

Tribute to John ShanahanJerry Keough

(Daniel Chambers, our liaison at Boston College, sent me this tribute written by the Chair of the Mathematics Department, on the death of John Shanahan of their department. – Newsletter Editor)

On Thursday, September 11, 2003, the Mathematics Department lost one of its long-time citizens after a lengthy battle with cancer.

John Peter Shanahan received the B.Sc. (1956) and M.Sc. (1957) degrees from University College, Galway, Ireland, and then the Ph.D. (1962) from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD.

Professor Shanahan was a student of John Hartman (himself a student of Aurel Wintner). His expertise was in the areas of Analysis and (Partial) Differential Equations. He would go on to publish several articles on the solutions to certain types of hyperbolic equations during his mathematical career.

Professor Shanahan joined the Mathematics faculty of Boston College in the Fall of 1962 as an Assistant Professor, and was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure in 1967.

His Irish wit and reserved sense of humor endeared him to two generations of undergraduates and his faculty colleagues. Once, when asked by a student in class “Professor Shanahan, are you a doctor?” Shanahan responded in his characteristic, self-effacing manner by asking the student “Why, are you sick?”

Professor Shanahan was assigned to room 322 in Carney Hall when the Mathematics Department was moved into a then, newly-constructed Carney Hall in 1963 -- an office which until Thursday housed his warm smile and engaging personality. He is believed to be the longest, single-office occupant in the entire building, a home over the years to hundreds of faculty members in the College of Arts and Sciences.

John P. Shanahan was 68, and served Boston College and its students for a total of 41 years.

Professor Shanahan was preceded in death by his sister Mary (Murray). He leaves a second sister, Sally (Sharratt), and several nieces and nephews