

## A remembrance of the Batemans

Like hundreds of mathematicians, my first contact with Paul Bateman was on the telephone, as a disappointed job-seeker. In those pre-email days, when you were finishing your degree and made your applications, good news came only in phone calls and letters were usually bad news. In Stanford, in March 1976, no news had come, so I called Urbana. The answer was “no”, as expected, but Paul Bateman was the only encouraging “no” I heard; the only one who said that he would have liked to say “yes”. He said I should stop by if I was ever driving near Urbana.

In July 1977, coming back from California, I did that, walking into 273 Altgeld to say hello. Paul was more than a little startled to see me, but he quickly rustled up Mahlon Day and a few other analysts for coffee in the basement of the Union. Paul warmly encouraged me to apply again when on the market.

The interview was scheduled for January 1979, right after the Biloxi Joint Meetings. Paul and Felice met me at the airport and Felice was carrying a spare coat, having correctly guessed that Berkeley outer garments would be insufficient in Urbana. When they heard that the trip had lasted 7 hours without any meals, they insisted on taking me to the Parthenon on 5th and John for a full Greek meal, and pretended not to notice when I started yawning uncontrollably from the stress and the souvlaki.

A few weeks later, in a break from interviewing somewhere else, I called Urbana for an update and learned that, while #3 on their list, they had offered the job to #1. Someone in my voice was heard asking: “do you have any visiting positions?” Paul was more than a little startled by the question, but said he would get back to me. A week later, a visiting offer was in the mail. I turned down a tenure-track offer to take it.

A couple of months later, Paul called on a Saturday to say that #1 had decided he didn't want to move west of the Hudson, #2 had a good job elsewhere, and he hoped I wouldn't mind that he'd promoted me to the tenure-track job. I was more than a little startled by the phone call and didn't ask about salary.

I came to Urbana that August, and Paul was happy when I got an apartment, so I could move my mailed boxes of books out of his office. Felice was a bit disappointed that I didn't wear a tie every day as I had during the interview. (This is the tie.) Paul and Felice had me over to their house many times, and they and Sally were always delightfully friendly and hospitable to me and, later, to Robin as well. Paul was always happy to remind me that I was the last faculty member he hired for the Department.

The best Paul Bateman story I know comes from that time he needed a major heart operation in Chicago and realized that he should schedule on a Friday the 13th, since other patients would be too superstitious, and the best physicians would likely be available. He had many good years after that operation.

I was privileged to know Paul Bateman and Felice Bateman and am happy for the opportunity to help remember them today.

Bruce Reznick  
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