

Dear Family of Grisha, Dear Colleagues,

I am happy to contribute to this Memorial Celebration for Grisha Mints.

For me, the distance in time to Grisha's passing has not made it fade away, but it has made me see some things about him more clearly, perhaps for the first time in my life.

Grisha and I were close colleagues in terms of several interests: especially, modal and intuitionistic logic. Of course, Grisha was a proof theorist by nature, while I am more into semantics and model theory. But then, even my dissertation supervisor Martin Löb was a proof theorist, and I have never felt threatened by their species in any way.

It was easy to talk with Grisha about research topics of shared interest, and we did so in his office until his very last quarter, when he told me enthusiastically about his new work on modal syllogisms, which I immediately introduced in my modal logic class. Grisha was in excellent intellectual shape last spring, bright and sharp as ever.

Grisha's work had a unity of themes and style that went back and forth between logic, mathematics, and computer science in innovative ways. I always felt more enlightened after every professional conversation. I also felt honored when he found something of value in my work, such as the use of bisimulation in his latest results on interpolation.

What I regret is the ironical twist of fate that, right now, I have actually started working with Grisha's pioneering logics for dynamical systems. They have come up in my work on logics of agency, and also in a recent collaboration with our alumnus Wes Holliday on possibility-based logics for metaphysics and epistemology. I so much wish that Grisha could have seen this new line, and enjoyed the further march of his ideas.

More generally, Grisha always supported my efforts in connecting between disciplines. Many people will remember him as a constant visitor and active participant at some 13 CSLI workshops on Logic, Language, Computation, and Games.

Grisha was someone with great personal qualities. We had our differences of opinion about where logic at Stanford should go, but he never let these differences degenerate

into animosity, political manoeuvring, or condemnation. To me, this is a rare talent. Many academics routinely equate opposing their views with immorality.

Another striking quality was Grisha's modesty. We never had one of those standard academic conversations where the hidden subtext is: 'refer to my paper', or: 'acknowledge my priority'. He was all about the content of logic, not about himself.

Grisha also had a unique charm, formed by a lot of Russian and a little American culture. The same originality of his logical work showed in his conversation: his sense of humor, and his love of pithy phrasing capturing familiar situations in unusual and novel ways. I cherish several emails of his with memorable one-liners. To me, Grisha also represented a Russian dissident tradition where life blends with the arts. I remember a visit by a Russian poet to Stanford that excited him even more than that of a mathematician.

Listening to our Stanford students, and consulting American and Russian colleagues for a memorial piece in the ASL Newsletter, I heard about the same human warmth they had all experienced. Grisha's generous encouraging attitude exerted a strong influence on colleagues worldwide. Many people (such as Phil Kremer and Valentin Shehtman, but I could mention others, too) told me they owed him a crucial push toward their career.

Grisha's oeuvre can be found described in public pieces by Sol Feferman, Vladimir Lifschitz, myself, and others. His achievements are well-known, and they will persist.

But as I reach the end of this message, other images are uppermost in my mind. I am seeing the long spring hikes with Grisha and Marianna in the parks around Stanford, with many students and colleagues over the years, talking about truly everything under the sun. And so, my main sense today is not professional, but emotional. I see ever more clearly now what we have lost with Grisha: there was just no one like him.

I end with my warmest wishes to Marianna, to Grisha's family, and indeed, our Stanford community. We have suffered a great loss – and yet, we have so much to be thankful for.

Johan van Benthem