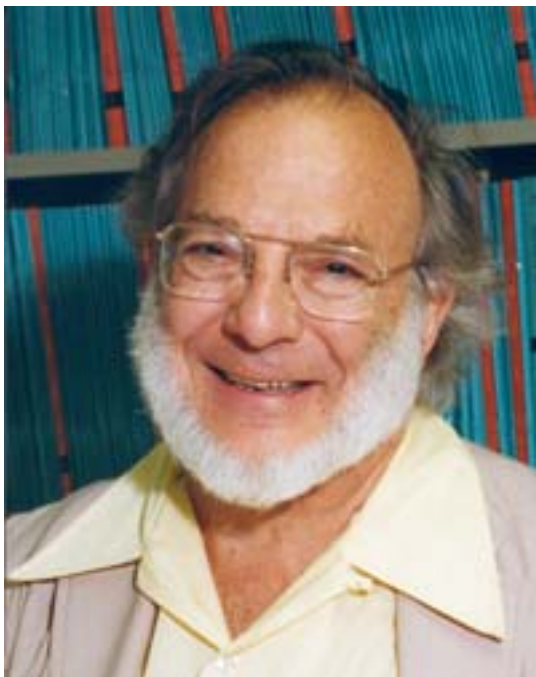# Preface

Let me begin by quoting Eytan Domany and David Jasnow, the editors of *Current Problems in Statistical Mechanics: A Symposium and collection of articles honoring Michael E. Fisher on the occasion of his 60th birthday* (North-Holland, 1991, as well as Vol. 177, *Physica A*, 1991). They start their preface by saying: "Michael E. Fisher bears no responsibility for the contents of the articles in this volume. Marginalia generated by his red pen, had he been given a chance to unleash it, would probably have filled a volume of similar size."

This is equally true of this (mega) issue of the *Journal of Statistical Physics*, which it gives me great pleasure to dedicate to Michael as part of the celebration of his 70th birthday. Another part of this celebration was a conference held at Rutgers on December 16–18, 2001, the program of which is contained in this issue. That meeting was part of the series of semi-annual conferences on statistical mechanics (the 86th to be precise), in which Michael has played a leading role as a lecturer and critical (sometimes very critical) member of the audience.

This issue also contains articles by David Mermin and by Cyril Domb which depict Michael as a person and as a scientist. More information about Michael's early career is contained in the volume edited by Domany and Jasnow, mentioned above. I will therefore confine myself here to some personal reminiscences—leaving others for the volume which will celebrate Michael's 80th birthday.

I have known Michael as a friend, colleague and teacher for about forty years now. Our first meeting took place at King's College, London. I was briefly in London and went to visit Cyril Domb at King's, which was then one of the hot spots of statistical mechanics. Domb and his group were developing new series expansions for the susceptibility and specific heat of various lattice models and methods for analyzing these series. I remember Cyril introducing me to Michael and the other bright young people there. Michael's office was far down the hall but his presence was felt everywhere. This is certainly no surprise to anyone who has ever been together with Michael at a conference or a dinner, and I don't believe there are many in statistical mechanics who have not.

Michael is not only a great scientist, he is also a forceful personality: outspoken, eloquent and gracious. He insists on clarity of thinking and

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presentation both in writing and in oral communications and is himself the best exemplar of this quality. I have never yet seen Michael at a loss for the appropriate words—he is the Samuel Johnson of science, only much nicer.

In the last decade Michael has gone into two new, for him, areas of science, and made very important contributions to both of them: electrolytes and motor proteins. In each case Michael noted the fuzziness in some of the thinking and calculations in the field, raised the right questions and proposed logical answers. Whether these are the right answers is still not settled but I am confident that they contain a substantial part (perhaps all) of the truth. I look forward to hearing more about them in the coming years.

Meanwhile, I am sure that I speak here for all the contributors to this volume, as well as for the whole statistical mechanics community, when I say: thank you Michael, for all you have done for us and our field. We continue to need your contributions and critical analyses of what we do. We wish you and Sorrel very many happy, healthy and productive years.

Personally, Michael, I look forward to your friendship and guidance for a long time to come.

Joel L. Lebowitz, Editor