In honor of

JOHN ZABORSZKY

1914–2008

Monday, February 11, 2008
Graham Chapel
Washington University in St. Louis
John Zaborszky was born on May 13, 1914 in Budapest, Hungary. After receiving his D.Sc. in 1943 from the Royal Hungarian Technological University, Dr. Zaborszky worked for the university as a docent and was chief engineer of the Municipal Power System in Budapest. Arriving in the United States in 1947, Dr. Zaborszky worked at the University of Missouri-Rolla until he joined Washington University in 1954. In 1974, Dr. Zaborszky became the founding chairman of the Department of Systems Science and Mathematics, a position he held until 1989.

Dr. Zaborszky’s research focused on power systems and their dynamics. He published two books and over 200 technical papers, and he was a member of the National Academy of Engineering and an honorary member of the Hungarian Academy of Science.

The School of Engineering established the Zaborszky Distinguished Lecture Series in 1990 to honor Dr. Zaborszky for his distinguished career. Even after retiring, Dr. Zaborszky remained active in the School as a senior professor.

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Photos taken by Hiro Mukai.
Introduction: Barna Szabo

We have come to honor the memory of a colleague, friend, teacher and academic leader; John Záborszky. While we all share in the sadness of his passing, we have reasons to celebrate the fact that John had a long, productive, meaningful and happy life. His life enriched our lives and the life of Washington University. I am honored to have been asked by Mrs. Záborszky, Kiyoko, to say a few words about John today.

John came from a distinguished family with a long history. John’s ancestors received a grant that included a village, named Zábor, and a coat of arms from the king of Hungary in 1263. That was about 200 years before Columbus was born. The family name derives from Zábor, located in northern Hungary, now in one of the successor states of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Slovakia. A long line of distinguished public servants came from the Záborszky family.

John’s father, Nándor Záborszky, studied law and, on completion of his studies, following family tradition, entered public service. In 1926 he was elected mayor of the town of Budafok. He served two terms, during which Budafok underwent rapid development. He died there in 1952. His memory was honored by Budafok a few years ago. A plaque, commemorating his service, was dedicated on the main square of the town. John’s ashes will be placed in the family mausoleum in Budafok.

John was born on May 13, 1914. Six weeks later the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and his wife were assassinated in Sarajevo. Shortly thereafter the First World War began. At the end of that war the Austro-Hungarian Empire collapsed along with the German, Russian and Ottoman empires. A humiliating peace treaty was enforced on Hungary when John was 6 years old. The world in which John was to grow up would be very different from the world in which his ancestors lived.

I do not know much about John’s early education except for remembering John having once remarked that learning was easy for him. The school system in Hungary was exceptional at that time, as evidenced by the number of leading scientists, such as Pal Erdos, (who was a year older than John), Edward Teller (six years older than John), Leo Szilard, John von Neumann, Gabor Szego, John Kemeny and others, produced by that system. The performing arts, the fine arts, literature and music were flourishing in Budapest. The names of Bartók and Kodály are well known around the world. John was exposed to the highest of qualities in the arts and sciences.

While John’s brother, András, followed in his father’s footsteps and studied law, John chose engineering and received his diploma in engineering at age 23 at the Royal Hungarian Technological University Hungary entered the Second World War on the side of Germany in 1940. Somehow John was able to continue his studies during those turbulent times and received his D.Sc. degree, with special honors, in 1943 from the Royal Hungarian Technological University in Budapest. Afterward he took a position with the Municipal Power System of Budapest and had an appointment as Docent with the Technological University in Budapest.

At the end of the war Budapest was in ruins. For a short while there were reasons to hope that a democratic development would take place. However, the history of Hungary and her neighbors was to take a different course.

On March 5, 1946 at Westminster College, in Fulton, Missouri, Sir Winston Churchill delivered his famous Iron Curtain speech: “From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe.” Churchill identified clearly and eloquently the development of the Soviet sphere of influence and the implications of that development.

John probably did not know about that speech at the time, but he realized what was happening and in 1947 he emigrated from Hungary. He came to the United States and received an appointment at the University of Missouri at Rolla. He joined the faculty of Washington University in 1954.

Many years later and not too many years ago, I took John and Kiyoko to Fulton to visit the Churchill memorial there. They were very interested in the exhibits. John paused for a long time at the typewritten, triple-spaced text, annotated in Churchill’s handwriting, of the Iron Curtain Speech.

