

Remembering Bert “Hank” Waits

We are very sorry to share the news that Bert Waits died on July 27, 2014, in the company of family members in Orlando, Florida, from complications following six weeks in the hospital for treatment of a broken leg.

Bert Waits was an emeritus professor of mathematics at The Ohio State University. He was the cofounder and director of the Ohio Early College Mathematics Placement Testing (EMPT) Program of the Ohio Board of Regents, which became a model for the nation. He authored over 70 publications in internationally recognized professional journals and presented many keynote lectures, workshops, and mini-courses at national meetings of the MAA and NCTM. He was a coauthor of the NCTM’s 1989 *Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics*. He has also served a three-year term on NCTM’s Board of Directors and has been a member of the College Board’s AP Calculus Development Committee.



Working with Frank Demana, he played a key role in designing the Texas Instruments family of graphing calculators and promoting the use of handheld technology in mathematics education worldwide. They developed a graphing approach to the study of functions, which impacted secondary and college curricula worldwide. The inroads of their approach included the concept of a “complete graph” capturing the key features of the graph of a function and the power of parametric equations applied to interesting applications, such as the path of baseball hit over a fence for a home run. Demana and Waits capitalized on the “Power of Visualizations” long before other mathematics educators saw it’s potential on understanding and memory.

Waits and Demana were cofounders of Teachers Teaching with Technology (T³) organization, the annual International Conference on Technology in Collegiate Mathematics (ICTCM), and the European biannual International Conference on Technology in Mathematics Teaching (ICTMT). They co-directed many mathematics education projects funded by the National Science Foundation and the US Department of Education. Bert coauthored numerous middle school, high school, and college textbooks, both precalculus and calculus.

Together with Frank Demana, Bert Waits received the distinguished Glenn Gilbert *Award* of the National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics and the Ohio Council of Teachers of Mathematics’ Christopherson-Fawcett Award for “inspiration and achievement in education in mathematics”.

Known to many as “Hank”, he was appreciated not only for his extraordinary contributions, but also for his warmth and keen sense of humor. In his presence others not only learned something significant, but had fun doing it. He was a great friend to many. He enjoyed the last several years with his family in the Florida winter sun.

Bert is survived by his wife, Barb; two sons, David and Jeff; three step-daughters, Sherri, Brigitte, and Brittany; and, their families, including 10 grandchildren. He lives on in the countless people throughout the world who were inspired by his contributions.

Submitted by Jim Schultz & Ed Laughbaum, includes material drawn from nctm.org