

Terrence Akai of ND graduate school dies

By: Michael O. Garvey
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Terrence J. Akai, senior associate dean of the Graduate School of the University of Notre Dame, died Saturday in his home. He was 59 years old.

A native of Guyana, South America, Akai joined the Notre Dame faculty in 1976 as a research associate in aerospace and mechanical engineering who specialized in fluid mechanics. Holding concurrent appointments in that department, computer science and engineering, and mathematics, Akai taught some 15 courses during his career, including a popular mathematics course based on a seminal and widely adopted textbook of which he was the author, *Applied Numerical Methods for Engineers*. He had received every possible teaching award at Notre Dame by the time he was appointed assistant dean of the Graduate School in 1994. As senior associate dean, Akai was principally responsible for graduate admissions, administering thousands of applications each year.

Terry Akai was both colleague and friend to countless people at Notre Dame, said Gregory Sterling, dean of the Graduate School. His death is as much a personal as a professional loss for the graduate school and the University as a whole, and we join our sorrow, thoughts and prayers with those of the Akai family.

Universally praised by his former students for his conspicuous commitment to their success inside and outside the classroom, Akai once described his teaching method as intended to dispel myths and to develop appropriate attitudes and approaches to problems to develop a style of thinking.

Akai's own style of thinking, to the delight of the many colleagues, students, staff members and visitors encountering him in the corridors and entrances of Notre Dame's Main Building, was droll and gregarious. Along with a remarkable administrative efficiency, he always had time for an anecdote or a joke.

A visitation will be held from 3 to 8 p.m. Wednesday (March 4) in the Palmer Funeral Home-River Park, where a funeral service will be at 11 a.m. Thursday (March 5). A reception for Akai's family, friends and colleagues will be held from 12:30 to 2 p.m. Thursday in McKenna Hall.

A memorial Mass for the Notre Dame community will be held on March 16, at 3:30 p.m. in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart.