

In Memoriam Gregory Kersten (1949–2020)

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Gregory (Gzregorz) Kersten, editor in chief of the GDN journal since 2016, was taken from us unexpectedly on May 26, 2020.

Gregory was born in Warsaw (Warszawa), Poland, on September 23, 1949. He studied at the Warsaw School of Economics from 10/1968 to 4/1973 for his MSc in Econometrics, Faculty of Finance and Statistics, and for his Ph.D. in Economic Sciences—Operations Research, from 01/1975 to 10/1981. From 1977 to 1984, he worked at the Institute of Human Resources Management and Improvement in Warsaw. He migrated to Canada in 1984, where he became an Assistant Professor in the School of Business at Carleton University and was promoted to Full Professor there in 1999. He later became the Paul Desmarais Power Corporation Professor at the School of Management at the University of Ottawa and since 2006 he had been Senior Concordia University Research Chair in Decision and Negotiation Systems, John Molson School of Business, Concordia University, Montreal.

He advised and mentored 14 Ph.D. students and 20 MS students. His academic record is impressive with numerous journal and conference publications. He served on the Program committee of multiple conferences and also served as General chair or Program Chair for the Group Decision and Negotiation conferences in 2005, 2008, 2014, and 2015 as well as in 11 other international conferences in Negotiation, Marketing, and Operations Research. He was internationally known for his

research on Group Decision and Negotiation both for his mathematical rigor but also for making mathematical models applicable in the real world. In the late 1990s, he developed the first web-based Negotiation Support System, called Inspire, which he made freely available for research and education in negotiation. He continued his negotiation research and later explored the relationship between negotiation and auctions, acquiring a patent in 2015 for his work in multi-attribute auctions. He received the GDN Section Award in 2006 for his academic achievements and his service to the Group Decision and Negotiation research community. He was president of the GDN Section of *Informatics* from 2017 to 2019, and Editor in Chief of the GDN journal since 2016. He led the journal with dedication and saw it grow in reputation.

Gregory was a colleague and dear friend to many of us in the group decision and negotiation community. We will always remember his friendship, warmth, generosity, and sense of humor as recounted by some of his closest colleagues that we share below.

Wojtek Michalowski Gregory and I met while students at the Warsaw School of Economics in Poland and we immediately connected over our common passion for downhill skiing. A few years after graduating from university, and still in Poland, Gregory and I were reconnected, this time professionally, working together at the Polish Management Development Institute in Warsaw. We both emigrated from Poland after martial law was imposed by the communist government and we ended up in Canada—Gregory and his family via Belgium, and my family and I via Algeria. In 1985, we joined the School of Business (now the Sprott School of Business) at Carleton University in Ottawa. Here we began our joint research on negotiation models and systems, resulting in a decision support system called Negoplan. Our two joint papers about Negoplan published in *IEEE Intelligent Systems* and in *Management Science* are still some of the most cited papers I co-authored. Gregory continued this line of research and became a world recognized scholar in the area of group decision-making and negotiations and my work shifted to health informatics. I remember Gregory as truly “un homme savant”—a scientist questioning established paradigms, a person open to the world and new ideas, and someone who radiated a joie de vivre. Gregory was my true and dear friend and while his legacy will remain, his presence will be missed.

Katia Sycara Greg was the quintessential absent minded professor. I remember the time at the INFORMS meeting in Paris in 1993 when he told me the next day that the night before he had boarded the Metro to get to his hotel after the conference sessions were over. He was thinking about some particularly difficult modeling problem and forgot to get off before the Metro reached the last stop, stranding him in the countryside. He had to walk back to Paris arriving in time for his session the next morning.

Rudolf Vetschera It rarely happens that one single person creates a new field of research and influences the work and careers of so many people as Gregory has done with e-negotiations. I first met Gregory at the EURO conference in Belgrade 1989, when we were fiercely debating different ways to model and support negotiations.

