

Bill Paschke

William (Bill) Lindall Paschke, Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at the University of Kansas, died at his home in Lawrence, KS, on December 11, 2019, at the age of 73.

Bill was born in New York City, the son of Wade Warren Paschke and Maria Lindall Paschke, and he grew up in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. At an early age, Bill became interested in mathematics, a subject that would engage his mind for the rest of his life. In 1967 he earned a B.A. in mathematics from Dartmouth College and served as the classical music director and disc jockey for WDCR, the campus radio station. He continued to study mathematics at the University of Oregon and earned an M.A. in 1969 and Ph.D. in 1972. That same year, he joined the operator algebra group in the mathematics department at the University of Kansas. He received research funding from the National Science Foundation, published dozens of research papers, and presented his findings at mathematics conferences in the United States, Canada, Europe and Japan. In 1984, he spent a sabbatical semester at the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute in Berkeley, California, and from 1987 to 1989, he served as the Program Director for Modern Analysis at the National Science Foundation in Washington, D.C. Bill returned to KU and continued his research and teaching until his retirement in 2011.

The mathematics department recognized Bill as an outstanding teacher. Passing by his office, one would often see students being schooled in the finer points of analysis and C^* algebras. Bill was a talented, patient and nurturing mentor, and he helped many students grasp the beauty, power and importance of mathematics. On six occasions, the graduate students selected Bill to receive the G. Bailey Price Award for Excellence in Teaching. He also received the Max Wells Teaching Award in 2005 and the Career Teaching Award in 2011.

Bill had wide-ranging interests and loved to read about history, politics, current events, philosophy, science, art, and music. In high school, he mastered German and regularly read German literature, poetry, and news magazines. Over the years, he amassed a large collection of books, many of which he donated to the Lawrence Public Library or gave to friends. He was an avid music lover and whenever possible attended classical and opera performances.

Bill believed in the importance of active citizenship. He worked as a campaign volunteer, participated in rallies and marches, and wrote hundreds of letters to elected officials. For several years, he served as a Medicare counselor at the Senior Center, helping people through the complexities of health insurance enrollment.

Cycling was Bill's special passion and he was frequently seen riding to and from the university or taking long excursions on county roads. As a graduate student in Oregon, he and his friends rode from Eugene to the Pacific Ocean, a 60-mile adventure across the coastal range on second-hand bikes. As a young man, he also enjoyed hiking and trout fishing in the Western mountain ranges, and in later years occasionally came home with fish for dinner from the lakes around Lawrence.

Bill was grateful for the friendship of his colleagues, who already miss his humor, generosity, open-mindedness, talent, confidence, and humility. He appreciated the kind and competent care he received from his health-care team, as well as the support and help he received from his friends during his final weeks.

Bill is survived by his wife of 51 years, Barbara; his sister, Ann Landi in Taos, NM; and cousins in Michigan, Colorado, and Oregon.

At Bill's request, there will be no services. Those wishing to honor his memory may contribute to the Visiting Nurses Association in care of the Warren McElwain Funeral Home, 120 W. 13th St., Lawrence, KS 66044-3402.