

In Memoriam

Maynard J. Mansfield

January 28, 1930 – February 8, 2015

As one of the founding faculty of IPFW, Maynard Mansfield was a person of noteworthy achievements and an exceptional inspiration to others.

After earning his Bachelor of Arts degree from Marietta College in Ohio in 1952, he continued his education at Purdue University. He earned his Master's degree in 1954 and his Ph. D. in 1956. As will be noted later, that was not the last of his Purdue degrees however. After remaining another year at Purdue as an Instructor, he joined the faculty of Washington and Jefferson College, where he taught from 1957 to 1963, being promoted to Associate Professor after just three years. In 1963 he returned to Indiana, this time as a Purdue professor at the Fort Wayne extension, in anticipation of leading mathematics in the move to the new campus the following year.

Throughout the rest of Maynard's career, he was a leader on this campus, being promoted to Professor in 1965. From 1964 to 1988, he served valiantly as Chair of the Department of Mathematical Sciences. He did have two years off while serving as Acting Dean of Science and Humanities. During his tenure, the department grew from four to close to its present size of 25. When the Department of Computer Science was created, Maynard saw a challenging situation where he was needed more than in the mathematics department. Two years later, he became Dean of the School of Engineering, Technology, and Computer Science, a position he held until his retirement in 1994.

Maynard's professional service went beyond Purdue and IPFW. For a number of years, he served as Secretary of the Indiana Section of the Mathematical Association of America, and later served a term on the Board of Governors of the national organization. In addition to his papers on topology, he was the author of four mathematics textbooks and co-author of two others.

Those are basic facts of Prof. Mansfield's career, with one significant omission. In 1998, Maynard received one more degree from Purdue: Honorary Doctor of Engineering. The following is taken from the nomination statement for that honor:

“Maynard J. Mansfield is a man of influence and achievement. His years at IPFW, as chair of mathematics, chair of computer science, and dean of the School of Engineering and Technology, were characterized by much growth and progress. Mansfield served as an inspirational catalyst for such development.”

In addition, here are some excerpts from quotations in that statement of nomination from former members of the math department:

“Maynard provided the intelligent enthusiasm that was essential. He was known to be thoughtful, analytical, and principled.”

“Mansfield’s attitude of encouragement and support fostered excellence not only among his faculty, but across the campus.”

“His contributions to IPFW’s academic mission, faculty governance, and administration are legendary.”

His thesis in point-set topology was entitled *Some Generalizations Of Full Normality*. While the dissertation itself was in abstract mathematics, its title might be used as a tribute to Maynard’s career here at IPFW. “Full normality” can be considered a metaphor for the three normal areas of professorial activity: teaching, creative endeavor, and service. Maynard was a specific instance, an example extended to the many faculty who felt his impact, people inspired to be complete educators, in both creating and sharing knowledge.

During his lifetime, Maynard had many interests outside mathematics, from playing saxophone in a dance band while young to playing many rounds of golf in retirement. In fact, he even achieved the golfer’s goal of a hole-in-one. He was a life-long amateur radio enthusiast, right up to the days before his terminal illness, less than two months prior to his death. Maynard also became an avid producer and performer of music generated via his computer. As a pilot, he frequently flew his Piper Cherokee to West Lafayette to meetings. He was even prouder to be able to use his plane as an Angel Flight pilot, helping families with insufficient means to get to medical facilities.

Thus, Maynard Mansfield will be long remembered for leading and helping others in very many ways. Each year his dedication to mathematics is recalled with the conferral of an award in his name to an outstanding graduating senior. Later this year, this will be joined by the Maynard J. Mansfield Scholarship, established in his memory.

Survivors include his wife Sharon K. Slack, IPFW Professor Emerita of Chemistry; one daughter, Nancy Curtis; and seven grandchildren. One daughter, Pamela Kearley, preceded him in death.