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Topology and its Applications

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Biography of Kenneth Kunen

Ken was born in New York City in 1943 and got his undergraduate degree at Caltech. He received his PhD from Stanford University in 1968, under the direction of Dana Scott, and came to Wisconsin that same year. He was quickly promoted to Associate Professor in 1970 and Full Professor in 1972. Except for a year visiting the University of California, Berkeley, and two years visiting the University of Texas, Austin, Ken has been in Madison ever since, retiring in the Summer of 2008. Ken is married to the lovely Ann Kunen and they have two sons, Adam and Isaac. And, as we write this, he is about to become a grandfather for the first time.

His many honors include an Alfred P. Sloan Fellowship and H.I. Romnes Fellowship. Ken has been an editor for the *Annals of Mathematical Logic*, the *Journal of Symbolic Logic*, the *LMS Journal of Computation and Mathematics*, and the *AMS Transactions*. He, with Jerry Vaughan, edited the influential *Handbook of Set-Theoretic Topology*. Ken also edited the set theory section of the *Handbook of Mathematical Logic*. Ken has given an enormous number of invited lectures in the US and throughout the world, and he has helped to organize many math conferences.

In over one hundred and fifteen research papers, Ken has contributed fundamental knowledge to set theory and its applications to various areas of mathematics, such as set-theoretic topology and measure theory. In addition he has worked in the area of non-associative algebraic systems and used computers to derive theorems. His seminal textbook *Set Theory. An Introduction to Independence Proofs* has been an influential force and inspiration to countless numbers of graduate students and others working in the field of mathematical logic.

Ken has been one of the central figures in the UW Madison logic group. He has directed the doctoral dissertations of over 25 graduate students. This includes many who have gone on to great careers and had students of their own, such as, William Fleissner, Ali Enayat, Boban Veličković, and Mirna Džamonja, to name only a few. Ken is not just a brilliant and productive mathematician but what we really admire most about him is his generosity with his mathematical ideas, conjectures, and problems. Plus, he is always affable and always unflappable.

In the mathematics department he has served on several of our more important committees, e.g., chair of the committee on future needs in computing and technology, graduate advising committee, chair of the academic staff review committee, salary committee, and hiring committee. He will especially be sorely missed for his long time service to the qualifying exam committee. Ken is legendary for the creative but fair problems he sets. A popular teacher for both undergraduate and graduate courses, he is particularly well known for his eloquent and incisive style of lecturing. Ken is also famous for the mountainous heaps of model polyhedra which overflow his office. These models were made for him over the last 20 years by the students in his Math 131 class (Geometry for Elementary School Teachers).

Finally, those of us in Madison are looking forward to seeing Ken in his SUV with his personalized license plates, Aleph 0, for many years to come.

Arnold W. Miller
September 8, 2009