Dr. George Marsaglia

March 12, 1924 - February 15, 2011

A sudden heart attack while walking on the grounds of Capital City Country Club in Tallahassee on February 15 took the life of Dr. George Marsaglia. He was born to John and Mabel Marsaglia in Denver, Colorado, in 1924. His elementary and high school life was spent in Clayton College, an orphanage in Denver. After high school he joined the Army Air Corps and shortly thereafter left to go to Colorado State University, where he earned his B.S. in physics. He then attended Ohio State University, where he obtained his M.S. and Ph.D. in mathematics. He studied as a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Manchester, England, under Alan Turing. He began his professional experience teaching at the University of Montana, and following that he was a Fulbright Professor at the University of Rangoon, in Burma. He then taught at Oklahoma State University and the University of North Carolina, and in the private sector worked for Westinghouse. Next he joined the Boeing Co. in Seattle and later the Boeing Scientific Research Laboratories as a research mathematician. At the same time he was an Adjunct Professor of Medicine at the University of Washington. Years later he went to McGill University in Montreal as Director of the school of computer Science. Following that he was Chairman of the Computer Science Department at Washington State University. In 1985 he joined the Supercomputer Computations Research Institute and Department of Statistics at Florida State University. He was awarded the title of Professor Emeritus of Pure and Applied Mathematics and Computer Science at Washington State University, and of Statistics at Florida

State University. In the 1960's when computers were big machines in air-conditioned rooms controlled by punched cards, Dr. Marsaglia was an innovative user. He saw possibilities and pursued them well ahead of the times. He revolutionized the concept of randomness in scientific computing and simulation with his famous paper "Random numbers fall mainly in the planes." It was published in the Journal of the American Academy of Sciences, and it showed the inadequacy of all previously used machine-generated pseudo-random numbers. He was also well known for developing the Diehard Battery of Test of Randomness. During his life he was an invited lecturer and consultant at universities and institutes throughout the world--Tashkent (Russia), Madras (India), Mexico, Europe, Hong Kong, and Beijing, as well as in Canada and the U.S. He retired from academia in 1996 but was constantly involved in mathematic research and wrote numerous articles for journals and published findings on the Web. He was a man admired by colleagues and students alike. He was always generous with colleagues, ready to share his knowledge and offer constructive ideas. Until recently he was an avid golfer, but still enjoyed walks on the course. In addition to mathematics and golf, his passions were electronics, reading, plumbing and carpentry. He was often dubbed a "Renaissance Man" for his inventiveness. He is survived by his wife, Doris Marsaglia, his son, John and wife Michelle, and grandchildren Chris and Nicole, of Salem, Oregon; and a brother Frank and sisters Gertrude Falagrady and Martha Vitale of Denver. He will be remembered as a wonderful husband, a great dad, a loving grandfather, and a good and loyal friend to many. A private family service will be held at a later date, Bevis Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.

Tribute Wall

RS

I will be talking about random number generators at HHC 2025 in Orlando next month.

Richard Schwartz - August 15, 2025 at 04:17 PM

BE

im his neice im good in school and math. and no my last name is NOT marsaglia, its rugg. 😋

bebe - November 05, 2023 at 12:52 PM