

## In Memoriam: Phil Scott (1947-2023)

Obituaries

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**Richard Blute** (University of Ottawa)

**Robin Cockett** (University of Calgary)

**Simon Henry** (University of Ottawa)



It is with great sadness that we convey the news of the death of our good friend and colleague Phil Scott to the Canadian Mathematics Society. He passed away after a long battle with cancer on the 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2023. His passing was a major loss to Canadian mathematics.

Phil was born on December 27<sup>th</sup>, 1947, in Leeds (UK). His mother was from Leeds although his father was Scottish from Glasgow. When he was one year old, his family moved to North Carolina where he grew up and eventually went to university at Chapel Hill to study mathematics. He moved to Canada in the 70's to study for a Ph.D., receiving his doctorate in Pure Mathematics from the University of Waterloo in 1976, under the supervision of Denis Higgs – an expert in universal algebra and category theory. In 1977 he became a postdoctoral student under Jim Lambek's supervision, which led to a lifelong collaboration between the two mathematicians. Phil then spent several years teaching and researching, including a year at Dalhousie, before joining the Mathematics Department at the University of Ottawa in 1982. He remained there until his death.

Phil made many contributions to category theory and to categorical proof theory – a subject which Phil and Jim Lambek essentially invented. He wrote a series of papers that culminated in the landmark book with Jim Lambek "Introduction To Higher-Order Categorical Logic" which was published in 1986. The book is still the standard text on the subject. But Phil's research went well beyond these initial works: he made major contributions to theoretical computer science, linear logic, inverse semigroup theory and recursion theory.

Phil was a wonderful mentor to students and young researchers at all levels. Phil would regularly receive emails wanting to know more about the fascinating field of research he helped create. He was never too busy to talk to a student or anyone interested in mathematics. The subject of categorical proof theory continues to thrive, and this is in large part due to Phil's stewardship of the area.

Those of us who knew him personally will always think of him as a dear friend and a genuinely kind soul.