ceedings of the Cambridge Philosophical Society **31** (1935), 433–454. As Mac Lane explains (pp. 17–18, "Part I, History of Algebra: History of Abstract Algebra: Origin, Rise, and Decline of a Movement," in D. Tarwater, *et al.* (editors), *American Mathematical Heritage: Algebra and Applied Mathematics* (Lubbock, Texas Tech University Press, 1981), 3–35),

> In this paper, he proved what is now called Birkhoff's theorem characterizing varieties of algebras closed under (infinite) products, quotients, and the formation of subalgebras. Lattice theory, which had been extracted by Dedekind in 190 from the properties of ideas, was rediscovered by Garrett Birkhoff and also independently by Oystein Ore, who had been influenced by the Göttingen school and had just edited Dedekind's collected works, including the papers on dual groups (= lattices). Ore's emphasis was to apply lattice theory to groups and to ring theory, while Birkhoff was more concerned with a wider sweep including ordered systems. Birkhoff and Karl Menger contributed essentially to the description of projective geometires by lattices. . . .

Birkhoff also carried out research on scientific computing, reactor theory, differential equations, and the history of mathematics His history of the development of modern algebra, for example, is presented in the aforementioned "The Rise of Modern Algebra to 1936" and continued in the next pages in "The Rise of Modern Algebra, 1936 to 1950" in J. D. Tarwater, J. T. White & J. D. Miller (editors), *Men and Institutions in American Mathematics* (Lubbock, Texas Tech University Press, 1976), 65–85).

THOMAS TYMOCZKO

Philosopher of mathematics THOMAS TYMOCZKO died this past summer following a brief illness. His teachers included Hao Wang, Michael Dummett, Burton Dreben, and Hilary Putnam, as well as ethicist Phillipa Foot. He received his doctorate in 1971, after which he joined the philosophy faculty at Smith College, where he continued to serve as Professor of Philosophy until his death. His special concern was the re-introduction of the algorithmic — or what he prefered to call "quasi-empirical" — nature of proof as a result of the use of computers to test equations. Examples of his ideas in this regard are his papers "The Four-Color Problem and Its Philosophical Significance", which first appeared in 1979 in *The Journal of Philosophy* **76**, no. 2, pp. 57–83 and "Computers, Proofs and Mathematics" (*Mathematics Magazine* **53** (1980), 131–138. He is perhaps best known for the anthology which he edited, *New Directions in the Philosophy of Mathematics* (Boston/Basel/ Stuttgart, Birkhäuser, 1985; Birkhäuser Boston, 1986). The latter includes a reprint of "The Four-Color Problem and Its Philosophical Significance", which is undoubtedly his best-known and most important article on the philosophical significance of the use of computers in mathematical theorem proving.

PAUL ERDÖS (1913 – 1996)

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PAUL ERDÖS died in Warsaw, Poland on Friday afternoon, 20 September 1996 while attending a combinatorics seminar. The doctor at the hospital in Warsaw reported that in the early morning of that day, Erdös had suffered a heart attack in his hotel room and called for medical assistance. This was followed by a fatal second massive heart attack that same afternoon.

Erdös, who was born in Budapest, Hungary on 26 March 1913, received his Ph.D. from the University of Budapest in 1934. His posts included the Technion in Haifa, Israel, the University of Colorado, and the University of Budapest. He was also a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

Erdös was best known as an international globe-trotting peripatetic mathematician who offered monetary awards for the solution of problems which he posed, and whose chief specialties were number theory and combinatorics. During his lifetime, he published over 1500 papers, and he worked at one time or another with some 460 collaborators or coauthors. Although Erdös did virtually no work specifically in logic, he did work on Ramsey theory in set-theoretic combinatorics. He also knew a number of interesting and important logicians, including in particular Kurt Gödel, and there are four anecdotes connected with or told by Erdös that are of especial interest to historians of logic.

The first anecdote concerns John von Neumann, who, Erdös opined in his interview with Gerald L. Alexanderson for *Mathematical People* [Alexanderson *1985*, 84], 'was very impressive to talk with. He was very quick.' Erdös admitted that he did not know von Neumann's work well, but knew that a number of younger mathematicians, with whom he had some contact, such as [Endre] Szemerédi and [Shaharon] Shelah, were following up on von