

Graduate Work at The University of Pennsylvania

In 1968, Joanne and I decided to return to graduate school. After visiting several places, we applied to the University of Pennsylvania, located in Philadelphia and were accepted with graduate teaching assistantships.

We searched for a place to live and found a nice ground floor apartment at 3712 Hamilton Street, about a mile from campus. Our landlady, Adair Douglas, lived on the top floor. We soon met many of our neighbors, including Richard Hunt and his wife Nancy, who lived across the street, as well as the Dandridge family who occupied the other half of the duplex house. Richard and Nancy owned a dog named "Bach." I had always been interested in having a dog. We found a beautiful Malamute puppy which we brought home and named "Anoka." We saw Richard and Nancy frequently, and the two dogs were always there.

Since my brother-in-law was from Turkey, I was interested in the Turkish language and culture. The opportunity arose to enroll in a class on the Turkish language taught by a respected scholar, Professor Osman Nedim Tuna. When I reported for class, I found there were only three students. One of them, Marie-Henriette Gates, became a good family friend. Joanne and I frequently got together with Marie and her husband Charles. After completing graduate work, they became Archaeology professors at Bilkent University in Ankara, Turkey. They both are now retired and live in Paris. I am in touch with them today.

After reporting for duty at the math department, I was greeted by Professor Steve Schatz, who informed me that I would teach a class in calculus. I began to meet other Graduate students and in the department. One was Bob Rubin. Bob and his wife Rita managed Chamonix Mansion, a hostel located in Fairmount Park. Another was Dan Prener, whom I later worked with at IBM.

I soon learned that every Friday the graduate students in the department would gather for something called the "bourbon colloquium." All class duties for the week were over so bourbon was appropriate. Frequently, a professor or two would join us, including Andrew Wallace, who was the math department chairman.

In addition to Professors Schatz and Wallace, there were several other professors that I knew quite well: Professors Oscar Goldman, Herbert Wilf, Albert Nijenhuis, Eugenio Calabi, Murray Gerstenhaber and Frank Warner. Bob Rubin and I worked under Professor Goldman's guidance. Bob finished his thesis with Goldman. Professor Wilf and his wife Ruth became good friends. Herb Wilf earned his pilot license and flew his Cessna aircraft for many years.

In 1970, a tragic event happened during a math colloquium. A former math graduate student burst into the room with a gun and fired shots which hit professor Walter Koppelman and Professor Goldman. Two weeks later, Koppelman died. Goldman was wounded in the hand. This event was reported in the New York Times for February 27, 1970.

In 1971, I received an offer to teach in the math department at Glassboro State College (now Rowan University) to substitute for a professor on leave. Because of the growing interest in computers, I began to teach courses in Computer Science. I self-educated myself in this new field. I even purchased a microcomputer which I used in teaching and consulting. To make a long story short, my interest shifted from mathematics to computers. This led to a seventeen year career at IBM.

Joanne finished her thesis under Professor Warner and pursued an academic career for many years.