



Lawrence Markus

Markus, Lawrence Age 97, of Minneapolis, passed away peacefully on January 18, 2020.

He was born in 1922 in Hibbing, MN. Shortly thereafter his family moved to Minneapolis, and later to the Chicago area. At age 16 he entered the University of Chicago receiving his B.S. degree in two years, then his M.S., and joined the University of Chicago faculty at age 19. During WWII he worked on the Manhattan Project while the atomic bomb was being developed. He later accepted a commission in the U.S. Navy and served as Chief Meteorological Officer aboard a weather frigate in the North Atlantic. After the war he went to Harvard, completing his Ph.D. in Mathematics, following a Fulbright Fellowship in Paris where he married his wife, Lois. After being on the faculties of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, Larry joined the University of Minnesota's School of Mathematics in 1957, becoming one of eight Regents Professors in 1980 (its highest academic honor). With a lively undergraduate classroom style, he was granted the University Distinguished Teacher Award in 1968. Despite his casual exterior he was very willing to listen to students and suggest other mathematical approaches to problems confronting them. Professor Markus was a prolific researcher, writing the classic treatise "Foundations of Optimal Control Theory" (with E.B. Lee) while on a Guggenheim Fellowship. In 1963 Larry founded the Center for Control Science at the Institute of Technology at the University of Minnesota, and subsequently founded and directed a corresponding Centre for Control Theory at the University of Warwick, England. For the next twenty-five years Larry alternated between these two universities, always accompanied by Lois. He gave lectures in Japan, China, Iran, and at hundreds of colloquia and conferences in America and Europe. Of particular note was his invited discourse before the British Royal Institution in London. One of the highlights of his later career was being elected an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. In later years he began to write a book drawing on his scholarly knowledge of physics and astronomy as well as mathematics, which took a new approach to explaining basic

mathematical principles. Larry was known for his witty stories and conversation. He had an astonishing talent for distinguishing regional accents and enjoyed working out puns to add to his repertoire. Perhaps his proudest achievements were his seven table tennis championships, including Minnesota State Champion in 1965. A lifelong hobby, Larry played his last game of table tennis in 2008, at age 86. He is survived by wife Lois, daughter Sylvia, brothers Judge Richard Markus & theater director Tom Markus. He was predeceased by son Andrew, a noted East Asian scholar and linguist. Memorial Service 10:30am Friday March 6th at Jones- Harrison Residence, 3700 Cedar Lake Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55416. [washburn-mcreavy.com](http://www.washburn-mcreavy.com) (<http://www.washburn-mcreavy.com>)
Edina Chapel 952-920-3996

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Guest Book

2 comments

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Anton Zettl  March 18

The book: ``Boundary Value Problems and Symplectic Algebra for Ordinary Differential and Quasi-Differential Operators'' by W. N. Everitt and L. Markus introduced a new method for studying such problems. This method is based on complex symplectic spaces and has recently been used by A. Wang and A. Zettl to characterize symmetric, self-adjoint, and dissipative operators in Hilbert space; and the relationship between these classes of operators.

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Jan Minette  March 5

I was so sorry to hear of Professor Markus's passing. I worked with him on his book "Duplicate the Cube ". My not being a mathematician I was surprised to find that even though I didn't understand the mathematics I really enjoyed the stories he wrote about the mathematicians from the past. Their lives and contributions to mathematics and in some cases the reasons for their deaths. Professor Markus never seemed to run out of material to add to the book. Just when I thought we were done I would receive more material to add or changes to prior material. I will think of him often and will miss him.

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