Toposym Kanpur

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In: Stanley P. Franklin and Zdeněk Frolík and Václav Koutník (eds.): General Topology and Its Relations to Modern Analysis and Algebra, Proceedings of the Kanpur topological conference, 1968. Academia Publishing House of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, Praha, 1971.
pp. [5],7--8.

Persistent URL: http://dml.cz/dmlcz/700577

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It is with regret that we record the death on 8 September, 1969 in Charlottesville, Virginia, U.S.A., of GORDON THOMAS WHYBURN, who was the senior participant in the Kanpur Topology Conference.

Professor Whyburn was born in the farming community of Lewisville, Texas, on 7 January 1904, the youngest son of three boys and two girls in the family. As an undergraduate and as a first year graduate student at the University of Texas, he majored in chemistry. While he was an undergraduate he studied calculus, advanced calculus, and topology under Professor R. L. MOORE, and continued to the Ph. D. degree after deciding to devote himself to mathematics. He completed the Ph. D. requirements under Moore's direction in two years (one year after receiving the M. A. degree in Organic Chemistry). No wonder he expressed concern about not being able to think of research problems to work on. But he need not have worried. His probing and restless imagination led him to produce one hundred fifty research papers. Starting in the rapidly developing study of continuous curves (locally connected, connected sets), working alongside WILDER, AYRES, GEHMAN, ROBERTS and others, important results flowed out in a steady stream. Of this period, Whyburn's Cyclic Element Theory is possibly most notable and with more recent refinements is still being applied (to surface area problems, for example). But Whyburn's interests were gradually being turned in the direction of the properties and actions of mappings. This research culminated in his American Mathematical Society Colloquium Publications, Volume 28 (1942), entitled: *Analytic Topology*. What is analytic topology? Rado (in his AMS Colloquium Lectures) said that it was topology that every analyst ought to know. In fact, Whyburn's interest in analysis never dimmed and, in separating the purely topological essence of analytic functions from the purely analytic, he was led to the discovery (which he shares with STOÏLOW) of the close connection with light open maps. Further research with this motivation produced the small monograph: *Topological Analysis* (1958).

Not all Professor Whyburn's energy went into research for he gave generously of his time to administrative work devoted to the welfare of mathematics. After a few years at Johns Hopkins he became Chairman of the Department of Mathematics at the University of Virginia, a post which he held for over thirty years. He served on many committees, both national and international. Some of these dealt with

grants or fellowships. He took these responsibilities quite seriously, remarking on one occasion that it was the most difficult thing in the world to give away money. He served as Editor of the Transactions of the American Mathematical Society and later as President of the Society at a time when the conscience of membership was troubled with "loyalty oath" and civil right problems.

With all he was foremost a teacher, teaching not only topology in its various branches, but function theory as well. He constantly encouraged students in their work, having twenty five do their doctoral research under his direction, including DON WALLACE, JOHN KELLEY, BOB WILLIAMS, and ED FLOYD (to mention just a few). He visited other universities, especially during the summer and during one such visit he so influenced O. G. Harrold that he turned subsequently to research in topology.

In spite of his genuine modesty, many honors came to him. A Guggenheim Fellowship allowed him to visit Europe early in his career. In 1938 the Mathematical Association of America awarded him the Chauvenet Prize. He was a member of the National Academy of Sciences (U.S.A.).

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