

Gene Fuerst Rose
1916 – 2008

PROFESSOR OF COMPUTER SCIENCE, EMERITUS

B.S., Case School of Applied Science, Cleveland; Ph.D., University of Wisconsin, 1952
California State University, Fullerton From September, 1977 To August 1987 Birth: 1916; Death:
May 8, 2008

Gene Rose, Professor of Computer Science Emeritus, died at 90 on May 8, 2008 after a brief illness. He came to Cal State Fullerton in the fall of 1977 as Full Professor and Chair of Computer Science. Gene was a gentleman and a scholar. The establishment of a new department was a yeoman task, involving jurisdictional disputes as well as curricular development and major recruitment efforts. CSUF was very lucky to have a calm, rational gentleman handling the Department Chair position during this period. Gene's efforts brought Computer Science through early stormy seas, and led to a department and degree programs which have been a credit to the University. Since the Department had only one-half position for the chair at that time, Gene also carried a significant teaching load. He taught introductory courses in programming as well as graduate courses in formal languages and automata theory. Preferring teaching to administration, he stepped down after a three year term as Chair in 1979 and taught courses in the Computer Science graduate program and calculus in the Mathematics Department until retirement and being granted Emeritus status in June of 1987.

I met Gene early in his tenure at CSUF, but did not get to know him well until I transferred to Computer Science in 1979. Since then, in addition to working closely with him professionally, he and his wife became close family friends. It was in the latter regard that I came to understand what Dean Diefenderfer meant when he told me that beyond being a scholar, Gene was a fine human being. His broad interests included music, notably piano, the oboe and the English horn, cooking, particularly in the Chinese and Italian cuisines, and languages. In addition to French, German, Spanish and Russian which he studied in connection with his work, he later became interested in Cantonese and Italian, driven in part by culinary studies. Other interests were birding, mushrooms, model airplanes, acrostics and Sudoku and, especially, bridge. And no matter what he chose to do, whether undertaking a new language or learning to play a new instrument, he attacked it with vigor and sought to be good at it. An example or two might help here. On one of the many occasions when we (my wife Judy and I) went to the Rose's for dinner we noticed little Post-It notes all around the house: "table," "chair," "bathroom" and so on. Given that both he and his wife Elizabeth were in their 80s by then, we thought perhaps one or the other had started down the path towards dementia of some sort. But then we noticed some strange characters under each of the word. Turned out Gene was studying Farsi! On another occasion Gene took us to his project room where we saw some unusual mechanical things on his worktable, which we soon learned were tools for cutting reeds for his oboe! And, even though this is about Gene, I must say something about his wife and friend since high school days, Elizabeth. She was a wonderful companion for Gene because she shared his adventurous spirit and eclectic tastes. They were always doing the unexpected, such as a ride in a hot air balloon on Liz's 60th birthday, driving up one day in a bright yellow Mustang convertible (and two years later in an orange one!), or going to Italy to hunt mushrooms -- you get the picture. Their plan was to enjoy life to the fullest so long as they were able, and take care of each other. It worked.

Along the way, they showed us that the Golden Years need not be defined in terms of cruises and motor home excursions.

Gene earned his Ph.D. in Mathematics at the University of Wisconsin in Madison in 1952. He studied under Steven Kleene and specialized in Symbolic Logic. His subsequent career enabled him to work almost equally in applied research and academic appointments. From 1952-55, he worked on defense projects at the Sandia Corporation (Albuquerque, NM). In 1955, he moved to Santa Monica where he was first employed by the Ramo-Wooldridge Corporation in Inglewood, then at Systems Development Corporation in Santa Monica. Among his colleagues in these research establishments was Seymour Ginsberg, who later became a founder of the Computer Science Department at USC.

In 1966-67, Gene was invited as guest-professor to teach at the Polytechnic Institute (Technische Hochschule) in Munich, Bavaria. This was the first of two German appointments, in the late 1970's he received a fellowship from the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung and he worked for a year in Bonn-Bad Godesburg.

In the early 1960's Gene taught and guided student research at his undergraduate alma-mater, Case-Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. He returned to Southern California in 1977 to be founding Chair of the Computer Science Department at CSUF.

Predeceased by Elizabeth in 2001, Gene met Mary Lou Ritter of Indianapolis in 2005, and she became his close friend and companion. Gene is survived by her, as well as his son, Arthur Rose, of Port Orchard Washington, and his three granddaughters: Victoria Rose-Yontef, Alexandra J. Rose and Frederica Rose.

Submitted by:

Ed Sowell, Professor of Computer Science, Emeritus

Assisted by Herb Rutemiller and Arthur Rose