

In Memoriam



Since the Conference was held last January, one of our distinguished colleagues and friends, Flaviu Cristian, passed away on April 27, 1999 at the age of 47, after a long and courageous battle against cancer.

Flaviu was born in Romania in 1951, and moved to France in 1971 to study computer science. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Grenoble, France, in 1979, where he carried out research in operating systems and programming methodology. He went on to the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK and worked in the area of specification, design, and verification of fault-tolerant software. He then joined IBM Almaden Research Center in 1982. While at IBM, he received the Corporate Award, IBM's highest technical award, for his work on the Advanced Automation System for air traffic control. He subsequently joined UC San Diego as Professor in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering in 1991. He was nominated an IEEE Fellow in 1998 for his contributions to the theory and practice of dependable systems.

Flaviu's work on the design and analysis of fault-tolerant distributed systems was fundamental, and he was widely regarded as one of the technical leaders in his field. The impact of his work was felt both in the theory and in the practice of fault-tolerance. He actively contributed to both FTCS and DCCA; in particular, he was the General Chair for DCCA-4 held in San Diego in January 1994. He continued to be active in his work and his advising of students throughout his illness.

He was also interested in poetry, and turned to it as a form of therapy when diagnosed with cancer. His poems were published as two books "52 Poems" and "At the Crossroads" in 1995 and 1996, respectively. The following poem (reproduced with permission), reveals another facet of Flaviu's inspiring talent and provides an additional reason to remember him.

Perpetual Life

*At the beginning a spark that bursts
from a man's flint and a woman's stone
Then a fire that burns alone
or merges with other fires
producing new sparks
As years pass the fuel that sustains each fire
is consumed and the fire dies out
Despite this the earth is lit each moment
by the billions of fires that burn*

Flaviu Cristian (1951-1999)