MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

Arlen Brown

(1926–2020)

Emeritus professor H. Arlen Brown passed away on May 21, 2020. A native of Goshen, Indiana, he served in the merchant marine in World War II, and was a Ph.D. student at the University of Chicago where he obtained his degree in 1952. He wrote two distinct theses under the direction of Paul Halmos (who also taught at Indiana University for 15 years) and Irving Kaplansky. Both results were published and are still cited in the current literature. Arlen taught at Rice University (1952–63) and the University of Michigan (1963–67) before coming to IU where he became emeritus in 1991. His Ph.D. students were Jim Scroggs, Carl Pearcy, Donald Deckard (at Rice), James Williams, who also served in the math department at IU, Don Rhodes (at Michigan), and Tin Wong (at Indiana).

Arlen's work is characterized by elegance, both in mathematical ideas and in exposition. His most cited work is a joint paper with Halmos in which they establish (among other things) a simple algebraic equation whose solutions constitute the important class of Toeplitz operators. He is also known for the English translation of Pontryagin's book on topological groups that appeared in two editions (1966 and 1986).

Arlen was an active member of the analysis group and also became an honorary Romanian, taking part in lively discussions at a weekly lunch in the Tudor room. After his retirement, he maintained his mathematical interests and collaborated on several books on various aspects of analysis, the most recent of which appeared in 2016.

Hari Bercovici
Professor, Department of Mathematics
Indiana University Bloomington