At Washington University John developed the Department of Systems Science and Mathematics which focused on control and systems engineering. He chaired that department until 1989. In 2003 the department merged with the Department of Electrical Engineering to form the Department of Electrical and Systems Engineering.

John performed service to professional and scientific organizations at both national and international levels. For example, in 1965 he was a member of the panel of the National Academy of Science charged with evaluating the implications of the Northeast Power Blackout. He was instrumental in the formation of the Control Systems Society, within the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). He served as president of the Control Systems Society until 1970.
He was a member of the IEEE Board of Directors and served as its Director of Division I from 1974 to 1975 and as President of the American Automatic Control Council (AACC) from 1980 to 1981. He was a Fellow of IEEE and a Distinguished Member of the IEEE Control Systems Society.

Throughout his life, John Zaborszky was active in research. He published two books and over 200 technical papers related to theoretical and practical aspects of power systems and their dynamics. He served as consultant to numerous companies and organizations, including McDonnell Douglas, Emerson Electric, and Westinghouse. He was a member of the U.S. National Academy of Engineering and an Honorary Member of the Hungarian Academy of Science. He also was the recipient of the Control Heritage Award of the American Automatic Control Council in 1986.

John loved classical music and he enjoyed cultivating plants. He knew the taxonomy of rare plants; he knew how to care for them. One of his plants, that looked to me like a cactus, flowers only once in its life, then only for a few hours and at night. John invited friends to witness this event. We were seated in chairs arranged in a semi-circle around the plant. John explained that this was not a cactus but an agave, a plant that is closely related to lilies. His enthusiasm and excitement kept us awake until the small hours of the morning. The event, guided by a wonderful and miraculous control system operating inside that plant, occurred exactly as John had predicted.

John and Kiyoko shared thanksgiving dinner with us on a number of occasions. My son, Mark, started a tradition. After dinner he asked that everyone at the table say a few words about what were the important things to be thankful for that year. When John’s turn came, he invariably said that he was thankful for having Kiyoko by his side. When Kiyoko’s turn came she said that she was thankful for having John by her side.

Dear Kiyoko, we know that John can be by your side no longer. But we would like you to know that John’s friends will remain by your side always.

Barna Szabó

Recollections: James M. McKelvey

In 1964 George Pake, at time the university Provost, asked me to assume the responsibility of Dean of Engineering. At that time Washington University was a research university with a strong regional reputation. It had aspirations and plans to become a leading national research university. Many of the schools of the university, particularly medicine, already had national reputations for the importance of its research. At that time the School of Engineering was extremely limited in its research output. It was imperative that this change if engineering were to remain part of Washington University.

I looked carefully at where our best potential for research growth could be found. It became clear to me that John Zaborszky, with a relatively small group of faculty colleagues, provided an important base for expanding research capability. With the concept of building on established strength, I directed as much of our limited resources as possible to his operation. Needless to say, he responded quickly, with great enthusiasm and with many ideas and proposals, including the establishment of a separate academic department of systems science. This resulted ultimately in the establishment of the Department of Systems Science and Mathematics, with John as the founding chairman. For many years, with John’s leadership, the department produced more research and doctoral degrees than any other department in the school.

I greatly admired John’s ability to manage the administrative details of his department and, more importantly, provide the intellectual leadership of his faculty. Clearly, John’s success had a significant impact on the other departments of the school. I should also remark that John was extremely scornful of all matters bureaucratic. Fortunately, for all of us, the university and the school at the time had very lean administrative staffs and it was only occasionally that bureaucratic conflicts would arise.

I knew John for the 51 years of tenure at Washington University. He was a unique individual. He was someone whom I greatly admired. He was a major force in the Washington University School of Engineering for most of his tenure here. I consider it to have been a real privilege to have been his colleague.

James M. McKelvey
February 17, 2008
Faculty and Personal Tribute: Norman Katz

I first met Professor John Zaborszky when I came to the Department of Applied Mathematics and Computer Science in 1967. At that time John was the director of an interdepartmental program in Control Systems, which had been established by him. In 1974, the Department of Systems Science and Mathematics was formed, with John Zaborszky as founding chairman. Ervin Rodin and I transferred to the new department. We, together with T. J. Tarn, were charter members of this new department.

I would like to talk about two aspects of the life of my good friend, John Zaborszky: one, his scientific and engineering contributions, and secondly, very briefly, my personal relationship with him.

