

Quantum information science lost one of its founding fathers. Asher Peres died on Sunday, January 1, 2005. He was 70 years old.

A distinguished professor at the Department of Physics, Technion - Israel Institute of Technology, Asher described himself as "the cat who walks by himself". His well-known independence in thought and research is the best demonstration of this attitude. Asher will be missed by all of us not only as a great scientist but especially as a wonderful person. He was a surprisingly warm and unpretentious man of stubborn integrity, with old-world grace and a pungent sense of humor. He was a loving husband to his wife Aviva, a father to his two daughters Lydia and Naomi, and a proud grandfather of six. Asher was a demanding but inspiring teacher. Many physicists considered him not only a valued colleague but also a dear friend and a mentor.

Asher's scientific work is too vast to review, while its highlights are well-known. One of the six fathers of quantum teleportation, he made fundamental contributions to the definition and characterization of quantum entanglement, helping to promote it from the realm of philosophy to the world of physics. The importance of his contributions to other research areas cannot be overestimated. Starting his career as a graduate student of Nathan Rosen, he established the physicality of gravitational waves and provided a textbook example of a strong gravitational wave with his PP-wave. Asher was also able to point out some of the signatures of quantum chaos, paving the way to many more developments. All of these contributions are marked by a surprising simplicity and unbeatable originality.

Of all his publications, Asher was most proud of his book "Quantum Theory: Concepts and Methods". The book is an example of Asher's scientific style: an uncompromising and deep understanding of the fundamental issues expressed in a form which is as simple and accessible as possible. It took Asher six years to carefully weave the threads of his book together. The great quality of the work is acknowledged by anyone acquainted with the final result.

In a favorite anecdote, Asher told about a reporter who had interviewed him on quantum teleportation. "Can you teleport only the body, or also the spirit?" the reporter had asked. "Only the spirit," was Asher's reply. Our community has been privileged to know him and have been touched by his spirit.

"I am the cat who walks by himself" is the title of a charming twelve-page autobiography covering his life from his birth in the village Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne in France until his meeting with Aviva on a train to Haifa [physics/0404085]. The rest of his story is in his formal CV.

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