



**LOTHAR COLLATZ**  
1910 – 1990

## In Memoriam

Lothar Collatz  
(July 6, 1910–September 26, 1990)

Professor Dr. Lothar Collatz died in Varna, Bulgaria, on September 26, 1990, while attending an international symposium on Computer Arithmetic, Scientific Computation and Mathematical Modelling. Despite his age, his death was a great shock to us; his vitality and energy make it seem inconceivable that he is no longer with us. The mathematical community has undoubtedly lost one of the most ingenious and influential personalities of our time.

Professor Collatz studied mathematics and physics at the Universities of Greifswald, Munich, Göttingen, and Berlin from 1928 to 1933. He often told how much he had been impressed by the lectures of Hilbert, Courant, v. Mises, Schur, and other famous mathematicians of that period. He was convinced that mathematics and mathematicians had a responsibility to apply their results to, and be motivated by, real world phenomena. He never wearied of fighting for this conviction.

From 1943 to 1952, Professor Collatz held a chair at the Technical University of Hanover. In 1952 he accepted an offer from the University of Hamburg, where he founded the now famous Institute of Applied Mathematics. He continued to lecture there until the summer term of 1990.

The mathematical originality and creativity of Professor Collatz were evident to everyone who met him. He did fundamental work in all areas of numerical analysis. His oeuvre contains over 200 publications and several important books on boundary and eigenvalue problems, ordinary differential equations, the numerical treatment of differential equations, functional analysis, optimization, and approximation theory. Many of these books have been translated into several languages. In addition, he was an editor of *Journal of Approximation Theory* since its inception, and served on the editorial boards of many other scientific journals. He organized a large number of symposia on various topics of applied mathematics and edited numerous proceedings. These activities did not stand alone; both he and his work had a profound and lasting influence on a great number of mathematicians.

Professor Collatz was recognized and honored for his scientific contributions. He was awarded honorary doctorates by the University of

Saõ Paulo, the Technical University of Vienna, the University of Dundee, Brunel University, the Technical University of Hanover, the University of Augsburg, and most recently the Technical University of Dresden. He was a member of the senate of the scientific academy of Leopoldina at Halle, an elected member of the scientific academies of Bologna and Modena, and an honorary member of both the Mathematical Society of Hamburg and the Society of Applied Mathematics and Mechanics.

Professor Collatz was a truly wonderful individual. He was modest in his behavior, and ever amiable and helpful. His vitality was legendary. Right up to his death, Professor Collatz actively took part in scientific symposia all over the world, substantially contributing to their success.

Professor Collatz provides a shining example of a life devoted to science. We are forever in his debt, and his memory will always be with us.

GÜNTER MEINARDUS  
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