IN MEMORIAM PROFESSOR KAREL DRBOHLAV

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Professor Karel Drbohlav, former dean of the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics of Charles University (Prague), died on November 16, 1995, aged 68.

Professor Drbohlav was born in Prague on March 20, 1927. He was still a student of the Faculty of Science when he got his first position there in 1950. Since then, his main research interest was in general algebra.

In the early 60's, it was the Bourbaki group who emphasised the importance of abstract algebra for mathematics. At the same time, Prague became an active centre of research in several areas closely related to algebra: topology, logic, and category theory. Professor Drbohlav soon learned the new methods which facilitated syntheses of partial theories, generalizations, and transfers to other areas. In a series of papers in Comment. Math. Univ. Carolinae, Professor Drbohlav transferred the classical noetherian theory of ideals into the theory of commutative semigroups. He also discovered a categorical version of Birkhoff's theorem and instigated a study of algebras in the category dual to the category of sets. In 1966, due to the outstanding quality of his dissertation, he received directly the highest scientific degree, DrSc., instead of the usual lower-rank degree of CSc. (= former Czechoslovak equivalent of PhD.) In 1966/67, Professor Drbohlav did research at Brandeis University (Mass., USA).*

It may come as a surprise that Professor Drbohlav did not publish any research papers between 1971 and 1980. Apparently, he was deeply affected by the grim atmosphere of the Czech society of the 70's, in particular by the purges at Charles University that hit his close colleagues and outstanding mathematicians, Katětov, Vopěnka and Demuth.

In this situation, Professor Drbohlav fully dedicated himself to teaching. His elegant presentation of mathematical theories has been appreciated by his students, from under- to post-graduates, bringing him the reputation of one of the best teachers of the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics. When he got interested in an algebraic area, he soon became acquainted with it and made it the subject of his lectures and seminars. In this way, his famous lectures on homological algebra, numerical algebra and cryptography were developed. For many years, he also took active part in organizing maths competitions of secondary school students.

In 1990, after the breakdown of communism in Czechoslovakia, Professor Drbohlav was elected the dean of the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics. Despite his age and illness, he assumed the demanding task of leading the Faculty through rapid and extensive structural changes.

Professor Drbohlav gained many honours and prizes including a Medal of Merit of Charles University, the honorary title of Professor Emeritus of Charles University, medals of the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics of Charles University, of Masaryk University (Brno) and Technical University of Brno. He was also a Member of Honour of the Czechoslovak Union of Mathematicians and Physicists.

But no honour and prize can express his exceptional and gracious personality. The Czech mathematical community misses with deep regret one of its outstanding members.

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* For a list of research papers of Professor Drbohlav, see Časopis pro pěstování matematiky, *112* (1987), No. 3, pp. 329–330.