



Peter Kahn

Professor Kahn received his Ph.D. degree in 1960 at Northwestern University under the supervision of Max Dresden. He then went to Iowa as a post doctoral fellow before coming to Stony Brook in 1961, as a twenty-six year old Assistant Professor who was often mistaken for a student.

Peter enjoyed playing Ping-Pong, squash, and volleyball with the students. But, an elbow injury, a few blows to the knees and bifocals, put an end to that activity.

During his first year, he was very fortunate to meet the late Dr. Charles Porter of Brookhaven National Laboratory. The two of them developed a warm friendship and a fruitful research collaboration in which they investigated the properties of large dimensional random matrices. Dr. Porter was an exceptional physicist who gave the first physics department colloquium and helped

the campus attract many visiting scientists who gave seminars and were guest lecturers. Keep in mind that at that time we were a tiny department occupying a section of the girl's dormitory together with the business office and the research foundation.

Professor Kahn served as Chairman of the Physics Department from July 1974 until January 1986, during which time many of our traditions were firmly established. He taught a variety of physics courses and finds that he is most effective at helping students who are working hard and just need a little encouragement to get them to have the self-confidence necessary to master the subject. For some years he taught a course in mathematical physics which has been developed into a text book. His research interests include investigations of nonlinear systems and curriculum development.