

Suspect A Genius In Mathematics

**Kaczynski Astounded Professors By Solving Problems They
Couldn't Touch**

April 4, 1996

He was a diligent student who excelled in math, solving problems that baffled even his college professors. His flair for numbers took him to the nation's most elite schools.

Former classmates and teachers say Theodore John Kaczynski, 53, a former University of California at Berkeley mathematics professor, first showed signs of his academic and analytical skills as a teenager when he attended Evergreen Park High School, south of Chicago.

He was a National Merit scholarship finalist, a member of the German, math and coin clubs and played in the band in high school. Classmates said they remember little of him, however.

"Isn't he the profile? The quiet kid that you never know what he's thinking?" said Donna Bergeron, who was among 181 students in the school's class of '58.

"He was very, very bright and he received a scholarship to Harvard," said state Rep. Maureen Murphy, a Republican who represents Evergreen Park.

She said neighbors told her the family took weekend trips to museums. "They were into star-gazing, they were very proeducation and he was very, very talented," she said.

After finishing high school in three years, he attended Harvard University, graduating in 1962 when he was 20.

He then moved to the University of Michigan, where he received a master's degree in 1964 and a doctorate in 1967, both in mathematics. His dissertation was titled "Boundary Functions," according to school officials.

George Piranian, a Michigan mathematics professor emeritus who taught Kaczynski, said he was "a very serious student. Very able."

"I respected him very highly," said Piranian, 81, who hasn't talked to Kaczynski since 1967. "I know other members of the faculty had great respect for him."

Piranian said Kaczynski was able to solve a problem that had stymied both the professor and a colleague.

"I mentioned it in class and Kaczynski picked up the ball and ran like hell," the professor recalled. "Hurrah! I never would have accomplished what he could. 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."

Peter Duren, a Michigan math professor who served on Kaczynski's thesis committee, said he was very meticulous.

"He wrote much more detail than necessary, the proofs to his theorems were much more detailed than necessary," Duren said. "He would deliver sheaves 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."

Kaczynski moved out West and became an assistant professor of mathematics at the University of California at Berkeley in the 1967-68 school year, according to Harvard and Berkeley records.

A Unabomber victim, retired Cal-Berkeley professor Diogenes Angelokos, told The Spokesman-Review he never knew Kaczynski.

Angelokos, a professor in electrical engineering, was injured by a 1982 bomb that exploded in a university faculty lounge.

Kaczynski resigned in June 1969 but school officials said there was no indication why he left.

In Schenectady, N.Y., home to Kaczynski's brother, David, neighbor Mary Ann Welch said Kaczynski's mother, Wanda Dombek, talked about Theodore occasionally, describing him as an "isolationist" who lived in a one-room house in the wilderness.

"She told me he was a professor at a college in California, and that he saved his money so he could move out to Montana and live off the land," said Welch.

When Dombek visited Montana, Welch said, she preferred to stay in a hotel rather than with her son in his 12-by-16 foot tarpaper shack without electricity or plumbing.

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