John was an acknowledged expert in large-scale power systems. Early in his career he recognized that Mathematical Systems Theory, as it is called now, was being developed and that it would have very important impact, in the future, on our understanding of the operation of large electric power systems. For the remainder of his career he was a strong proponent of what is called “the systems approach”. The Department of Systems Science and Mathematics, which was his brainchild, was one of the first independent Systems Departments at an American University.

To illustrate John's prominence in the application of systems to large power systems, let me remind you that in 1965 there was the Northeast blackout, in which for the first time in history, the entire northeast corridor of the United States, with a population of tens of millions, lost power. In order to study how this disaster came about, and in order to propose ways to prevent its recurrence the United States government established ERDA (Energy Research and Development Administration) which later became the U. S. Department of Energy. Among the first scientific investigators who were awarded research contracts by the agency, was John Zaborszky and his group at Washington University. John had, indeed, been prescient in anticipating the importance of the “mathematical systems approach” many years earlier.

This, however, is perhaps not his greatest scientific achievement. Let me quote to you from an e-mail to Professor Tarn who forwarded a copy to me. It was sent by a former president of the IEEE Control Systems Society.

“It is indeed said news, although given how frail Zaborszky had been in recent years, we can take comfort that he is now at peace. The Department of Systems Science and Mathematics was a very special place.

Zaborszky was present for – if not presiding over – most of the beginnings of the field as we know it today. Although he had students and was an active researcher for many decades, I wonder if his most important contributions weren't the many things he founded or helped to found. Many generations of people in our community have been touched by what he did, and it is probably relatively few who were aware of his work and how the CSS and AACC were born.”

John's dynamic leadership helped make IEEE CSS and AACC into the important scientific organizations that they are today.

Secondly, my personal relationship with John. He was both the chairman of my department and a very good friend. As chairman John was fiercely protective of the interests of the faculty both collectively and individually. He encouraged and supported the research and professional development of each faculty member. With his connections at the funding agencies in Washington, he helped me to get my first major research grant which lasted for many years and led to other grants. For this, and for his help and encouragement in many areas for many years, I am grateful. I thank him and Kyoko for their close friendship over the past decades. If there was any problem, major or minor, I always felt free to go to John, who usually would offer excellent advice.

John, I will miss you. Judy will miss you. The systems group will miss you. The Department of Electrical and Systems Engineering, the School of Engineering and Applied Science, and all of Washington University will miss you.

Thank you for being there when we needed you.

Norman Katz
Faculty and Personal Tribute: Hiro Mukai

John was a firm believer in the personal touch.

I remember the first time I met John. It was on the UC Berkeley campus. I was a graduate student and he was recruiting junior faculty for his new department at Wash U. The visit itself reflected John’s belief in the personal touch. Most department chairs would forgo recruitment trips due to budget and time constraints. Such trips were, and still are rare, but they were one of John’s hallmarks. He knew that the best way to recruit is to visit campuses and conduct on site personal interviews. I remember being impressed then by both his energy and his cordiality.

The second time I met John was when I arrived at Washington University for a job interview. Once again his personal touch was in evidence, as he made sure that I was picked up at the airport and accompanied by a faculty member at every meal. Some called his style southern hospitality. Perhaps we could call it southern hospitality with a Hungarian flair.

John frequently invited prominent researchers to visit our department and made a point of treating each visitor graciously. His congeniality promoted goodwill among our field’s movers and shakers. He did so not only by inviting them to lunch or dinner but also by involving them in our everyday activities. I remember being impressed by his energy and his ability to make everyone feel welcome.

John made extra efforts to help junior faculty succeed professionally. He routinely invited young professors to join his research groups, making sure that they got credit for writing joint papers and supervising PhD students. He also paid visits to program managers at funding agencies such as NSF, DOE and DOD, promoting faculty projects. I remember him asking me to hand him copies of my new papers so that he could give them to my project managers in Washington. No doubt he put in good words on my behalf as he did so. I was one of many junior faculty members to benefit professionally from John’s belief in the personal touch.

It is remarkable that John started a new department, the Department of Systems Science and Mathematics, at age 60, an age by which most people have started to slow down. And it is even more remarkable that he kept going strong as our department chair for fifteen years after that, and then continued to be active in research until very recently. But beyond the remarkable longevity of John’s professional vitality, his “personal touch” will endure in the memories of those who had the good fortune to work with him.

