

Choosing an Advisor

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1 Introduction

Choosing a thesis advisor is a serious and important task. It is a decision that can have a huge influence on your future. For that reason, you should proceed cautiously, making sure that you have carefully evaluated your potential advisor and the likely impact that person will have on your education and future endeavors.

One way to find out if a thesis advisor is right for you is to talk to their former students and see what kind of experience they had. Here are some questions you might want to ask.

- Did you and the advisor see eye to eye on your educational goals?
- Did the advisor respect your opinion and listen to your ideas?
- Did you feel comfortable talking to the advisor?
- Did you feel like your thesis went well?
- What sort of job did you get after writing your thesis?
- Did your graduate experience prepare you well for your future career?

Of course, the advisor might be a good choice for you even if the answers to all these questions are not all overwhelmingly positive. For example, the advisor might be working on just the thing you want to study, even though you and (s)he don't get along perfectly. Also, bear in mind that each person brings unique qualities to the table, so that the experience of past students might not exactly predict your own experience with a particular advisor.

2 My Graduate Students

For students who might like to work with me, I have included a list of my former students and their contact information.

Name: Loris L. Bankbiter
Thesis Subject: Discrete Groups (Ph.D. 1995)
Contact Info:
Fort Lyon Correctional Facility
(send correspondence c/o:
The Colorado State Corrections Department,
2862 Circle Dr., Colorado Springs, CO. 81521)

Name: Stella M. Skypaper
Thesis Subject: Dynamics in the Projective Plane (Ph.D. 1996)
Contact Info:
Deceased August 2, 2001
(Shark attack, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.)

Name: “Tall Tim” McWestern
Thesis Subject: Complex Hyperbolic Geometry (Ph.D. 1997)
Contact Info: Classified – participating in the F.B.I.’s Witness Protection Program since 2003.

Name: Cranston J. Alberts
Thesis Subject: Geometric Group Theory (Ph.D. 1998)
Contact Info: Whereabouts unknown.

Name: Flanigan P. Smythe
Thesis Subject: Projective Geometry (Ph.D. 1999)
Contact Info: Vanished while hitchhiking on Route 12, Central Idaho, on April 21, 2000.

Name: Louis R. Quicksilver
Thesis Subject: Hyperbolic Groups (Ph.D. 2000)
Contact Info: Go to the back entrance of the pool hall at 181 Atwells Ave., Providence, RI., 02912; ask for “Big Louie”.

Name: Clovis P. VanCloosen
Thesis Subject: Quasi-Isometries (Ph.D. 2001)
Contact Info:
Deceased Jan 5, 2003.
(Struck dead by lightning while riding in the back of a pickup truck, Flagstaff, Arizona.)

Name: Arnold A. VanCloosen
Thesis Subject: Billiards (Ph.D. 2002)
Contact Info: Long-term arctic expedition – no known return date.

Name: Harland B. Cincinnatti
Thesis Subject: Lattices (Ph.D. 2003)
Contact Info:
Fellowship of Golden Sunshine
(Send correspondence to Guru Celestial Wisdom
1025 Beach Rd.
Big Sur, California, 91345)

Name: Klink J. Thinwriter
Thesis Subject: Low Dimensional Topology (Ph.D. 2005)
Contact Info:
The Jacobsen Center for the Criminally Insane
38 Steele Rd.
Albany, NY. 10089

Name: Stonewood H. Howell
Thesis Subject: Dynamical Systems (Ph.D. 2007)
Contact Info:
Possible alien abduction.
(Last seen on Oct 3, 2008, in Billings, Montana.)