At that time, group decision support still meant people sitting in front of computers connected to a local network. Our real collaboration began in the late 1990s, when he was visiting researcher at IIASA, the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis located near Vienna. During one of my visits there, he told me that he had developed a system by which one could conduct negotiations via the Web. Since the system was available to anyone around the world, he was wondering how people from different cultures would use and evaluate that system. These talks started a research program that would keep me and my research group busy for decades to come. One habilitation thesis, six Ph.D. dissertations, many Master theses and quite a few of my own publications were the direct or indirect result of these talks. All this was possible because Gregory not only freely shared his systems with many others, but also the incredible amount of data that was created by the Inspire experiments, as well as his ideas and insights. Many academic careers were built on that foundation. Gregory supported the field and in particular young researchers not only with scientific inputs. His dedication to the GDN conferences, the journal and the GDN section made exchanges and collaborations possible, and his personal support and openness created a network of researchers and friends that is his enduring legacy.

Creating a new field of research in such a successful way is a remarkable feat, and Gregory not only did it once, but again. His recent works, in which he combined and compared multilateral and multi-bilateral negotiations, auctions and other concepts made us see these approaches, which were mostly studied in isolation, as parts of one large picture. Gregory was not able to put the final strokes on this picture before the brush was taken from his hand, but he has left a legacy that will shape our field and us for a long time. We will miss him, but he will be with us in many ways.

Mareike Schoop I got to know Gregory in 2002 when we discussed our negotiation support systems Inspire and Negoisst. He invited me to work with him in Canada and I stayed with Gregory and his family in Ottawa for almost a month. His and his wife's hospitality were endless. From then on, we would exchange ideas and experiences on negotiation systems and we would organise negotiation competitions with our respective systems. One of my students did his Master thesis in Gregory's group and Gregory visited me to give a keynote at a conference I had organised. I will miss our friendly banter about the merits of Inspire and Negoisst and I will remain deeply grateful for his support.

GJ de Vreede Gregory was a great friend and colleague. We would always spend quality time together when we met at GDN and HICSS conferences, discussing the state of GDN research over a nice cold beer. He was very engaged with the GDN journal and would regularly soundboard with me about ways to strengthen it. His ideas shaped the GDN journal and brought it to new heights. I will miss him dearly, especially our regular weather-related banter during the winter times as he was living in Canada while I enjoyed the Florida winter.

Mel Shakun As founding editor-in-chief of Group Decision and Negotiation from April 1992 through July 2016, I had the good fortune of having Gregory Kersten work with me, in large part as Senior Editor. He was very helpful to me and we

became increasingly good colleagues and friends. When I retired as editor in chief in 2016, Gregory was appointed my successor and did an excellent job.

Daniel Druckman I recall meeting Gregory for the first time at a HICCS conference in Hawaii in the early 1990s. We were on a panel organized by Mel Shakun. Although the panel drew a small audience, the conversation among the panelists was stimulating. Gregory and I shared the opinion that few of the other conference panels were sufficiently interesting to attend. Instead we hung out with trips to the beach and town. The time spent together gave us a chance to get to know each other as scholars and persons. We realized many compatibilities of thought and opinion but also a shared vision for our fields. We were colleagues for more than 25 years.

Several experiences stand out in my memory of Gregory. Our overlapping research on e-negotiation led to many discussions of research design; he used my 2005 *Doing Research* book in his classes. I reviewed and recommended several of his research proposals and he provided useful technical feedback on our e-mediation system. At the GDN meeting in Stockholm, Gregory suggested that we find a way of connecting GDN with the International Association of Conflict Management (IACM) by co-sponsoring a conference and encouraging members of each Association to contribute to both journals (GDN and NCMR). This was an example of his quest to expand the scholarship of the GDN community. It was reflected as well in his tenure as Editor in Chief. He was a strong advocate of interdisciplinary scholarship as evidenced by the creation of the Social Science department and by his support for a special issue on Justice and Negotiation including articles atypical in GDN.