Hiro Mukai, Ph.D.
Associate Chair
Dept of Electrical and Systems Engineering
Professor of Engineering and Applied Science

Faculty and Personal Tribute: Heinz Schaettler

It has been my privilege to work with Prof. Zaborszky during the last years of his life.

When I arrived at Washington University, one probably could not have thought of a more diametrically opposed oriented pair of researchers than us, he, the practical engineer, me, the theoretical mathematician. It was only after Prof. Zaborszky had stepped down from his position as the chairman of our department that our collaboration began. He was 75 years old at that time and little did I expect then that this would be the beginning of an intense collaboration that would last for over 15 years and would only end the day he took his final fall. Even on the afternoon of that day he still was in his office to prepare for a meeting we had scheduled for the following day.

Prof. Zaborszky never liked to hear the word “retired”. He stepped down as chairman of the department, but he never retired from research. He filled a seemingly endless number of pages with research notes — and even when he was younger, and for me that means when he was 75 or so, reading his handwriting was a challenge to all of us. He still co-authored numerous papers, the last one was published just in 2005, and with Marija Illic he even co-authored a textbook on power systems. Together we still supervised five doctoral students and were PIs on NSF research grants and external contracts.

In his last years he held the rank of Senior Professor and it is befitting to his life that he passed away in this rank. He was very proud of his research activities and his accomplishments that lasted till the very end of his life. But this is not the only legacy he left. His enthusiasm and passion for research inspired all of us who worked with him and it is this legacy that we will carry forward proudly.

“non omnis moriat” — not everything dies

Heinz Schaettler
Farewell to John, Hungarian Reading: Ervin Rodin

Dr. Professor Zaborszky Janos.

That was the name in Hungarian of the man we knew as John Zaborszky.

John was born in Hungary during the early part of the 20th century, and he was educated there, culminating in a doctoral diploma from what then was Hungary’s imperial Austro Hungarian university. In his office he displayed proudly his doctoral diploma, hand written in Latin on the skin of an animal. While as we all know, he became a man of the world, traveling, lecturing, making contacts around the globe, still, his early education and environment left an indelible mark on him, and he remained a very proud former Hungarian, cherishing and remembering that country’s language, culture, music and literature.

On a memorial occasion, such as this one today, we of course remember, speak about and speak to the departed. However, we also should speak to and about those whom the departed left behind. And so, in this case, we must also remember his faithful and wonderful wife of many years, Kyoko Zaborszky.

Kyoko was an exceptional spouse for John. She cherished, supported and helped him in every possible way that a wife can, and much beyond that. It is clear to many of us that while John kept a lucid and clear mind to his last days, his physical body became so enfeebled, that he needed help and assistance in all of the ways of everyday life. Kyoko gave him all of that assistance, help and encouragement, to the extent that he was able to come to his office even, practically every day. But Kyoko’s help went considerably beyond that, for she gave him continuous encouragement, was acting as a hostess to all he wanted to see, handled his phone calls, and anticipated his wishes and needs in every possible way.

It was no surprise to me therefore when Kyoko decided to follow John’s wishes even after his passing away. One aspect of this was that she divined John’s possible wish that Hungarian be spoken at his funeral. Therefore she asked me to say a few words on this occasion in Hungarian.

I then asked myself: what is it that I should say in Hungarian?

That was when I remembered that John and I often spoke about Hungarian literature, and in particular about Hungary’s greatest poet, who lived in the 19th century, Sandor Petofi. John – and all Hungarians – admired and cherished his works, and remembered some of them by heart. In particular, Petofi’s poem, entitled The End of September, which is a poem that most Hungarian school children have to memorize, was one of his favorites. So, since Kyoko is a woman of literature, I thought it would be very appropriate to read at least one stanza of this poem to you in Hungarian.

This outstandingly beautiful poem is about a man, who, having reached old age, thinks about his death and wonders what will happen to his wife, who will take care of her. I will now read this first stanza for you.

