



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

Memorial Tribute to

ADAM SEMLYEN

Professor Emeritus

The Edward S. Rogers Sr. Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering

February 27, 2023

Be it resolved –

THAT the Council of the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering record with deep regret the death on May 24, 2022 of Professor Adam Semlyen.

Professor Adam Semlyen was born to Aurel and Anna (née Gyorgy) Semlyen in Gheria, a village in northern Romania, on January 10, 1923.

Adam achieved his Diplom-Ingenieur (the traditional engineer's degree) from the Polytechnique Institute of Timisoara in Romania. In 1949, he graduated with his PhD degree from Polytechnique Institute Iași — now the Gheorghe Asachi Technical University of Iași — an institution that has a storied tradition in Romanian engineering education. Directly after his doctorate, he held academic positions at the same institution while working for an electric power utility, the Engineer Regional Power Authority in Timisoara. After two years, Adam left the utility and became a full-time faculty member of Polytechnic Institute Timisoara, teaching and working there for close to twenty years. Adam was married to Mary Semlyen.

In 1969, Adam moved to Canada with and joined The Edward S. Rogers Sr. Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering (known at the time as the Electrical Engineering Department). As a member of what was then the Power Group, his main research interests were in steady-state and dynamic analysis as well as computation of electromagnetic transients in power systems. In 1988, he was named a Fellow of the IEEE for his contributions to this area. That same year he became a Professor Emeritus. He continued to advance the profession, publishing one of his most-cited papers during this time of his life and working with measurable effect well into his nineties. Remarkably, at the age of 98 he was first author on a paper, which proposed a mode identification of linear systems using a novel approach based on the theory of hyperplanes. One wonders what the age record is for lead author for an IEEE publication.

Adam was considered the “academic’s academic.” His curiosity moved him to suggest the possibility of intergroup research collaboration in an era when that was still uncommon. Gentle yet fiercely scholarly, he was known as an exceptional colleague who set high standards for education in the department with his dedication. His integrity and sense of justice never wavered, whether fighting for a colleague’s recognition or proudly representing his dearly loved profession.

Behind his quiet, introspective demeanor, Adam had a passion for education and was known for his care for students. As a thesis supervisor, he would not confine his teachings to the thesis at hand but would also extend it to engineering principles in general, ensuring his students understood and mastered the essence of being an engineer. These lessons would resonate throughout their professional careers.

Adam had an enviably long and productive life, the consummate engineer and teacher whose impact lives on in his contributions to the profession and to the community through those who were fortunate to study under him as students, learn from him as colleagues, or spend time with him as a friend. He will be missed.

Be it further resolved –

THAT this tribute to Adam Semlyen be inscribed in the minutes of this Council meeting, and that copies be sent to his family as an expression of the respect and gratitude of the members of this Council.

*Prepared and presented at Faculty Council by Professor Deepa Kundur,
Chair of The Edward S. Rogers Sr. Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering.*