



**Herschel S. Pilloff**  
**1940-2020**

Herschel S. Pilloff passed away in Longmont, Colorado on February 27, 2020, after a lengthy illness. He was born August 15, 1940, in Uhrichsville, Ohio to Dr. Benjamin and Belle Pilloff and was actually delivered by his father who was the doctor in this small midwestern town. Herschel led a very typical small-town childhood and enjoyed fishing, being outdoors, school, and Boy Scouts. He also developed his lifelong interest in photography during this time and was very much influenced by the values of life in a small midwestern town -- honesty, integrity, and a respect for work.

After completing high school in three years, Herschel went away to college at MIT and then to Cornell University where he was awarded a PhD in Physical Chemistry. He then went to the University of Toronto to complete a postdoctoral fellowship with Dr. John Polanyi who was later to win a Nobel Prize in Chemistry. It was during his time at the University of Toronto that he met Hena and they were married in June 1968. They moved to Maryland when Herschel completed his fellowship and was offered a position at the Naval Research Laboratory. He was a researcher at NRL for several years before accepting a position at the Office of Naval Research as a Program manager in basic science. During his long-distinguished career at the Office of Naval Research he managed many areas of basic research, having the opportunity to work with many of the brightest scientists in the country. Herschel was super insightful in judging the potential of young researchers. Several of those young researchers that Herschel picked up and supported for many years became pioneers in their respective fields including several Nobel

Laureates. He had a strong sense of what made good basic science and good scientists, and an instinct for identifying projects that mattered and would produce meaningful results. He understood well the partnership between researchers and funders of research and carried out his end of that partnership in a most exemplary way. To many of the researchers Herschel was more than a funding contact: his counsel and influence was vitally important in their success. By his life, he showed the many young researchers many important values in the Life/Work balance issue that affects all vigorous people.

After almost 40 years of distinguished government service, Herschel retired from the Office of Naval Research in 2000. Following his retirement, he and Hena moved to Colorado where Herschel enjoyed serious photography and riding his bike in the canyons surrounding Boulder, Colorado. Herschel is survived by his wife Hena, their three children, Dr. Daniel Pilloff, Dr. Mark Pilloff, and Rachel Pilloff, J.D., their spouses, four grandchildren, and his brother, Dr. Allan Pilloff.

Herschel Pilloff was a wonderful man. In addition to his family, he leaves behind a multitude of friends and colleagues deeply saddened by his passing. His wise counsel, his caring ways and the generosity of his spirit will be missed by all those fortunate enough to have known him.

Respectfully submitted

John Hall<sup>(1)</sup>, Steve Harris<sup>(2)</sup>, Michael Salour<sup>(3)</sup>, Marlan Scully<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) - JILA, University of Colorado, Boulder CO

(2)- Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA

(3) - Linkatel, La Jolla, CA

(4) - Texas A&M, College Station, TX