Szeptember végén
Még nyílnak a völgyben a kerti virágok,
Meg zöidel a nyírfa az ablak alatt,
De latod amottan a téli világot?
Már hó el takará a bérci tetőt.
Meg ifju szívemben a lángsugaru nyár
S meg benne virít az egész kikelet.
De úme, sötét hajam őszbe vegyül már,
A tel dere már megütit fejemet.
Elhull a virág, elírámlik az élet...
Új, hitvesem, új az öleleme ide!
Ki most fejedet keblenre tevéd le,
Holnap nem amolsz-e slom főibe?
Oh mond: ha előbb halok el, tetemimre
Könnyezve borítasz-e szemfődelet?
S rábirhathat-e majdan egy ifjú szerelme,
Hogy elhagyod érte az én nevemet?
Ha eldobod egykor az özvegyi fátult,
Fejít-meg sötét lobogóul akaszd,
En felfővök érte a síri világól
Az éj kösepén oda leviszem azt
Letörlieni vele konnyüümet érzed,
Ki könnyedén elfeleded hívedet,
S e szív sebeit bekötözni, ki téged
Meg akkor is, ott is, öröké szeret!

Szeptember végén
Még nyílnak a völgyben a kerti virágok,
Meg zöidel a nyírfa az ablak alatt,
De latod amottan a téli világot?
Már hó el takará a bérci tetőt.
Meg ifju szívemben a lángsugaru nyár
S meg benne virít az egész kikelet.
De úme, sötét hajam őszbe vegyül már,
A tel dere már megütit fejemet.
Elhull a virág, elírámlik az élet...
Új, hitvesem, új az öleleme ide!
Ki most fejedet keblenre tevéd le,
Holnap nem amolsz-e slom főibe?
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En felfővök érte a síri világól
Az éj kösepén oda leviszem azt
Letörlieni vele konnyüümet érzed,
Ki könnyedén elfeleded hívedet,
S e szív sebeit bekötözni, ki téged
Meg akkor is, ott is, öröké szeret!
I was thinking for a long time: should I try to give you a translation of what I just read to you. But the transcendent beauty of this poem is such, that I felt it would almost be a sacrilege to give a pedestrian translation to a work of beauty. Instead, in order to try to give you at least a sense of what it was that I read to you in Hungarian, I will conclude by reading to you the first stanza of another poem, this one by the Scottish author Robert Burns. In contrast to Petőfi’s poem, which is about a man thinking about his wife, Burns wrote about a woman, thinking about her husband growing old.

John Anderson My Jo
By Robert Burns

John Anderson, my jo, John,
When we were first acquant,
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonie brow was brent,
But now your brow is beld, John,
Your locks are like the snow,
But blessings on your frosty pow,
John Anderson, my jo!

John Zaborszky.
Good Friend.
We will miss you.
Rest in peace.

Ervin Rodin

RECOLLECTIONS
S. Massoud Amin
Goran Andersson
Robert Bellaire
Keh-Ping Dunn & Lincoln Laboratory Group
Gorng Huang
Gregory Kyslop
Marija Ilic
P.R. Kumar
Mania Pavella
Mark W. Spong
K. Mike Tao
Ilker Tunay
Mani Venkatasubramanian
Louis Wehenkel
Felix Wu
Dear colleagues,

We are very saddened by the loss of Professor John Zaborszky, a pioneer, a leader, a great and wonderful friend.

We have been thinking about John and how much we miss him, and sending our warmest regards to John’s family, friends and colleagues.

I’m very sorry that due to a surgery I’ll miss being in St. Louis for John’s memorial and to offer my condolences in person.

Please extend Elizabeth’s and my deepest sympathies and condolences to our colleagues, mutual friends and the family.

Our thought are with you and I look forward to seeing you soon in good health.

With warmest regards and condolences,

Massoud

S. Massoud Amin, D. Sc.
University of Minnesota

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Andersson Göran wrote:

I regret to hear the sad news that Dr Zaborsky passed away. We will always remember him as an innovative and creative engineer and researcher but also as a great teacher and inspirer for the younger generation. I can still recall some very memorable lectures by him.

I fully understand your feelings just now and my thoughts are with you and all his other close friends, students and relatives.

All the best,

Göran

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Dear Mrs. Zaborszky and family,

I was an unaccomplished undergraduate student from a non-accredited school that desperately wanted to go to Washington University to study for a Master’s degree in Systems and Automatic Control. Dr. Zaborszky had declined my application for good reason. Meda Wecker had not notified me of the rejection and sent me to plead my case in person.

