

Preface

It gives me great pleasure to dedicate this volume of the *Journal of Statistical Physics* to a truly original and deep scientist, Mitchell Feigenbaum. The fact that Mitchell is also a very dear friend and that his seminal papers were published in this journal only adds to this pleasure.

I first heard rumors about Mitchell's astonishing work on period doubling during the spring of 1976. I later met him and heard him talk about his work at a conference in Como, Italy, in the spring of 1977. I was greatly impressed. I was also very surprised and pleased to learn there that his paper has been declined by an applied mathematics journal. Surprised, because I thought the work was outstanding and deeply original, and pleased because it gave me the opportunity to ask Mitchell to send his paper to the *Journal of Statistical Physics*. The papers were published in *J. Stat. Phys.* 19, 25 (1978); 21, 669 (1979). The rest is history, best told in the articles in this volume and the references there. The story is also well told in the book "Chaos", by James Gleick.

Following our first meeting I had a chance to visit Mitchell in Los Alamos later that year. Personal computers were still quite novel at that time and I remember sitting fascinated in Mitchell's office late one evening (his favorite working time) watching iterations of various maps. This visit established a friendship which has lasted to this day and which I greatly cherish. It includes now also Mitchell's wife, Gunella.

Mitchell, as all who have dealt with him know, is an original thinker and character in the best sense of the latter. His ideas were and are far ahead of the common wisdom. This has led not only to his great contributions to science but also to his creating a major center for converting physicists into biologists at Rockefeller University.

Dear Mitchell, I wish you, on behalf of myself, the contributors to this volume and the large community of your friends and admirers, many, many happy and active years. Keep on thinking out of the mold and enjoy it fully.

Joel Lebowitz