
IN MEMORIAM

KVETOSLAV "SLAVA" PRAZDNY

Mike Baird, Perry W. Thorndyke,
and Jay M. Tenenbaum

A Redwood tree in Big Basin State Park was dedicated in Slava's name, through the Sempervirens Fund. Anyone wishing to make a tribute can do so in Slava's name to The Sempervirens Fund, P O Drawer BE, Los Altos, California 94023

It is with sorrow that we report the death of a respected member of the artificial intelligence community. Dr Kvetoslav "Slava" Prazdny died in a hang-gliding accident, Saturday, September 19th, 1987, in the California mountains. He is survived by his wife, Dagmar Dolan, and his 15 year old daughter Bronja Prazdny.

Slava was recognized internationally as an expert in many aspects of human and machine perception. During his prolific career, he had published over 60 journal articles reporting research in human perception, stereo vision, image processing, robotics, perceptual reasoning and learning, adaptive neural networks, and psychophysics.

Slava derived his greatest pleasure from concocting clever demonstrations aimed at destroying currently popular theories of perception. His work on transparent random-dot stereograms, for example, challenges widely-held theories of stereopsis that rely on surface continuity assumptions to resolve depth ambiguities.

We were fortunate to have worked beside Slava during his tenure in California. He most recently spent two years as a Senior Member of the Technical Staff in the Artificial Intelligence Center at FMC Corporation, in Santa Clara. He was previously Senior Member of Research Staff at the Fairchild Laboratory for Artificial Intelligence and the Schlumberger Palo Alto Research Center, and a Visiting Scholar at Stanford University. Before coming to California, Slava was a British Council Research Fellow at University of Essex, and a Research Scientist at University of Maryland.

Born on December 31, 1948, Slava left his native Czechoslovakia for an education in western Europe. He

received his BsC, MsC, and DrS in Psychology and Mathematics at R.U.G., The Netherlands. He then completed a Ph.D. in Computer Science at the University of Essex. His work reflected the marriage of these disciplines, as he strove to develop formal computational models of vision based on biological and psychophysical properties of the human visual system.

He was a member of American Association for Advancement of Science, American Association for Artificial Intelligence, The Cognitive Science Society, The Psychonomic Society, International Society for Ecological Psychology, Society for Information Display, SPIE, and a Fellow of the New York Academy of Sciences. He was a reviewer and commentator for many national and international journals, including Psychological Bulletin, Brain and Behavioral Sciences, ACM Transactions on Computer Graphics, IEEE Transactions on PAMI, Nature, Science, Computer Vision Graphics and Image Processing, and the National Science Foundation. He did book reviews and topic overviews for: *Nature*, *Artificial Intelligence Journal*, *Nederlandse Tijdschrift voor de Psychologie*, and *AISB Quarterly*.

Slava led a rich and varied life

He was first dan Judo, fifth grade jiu-jitsu, a licensed hang-glider and airplane pilot. He spoke Czech, Dutch, and English fluently, and read Russian and German. Slava loved life and animals, and from this became a strict vegetarian by conviction. We remember him as a kind and generous person with a keen sense of humor, and as a true scientist who was unwavering in his pursuit of truth.