During my walk from Sever Hall to Dr. Zaborszky’s office in Couples II, I was unable to imagine a single good reason Washington University should accept me. I found Dr. Zaborszky interested in me: my motivations, aspirations, hopes and dreams. We talked for a long time. In the end, he told me he could not admit me to his program because of my academic record but he would admit me as a “student not candidate for a degree.” He opened the door and gave me the opportunity of a life-time.

He admitted me to the school in the second semester. At the end of the first year he offered me a NDEA Fellowship to study for a DSc. I came to think of Dr. Z as my kind Hungarian Papa. Always interested in my education. He was a demanding teacher but was quick to help when the need arose.

At sixty-six years of age and looking back over my working life, I recognize Dr. Zaborszky was a fundamental force that shaped my life. He provided me a world-class education, made me the engineer I wanted to be, he put the good life within my reach, and he was the model professional engineer I emulated as best I could.

Not a week goes by without my thinking of Dr. Z and the wonderful gifts he gave me. Thank you for sharing him with me.

Robert (Bob) Bellaire
(Sever ’69 & ’70)
182 Raleigh Tavern Lane
North Andover MA 01845-5630
I remember meeting Dr. Zaborzsky on my first trip to St. Louis in 1981. I was interviewing for a job at McDonnell Douglas and was also looking at the SSM department at Wash U for their doctoral program. Dr. Z gave me an honest assessment of pursuing a doctoral degree while trying to work, but also gave me the appropriate level of encouragement when he said it had been done before.

I never had Dr. Z as an instructor, but he did sit on the committee for my oral qualifying exams and my doctoral dissertation. I suppose I am most grateful for his vision and leadership in forming the SSM department at Wash U. It was a unique blend of people on faculty, a unique program, and one that I benefitted from greatly.

Dr. Z's greatest legacy are his many students, and their students, which will endure for years to come.

Sincerely,

Greg Hyslop, D.Sc.
Vice President
Boeing Integrated Defense Systems

We are sorry that we can not be with you at the memorial service for Prof. John Zaborszky. It is a great loss to the Department as well as all of us at the MIT Lincoln Laboratory. We have lost a wonderful teacher, a great leader and a supportive friend. We all benefited from Prof. Zaborszky's guidance at the school in different ways. Most importantly, without his leadership we would not have such a unique environment to finish our education with so many brilliant professors and students in the Department. We all owe Prof. Zaborszky for our success at the Laboratory.

Keh-Ping Dunn
Group Leader, Lincoln Laboratory
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Daniel A. O'Connor
R. Louis Bellaire
Gregg A. Shoults
Kevin Brady
Katherine Rink
Cammie Humke
Justin Goodwin
Katherine Kline

Dr. Zaborszky is always a father figure to me. He is strict and has high expectations from his students and co-workers. At the same time he is very kind with high spirit. Those hard working days that we met during weekends, evenings and nights will be always part of my memory and shape up as part of my working ethics.

I always enjoy the knowledge and training that I received from him. The transition from vague engineering concept to rigorous mathematical descriptions of knowledge always amazes me, like kids enjoying their new world. With the discipline, I have the luxury to relive the wonder repeatedly for the rest my life.

He will always live in my heart. The working ethics, the wonder of knowledge and research will also be passed down to generations to come.

Garng Huang
ghuang@neo.tamu.edu
Over the years, I have gotten to know Dr. Z as a real friend and almost a relative. After I graduated, and started my own career ups and downs, we would talk each Sunday evening for many years. This stopped after his hearing weakened and he would become impatient with himself and me. I thought it would be easier to visit once in a while. So, I ended up visiting, but not often enough. I loved coming and spending wonderful time with Kyoko and Dr. Z. They had an absolutely great routine of staying creative in their own corners of the house, and stopping to enjoy meals and coffee breaks together. Kyoko (I call her “Kee” and don’t know why), added yet another dimension to Dr. Z’s learning of cultures in far away spaces and times. He truly enjoyed becoming partly Japanese. He was so lucky to have Kee as a life friend. Over the years, I have gotten to love and admire both of them.

I cannot help thinking about how much has changed in Europe since 1956 when Dr. Z came to start his new life in America. Nonetheless, he has remained a true legend in his native Budapest and Hungary. In 1999, when he and I were invited to jointly give a plenary talk at the IEEE PowerTech held at the Technical University in Budapest, he would point out to Kyoko and me where his office had been long ago, and also would talk about his favorite ... Europe. I feel that no matter how far and long Dr. Z travelled the world, he truly remained a Hungarian boy from Budapest.

