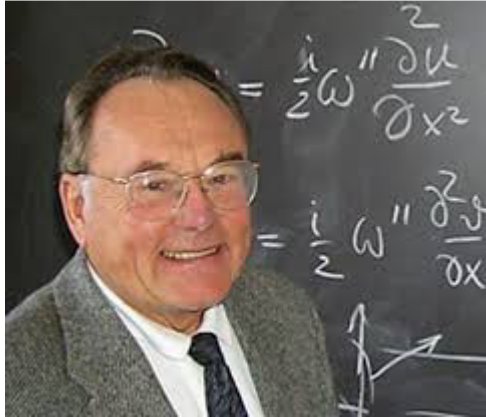


Hermann Anton Haus

August 8, 1925 - May 21, 2003



Hermann A. Haus “was considered the world expert on optical and electronic noise,” according to *The Tech*, the student newspaper at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). “He introduced the master equation of mode-locking, now the primary analytic tool for understanding pulsed lasers. [And he] made significant contributions to soliton theory, the study of propagation of a laser pulse. At the time of his death, he was leading an effort to develop integrated photonics in the Optics and Quantum Electronics Group of [MIT’s] Research Laboratory for Electronics, where he was a principal investigator.” Hermann had been a professor at MIT for 49 years and an Institute Professor there for the last 15. Hermann also led research and inspired generations of new thinkers in a field that led to successive revolutions in communications.

Born in Ljubljana, Slovenia, Hermann and his mother were deported by the country’s communist authorities to Austria shortly after World War II. They settled in Graz, and in 1946 he enrolled in the Technical University there, majoring in power engineering; not long afterward, he transferred to the Technical University of Vienna to study microwave engineering. Hermann was then offered a scholarship by Union College (Schenectady, NY), from which he graduated in 1949 with a B.Sc.

While working on his master’s degree at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (Troy, NY), Hermann obtained a summer job at MIT with Prof. Louis Smullin, which led to his acceptance in 1951 into the doctoral program of what is now MIT’s Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. He received his Sc.D. in 1954 and joined the department that year. Hermann remained based at MIT for his entire career while benefiting from regular sabbaticals, including three at Bell Labs in Holmdel, NJ.

Hermann was known at MIT as an extraordinary teacher both for his course-defining textbooks and his dynamic in-class personality. He would gesture dramatically, convey awe of the subject and the phenomena it explained, and lecture without notes. He lived by a lesson learned on the train from Slovenia to Austria as a young refugee, where a chemistry professor (also a refugee) lamented that he had to leave a career’s worth of research notes behind. Hermann then vowed to himself never to rely on anything so complex that he couldn’t keep it in his head.

Hermann led research and taught at MIT for nearly a half-century, and inspired generations of

new thinkers in a field that led to successive revolutions in communications. He received the National Medal of Science from President Clinton in 1995 for his research and his teaching, and was one of the few engineers in the country to become a member of both the National Academy of Engineering and the National Academy of Sciences.

Hermann suffered a heart attack after arriving home in Lexington from his regular, 15-mile commute by bicycle from MIT in Cambridge. He was 77 years old.