL. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps, honorably discharged at the rank of corporal on January 8, 1947.

For many of those who knew Zaring well, Hebrews 13:2 sums up his personality: "Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it."

Wilson Zaring is survived by his daughter, Susan (Dennis Winter) Baker of Sun City Center; son, David (Nora) Zaring of Danvers; grandchildren, Miles Baker, Morgan Baker, Michael Zaring and Paul Zaring; and great-granddaughter, Amy Baker. He was preceded in death by his wife of 64 years, Marjorie Zaring.

Memorial contributions can be made in Mr. Zaring's name to Heifer International, 1 World Ave., Little Rock, AR 72202, or to the First United Methodist Church, 210 W. Church Steet, Champaign, IL 61820.