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No matter how much it seems that both time and space have closed their circles, this is not true. Dr. Z’s time will reach into the times of many of us whose lives he had influenced in fundamental ways. Many of us never would have become what we are today without his vision and the special SSM at Washington University. Much of my work at Carnegie Mellon University today is carrying on the vision started by Dr. Z and attempting to teach the next generation. Many of our students are from all over the world. His life goes on in both time and place. The world garden still blooms, the classical music still reunites us all.

With my warmest memories,
Marija Ilic
Boston, February 2008
Professor John Zaborszky was a visionary of system theory. He was decades ahead of his time in recognizing the fundamental technological importance of system theory. With advances in technology and the imperatives of efficient resource utilization, we are now in the age of building large scale distributed dynamic systems such as smart energy grids and transportation systems, in which the system theory research he supported is playing a central role. Many ex-students such as I owe their career to his vision and support. Indeed the field itself owes much to his nurture.

P. R. Kumar
Franklin Woeltge Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering, and Research Professor, Coordinated Science Lab
University of Illinois
Urbana, IL 61801
Email: prkumar@uiuc.edu

Dear Marija,
Louis passed on to me your email with the very sad news of Dr Zaborszky’s death. Surely, I was not as close as you to Dr Zaborszky. But, still, I am deeply affected by his death. Our community loses a great Scientist, an enthusiastic and exceptional pioneer.

I share your sorrow.
Mania Pavella
mania.pavella@ulg.ac.be

I was sorry to hear about Dr. Zaborszky’s passing. He was an enormously influential person in the control field in so many ways. When I applied to the SSM Department for graduate school in 1977 I was very surprised to receive a personal phone call from Dr. Zaborszky asking me if I had any questions about the Department. That he would take the time to personally call prospective students shows how much he cared about the Department that he founded and how much he wanted it to succeed. He was not only a top researcher and administrator, he was also an outstanding mentor and teacher. The courses that I took from him were among the best courses I had anywhere. I would certainly not be where I am today without the support, encouragement and inspiration from John Zaborszky. I don’t think we will see another person like him for a long time.

With sincerest sympathies to his family and to the Wash U community.

Mark W. Spong
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P. R. Kumar
Franklin Woeltge Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering, and Research Professor, Coordinated Science Lab
University of Illinois
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Email: prkumar@uiuc.edu

I am deeply sorry to hear about Prof. Zaborszky’s passing. The news strikes me unexpectedly, for as recently as last Thanksgiving I learned that Dr. Zaborszky was doing well and still came to his office on a regular weekly basis.

In 1971, Dr. Zaborszky offered me a Tuition Scholarship so that I was able to study in the then Control Systems Science and Engineering Program at Washington University. Even though I moved on to Georgia Tech after a year, that one year’s study at Washington helped me lay a very solid foundation in modern systems science and engineering upon which I benefit tremendously throughout my studies and career development.

The high academic standards and the excellent research environment set by Dr. Zaborszky are a challenge for all of us to remember and to continue to strive for.

Please relay my condolences to Prof. Zaborszky’s family and the Faculty at ESE – Prof. Tarn, Prof. Mukai, Prof. Katz and Prof. Elliott in particular.

Sincerely,
K. Mike Tao
Dear Marija,

I met with Dr Zaborszky (and with you) for the first time in Athens (CDC 86) at a ‘transient stability committee meeting.’

Very early during my PhD studies, I read his papers about the anatomy of stability regions and I was again deeply marked by his contribution to the ECC/NSF workshop in Deep Creek Lake in the early nineties.

Actually, I also very well remember that in the elevator of the hotel in Deep Creek Lake, when I greeted him timidly, he actually recognized me and presented me to his wife as the ‘PhD student of Mania...’

I guess that this well reflects how he was, a bright and almost unreachable star in research, and at the same time a very human and accessible person.

He will remain for me one of the most exceptional persons I had the chance to meet.

Amitiés,
Louis
Louis Wehenkel, Univ of Liege
L.Wehenkel@ulg.ac.be

Dear Marija,

I heard from George Gross of Zaborszky's passing away. Would you please convey my condolences to Kyoko and if there is any way you can help me to express my respect for him at the memorial would you please do it for me.

Thanks,
Felix Wu
University of Hong Kong and the University of California at Berkeley