

NOTICES

- **IN MEMORIAM: ERNST SPECKER.** Ernst Specker passed away unexpectedly on December 10, 2011, aged almost 92. He began his studies in the department of mathematics of ETH Zurich in 1940, and received his M.Sc. degree in 1945 and his Ph.D. (Dr. sc. math.) in 1948, with theses in topology supervised by Heinz Hopf. During this period Specker also studied logic with Paul Bernays. Among his other teachers were Michel Plancherel, Frederic Gonseth, and Beno Eckemann, who was only slightly older than he was. At the University of Zurich he took courses with Paul Finsler. During the years 1948-1950 he was at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. After his return to Switzerland he taught at the Universities of Geneva and Neuchatel and at ETH Zurich. In 1955 he was appointed professor for mathematics and logic at ETH Zurich, the position he held until his retirement in 1987, heading the Zurich Logic School founded by Paul Bernays. After his retirement he continued to chair the Logic Seminar until a few years ago, and he followed the latest developments in logic and algorithmics with unabated interest until his last days.

Although compared to the records of many researchers of today Specker's papers are few, each one is a landmark in its respective field. The *Selecta Ernst Specker*, published on the occasion of his 70th birthday bears witness to this. So did the international conferences held in honor of his 60th, 80th and 90th birthdays.

His work covered algebraic topology, set theory, models of arithmetics, recursion theory, the foundations of quantum mechanics, finite and infinite combinatorics, algorithmics, and complexity. Much of his most influential work has been on Quine's New Foundations, a set theory with a universal set, but he is most famous for the Kochen-Specker theorem in quantum mechanics, showing that certain types of hidden variable theories are impossible. With the recent emergence of quantum information theory this work again plays a central role in the debate around the foundations of quantum computations. Specker's paper on recursive analysis, published in 1949, pioneered research in this field, and his paper on recursive versions of Ramsey's Theorem anticipates the Paris-Harrington-Kirby Theorem. His paper on the application of logic to combinatorics was the first to introduce model theoretic methods into finite combinatorics. In 1970, together with Volker Strassen, he founded a seminar on logic and algorithmics, one of the first of its kind in Europe, and a whole generation of leading theoretical computer scientists was formed in these seminars.

Ernst Specker was a challenging personality, as a teacher to his students and to his colleagues, but foremost as a human being who always questioned conventions and accepted only what withstood his own critical judgment. An example of this can be found in the mediating role he played during the 1968 youth unrest, where he co-authored, together with the renowned sculptor Gottfried Honegger, the "Zurich Manifesto", warning the frightened citizens of overreaction and calling for a dialogue between the generations. Another example is his public—and later published—lectures on biblical themes in which he offered inspiring and unexpected new angles of interpretation of biblical texts.

Ernst Specker, in his gently teasing way, forced everyone entering his orbit to reconsider accepted opinions. His questioning mind will live on in the memory of his family, his friends and his many direct and indirect students.

- **THE 2011 SACKS PRIZE AWARDED JOINTLY TO M. CAI AND A. DAY.** The ASL Committee on Prizes and Awards (with R. Solomon replacing T. Slaman, who recused himself for these deliberations) has selected Mingzhong Cai of the University of Wisconsin, Madison and Adam Day of the University of California at Berkeley as the recipients of the 2011 Sacks