

Introduction

This volume contains papers contributed by participants at a conference held in honor of the sixtieth birthdays of Doug Ravenel and Steve Wilson at the Johns Hopkins University, March 10–13, 2007.

These two mathematicians, working together and separately, have shaped Algebraic Topology over the past third of a century, and there is little in the subject today that does not bear their imprint. This is clear from the scope and variety of talks given at this conference, and of the papers contributed to this volume. The combination of “hard” computational virtuosity with “soft” abstract and visionary thinking is a hallmark of Algebraic Topology, and it is precisely the combination of talents Ravenel and Wilson have displayed in such abundance and consistency.

The original conception of the conference focused on currently active areas of research to which Ravenel and Wilson made major contributions. The listing pretty much covers modern homotopy theory: Stable homotopy and chromatic localizations; homology of ring spectra; spectra constructed from MU ; periodic homotopy and the telescope conjecture; cohomology operations both stable and unstable; and immersion problems.

The conference represented in this volume was a true gathering of the clan, and was characterized by the excitement and congeniality that have been the hallmarks of the very best topology gatherings. The 120 participants enjoyed the ambiance of Krieger Hall, where graduate students and old timers were thrown together in close proximity. The talks reflected a broad view of current research in Algebraic Topology, as do the papers in this volume.

Steve and Doug influenced me personally more deeply than any other mathematicians. Steve’s tireless optimism and Doug’s incisiveness, combined with the high energy level they share, made my early collaboration with them a life-changing experience. I am delighted to have this occasion to thank them for their friendship and for our “fun collaboration,” and wish them both a very happy birthday.

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