

Michigan professors remember Unabomber suspect as student

Associated Press

4 April 1996

Nearly 30 years after he left the University of Michigan campus, a man suspected by relatives of being the Unabomber is remembered by two professors for his sharp mind and dedication to detail. Theodore John Kaczynski, 53, who received master's and doctoral degrees in mathematics from the University of Michigan, was taken into custody Wednesday at his Montana cabin and questioned in connection with the Unabomber case. He was neither arrested nor charged. One of the 16 bombings linked to the Unabomber occurred Nov. 15, 1985 at the home of the late James McConnell, a University of Michigan psychology professor.

Nicklaus Suino, McConnell's research assistant, suffered minor injuries when he opened a textbook-sized package that exploded. McConnell suffered hearing loss. George Piranian, a Michigan mathematics professor emeritus who taught Kaczynski, said he was impressed with Kaczynski's intellectual ability. "I respected him very highly. I know other members of the faculty had great respect for him," said Piranian, Ann Arbor.

He said he last talked with Kaczynski in 1967. Piranian said he and another professor had been unable to solve a problem, but Kaczynski did and it became the basis of his dissertation, "Boundary Functions." "I mentioned it in class and Kaczynski picked up the ball and ran like hell. Hurrah! I never would have accomplished what he could," Piranian said. "This happens every so often, that you find a student in your class who runs circles around you. I'm proud to have known him." Kaczynski also had five published articles while at Michigan, the university said.

Michigan mathematics professor Peter Duren said he taught Kaczynski in one course and served on his thesis committee, but didn't know him well. But he remembered his handwriting. "He was very meticulous, very serious, (and had) very neat handwriting. He wrote much more detail than necessary; the proofs to his theorems were much more detailed than necessary," Duren said. "He would deliver sheafs of handwritten, neatly written manuscript, all finished by the time he showed it to his thesis adviser.

He was very impressive, and we all expected him to go on to bigger things in research." Duren described Kaczynski as independent, original and committed to his studies. "He had no interest outside of math, no social interests, math was his world," he said. Kaczynski, born May 22, 1942, in Chicago, was graduated from Harvard in 1962.

The Ted K Archive

Associated Press

Michigan professors remember Unabomber suspect as student
4 April 1996

Ironwood Daily Globe (Ironwood, Michigan), 4 April 1996, page 8.
<newspapers.com/newspage/3068554/>

www.thetedkarchive.com