

**MEMORIAL RESOLUTION OF THE FACULTY  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON**

**ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS HAKKI B. ÖGELMAN**

Hakki B. Ögelman, professor emeritus of physics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, passed away peacefully on September 4, 2011, in Austin, Texas after battling cancer for several months.

Hakki grew up in Istanbul. There he attended Robert College and left for DePauw University in Indiana in 1957. Friends remember him as an outstanding student who skipped a couple of grades on his way to an international baccalaureate, a versatile athlete, and a favorite among young women who thought he looked like James Dean.

At DePauw, he decided to pursue physics despite pressure from his father to become a mining engineer to help run a coal mine near Istanbul. Athletically, Hakki became a star, and ultimately a captain, on DePauw's very successful wrestling team. He married a fellow student, Ivy White.

For his PhD, Hakki went to Cornell. Hakki's thesis entailed measuring astrophysical gamma rays with an instrument attached to a helium-filled balloon at 100,000 feet. The instrument worked as planned, and hours of valuable data were collected. Unfortunately, the recovery parachute for the package failed to open, and the instrument hit the west Texas desert at terminal velocity. For days the package could not be located, and it was feared lost. Finally a rancher found the wreckage and, thinking it was the remains of a flying saucer, reported his discovery to the federal government. Miraculously, the recorded data was undamaged. Hakki had snatched success from the jaws of defeat.

Hakki signed on with the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center and with his colleagues became recognized as one of the world's leading experts on astrophysical 'compact objects' such as pulsars, quasars, and neutron stars.

In 1970, Hakki returned to Turkey with Ivy and their sons and took an appointment at the emergent Middle East Technical University (METU) in Ankara. Over the next 12 years, Hakki would make important contributions to Turkey, not the least of which were his establishment and nurturing of the field of experimental astrophysics in Turkey and his creation of the Turkish National Observatory. He was universally viewed as Turkey's leading experimental astrophysicist.

But he did not anticipate the many trials he would face in pursuit of his goal of advancing science in Turkey. He had good students who have since done exceptionally well in their own careers, some in continuing collaboration with Hakki. (Baha Balantekin became one of Hakki's students and later one of his colleagues when Hakki joined him at the physics faculty at the University of Wisconsin.) But the equipment available to Hakki at METU was primitive compared to what he was used to in the U.S.

Overriding everything else was Turkey's instability throughout the 1970s and early 1980s—the result of social conflicts which engulfed much of the country and brought it to the brink of civil war. METU was a flashpoint for this conflict. Unfortunately, Hakki and Ivy's marriage did not survive the chaotic years in Turkey. In 1977, Ivy returned to the United States with their sons.

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Hakki married a physics department colleague at METU, Dr. Yeter Goksu. She was an outspoken advocate of women's rights and an ardent communist. That combination made her a lightning rod in the left/right conflict that continued to rage throughout Turkey. In 1978, they moved to Adana in southern Turkey, where Hakki became dean of basic sciences at the newly established Çukurova University. There he started physics and astronomy programs, taught a multitude of general science courses, became deeply immersed in efforts to exploit solar energy, and built a revolutionary "solar house" on the Çukurova campus.

The move to Adana, however, did not have its intended effect of getting Yeter out of the political spotlight. Following the coup d'état in 1980, Turkey's ruling military junta jailed thousands of suspected political subversives, including Yeter. When the junta finally released Yeter after eight months, she and Hakki knew the time had come for them to leave Turkey.

Even after his departure, however, Hakki continued to be held in high esteem by the Turkish scientific community. In 1988, Hakki was awarded the highest scientific honor bestowed in Turkey, the Sedat Simavi Prize. And in 1991, Hakki received the Turkish Scientific and Technical Research Council Prize.

Hakki accepted a position at the Max Planck Institute for Extraterrestrial Physics near Munich. Europe had a satellite called EXOSAT which Hakki used to make several notable discoveries. Then MPE built a new X-ray satellite, ROSAT, which enabled Hakki to be among the first scientists to detect X-ray sources in space.

Toward the end of Hakki's stay at MPE, his relationship with Yeter Goksu foundered. Hakki later married an Italian astronomer, Marina Orio. Hakki and Marina spent the remainder of Hakki's life together and had a son Roberto, who is about to enter college in the United States.

In 1991, Hakki accepted a physics professorship at the University of Wisconsin. He continued to work with ROSAT, published more than he ever had before, mentored a number of successful PhD candidates, and reveled in teaching a variety of physics courses to graduate and undergraduate students alike.

In 1996 when Hakki was at the peak of his scientific career, he suffered a massive stroke that left him physically handicapped. After rehabilitation, he was able to get back to his teaching and research, but he no longer had the boundless energy that had been his trademark before the stroke. Nonetheless, Hakki retained his love of science and life. He had an endless repertoire of jokes. He continued to work in Madison and Istanbul until just months before he died from an aggressive form of cancer in September 2011. He read and thought broadly on a wide range of scientific and non-scientific subjects, and he transmitted his zeal for learning to all with whom he came in contact.

Following Hakki's death, the Turkish Astronomical Society created a memorial fund in his honor to underwrite a Hakki Ögelman Summer School for students of astronomy from all over Turkey. The recognition is fitting because Hakki was a born teacher, known for his clarity, enthusiasm, and genuine interest in students.

Hakki is survived by Kenan Ögelman of Austin, Texas, Nedim and Laura Ögelman of Alexandria, Virginia, and Roberto Ögelman of Madison. He also has two grandsons, Anders and Soren Ögelman, of Alexandria, Virginia.

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE  
Baha Balantekin  
Peter Timbie, chair