

GEORGE HERBERT WEISS

It is usual to walk unannounced into George's office at NIH and to find him starting, or in the midst of, writing a paper. To interrupt George is to find oneself in a deep discussion of the technical points and aim of the paper in hand. Not only does a visitor find himself much wiser when he leaves, but he often is a coauthor of the manuscript when the calculations are finished. George has maintained a dizzying pace of producing a steady stream of manuscripts which cut across a wide variety of disciplines. At the intersection of all these topics is a razor sharp ability to analyze probabilistic questions and mathematical challenges. His more than 400 papers have had a great influence in the statistical mechanics community.

George was born on February 19, 1930 in New York. He graduated from Columbia University in 1951 and began work that year at the Naval Ordnance Laboratory (now called the Naval Surface Warfare Center). After serving in the Army, where he did his first research on random walks, George received his Ph.D., in 1958, from the University of Maryland. George's thesis topic considered the theory of lattice dynamics in the harmonic approximation. His work on this topic, with Elliott Montroll and Alex Maradudin, was published in 1963 in the now classic book *Lattice Dynamics in the Harmonic Approximation*. George's subsequent, related, work on random walks and master equations now is legendary.

Over the years George has continued to make important contributions in many diverse areas of basic and applied statistical physics. Recently, George brought his full arsenal of techniques to bear on problems that explore the relation between trapping and chemical reactions. He introduced a powerful approach to the calculation of a novel quantity—the average distance of the closest untrapped diffusing particle from the reaction center. This work has been followed by many groups and seems to be a promising approach for studying a variety of problems in the theory of diffusion-controlled reactions.

Most important, George has protected and nurtured his younger associates. George's "employees" thus have been able to develop strong scientific personalities of their own, and have had the satisfaction of being

able to make unique contributions in several research areas. George's tolerance and respect for intellectual freedom and creativity should be emulated by all persons who revere the great traditions of liberal scientific thought.

Shlomo Havlin
Ralph Nossal
Michael Shlesinger