Gregory's vision was complemented by his exquisite attention to detail. A controversial manuscript needed his input to arbitrate a dispute about its potential for publication. Rather than to simply resolve the issues with a desk reject or accept, he became a third reviewer. This was, without exaggeration, one of the most detailed reviews I have ever seen. He did not miss a beat, providing comments on the authors' approach, arguments and ideological assertions, conclusions, and use of language. I was impressed with his effort and no-nonsense review of a paper that would have received much less attention by other editors. This friend and colleague, visionary, and humanitarian will leave a huge gap in our community.

Adiel T. de Almeida and the Brazilian Research Community Gregory's interaction with and contribution to the Brazilian research community stretched over two decades, a few highlights of which were as follows. In 1996 he gave a keynote plenary at a conference of the Brazilian Operations Research Society, where he and Adiel first met. In 2006, Gregory visited the Center for Decision Systems and Information Development (CDSID), during which his generosity of spirit and warm eagerness to inspire colleagues in Recife was evident. Gregory returned to Recife in 2012, where he was the keynote plenary speaker at the 12th GDN conference. Recently, he had become a member of the Brazilian research network INCT-INSID, which is connected to CDSID. Gregory's collaboration included PostDoc supervision of two members of CDSID. In 2007, Danielle went to Canada to do PostDoc in the Interneg Research Center under Gregory's project for SSHRC and in 2019, Eduarda Asfora Frej worked under Gregory's supervision as part of her PostDoc studies.

Gregory was important in many ways to many of his friends in Recife, who will always remember with gratitude how willingly he shared his knowledge, experience and insights with them. Most of all they shall always retain fond memories of his verve and sense of humor which added sparkle at any time to the enthusiasm with which he nurtured his friendship with us all.

Tung Bui I met Gregory for the first time in 1981 when we attended a summer workshop on Multiple Criteria Decision Making (MCDM) at Case Western in Cleveland. We somehow got connected with each other on the spot as both of us—doctoral students then—invariably and incessantly asked very similar questions to presenters, in the presence of some of the big names in the field. Subsequently, and whenever the opportunity arose, I invited Gregory to join my institutions as a visiting professor and researcher—at the Naval Postgraduate School, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, and he has been a regular contributor at the Negotiation Support System minitrack that Melvin F. Shakun and I ran for more than two decades at the Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS). But the most memorable souvenir I treasured with Gregory was our summer teaching and research tour in China in 1994 at a couple of leading Chinese universities. We went to a night market in Shanghai shopping for Chinese scroll paintings. Watching Gregory negotiating with the shop owners, sometimes in English, sometimes through the interpretation of a colleague from Taiwan, I knew then that Gregory would be an outstanding scholar in the field of intercultural negotiation. I still remember vividly as it happened last night the confused facial expressions of the street vendor when he heard Gregory saying: “I really like this painting, I really like you, and I am going to make an offer to buy it, but don’t be mad at me if you hear the offer.” The three of us did bring home half a dozen scrolls. I will miss reading his work. I will miss his friendship even more. Aloha, Gregory.

Tomasz Wachowicz With no exaggeration, I may say that it was Gregory Kersten who made me a researcher and involved academic. When he met me for the first time 20 years ago, I was about to start my Ph.D. studies but had no clear vision. Gregory decided to spend half a day with me talking about doing research, teaching, living as an academic, about the pros and cons of being a professor, about planning the future and planning one’s life. For many years I have been wondering, why did he do something like that to a total stranger but then I realized, that helping others was simply a part of his being. Gregory helped me also later in various ways. He invited me to stay and work with him for three months. When I asked him to review my Ph.D., he spent hours (all evenings and even nights) discussing it with me. He questioned every single assumption I made, every argumentation line I developed, every logic I used. I was angry, frustrated, and disappointed and felt I was being discouraged all the time. But then I realized his questions were nothing but the guidelines on how to improve my thesis. This was the most astonishing help I had ever received.

May he rest in peace and may his legacy live on!
GDN Section and Friends