

Born: 1956

John R. Greene - [John, Greene, 28, 193, 1984, 2021, 3, 2, 0]

John R Greene is currently a Professor at University of Minnesota. Fortunately, I did get a chance to interview Professor Greene, and thankfully because of that, I am able to dive a little deeper into his life. The year is 1956, and somewhere in Minneapolis, Minnesota a young man was born. Someone who would grow up to become a respected mathematician and also attend a famous conference in 1987 with Dr.Doron Zeilberger at University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign celebrating the 100th birthday of Srinivasa Ramanujan. When asked about his thoughts on Srinivasa Ramanujan, he told me that he was one of his favorite mathematicians and had much respect for him as he was a genius who made several contributions to the field of infinite series and number theories without having any formal education in pure mathematics.

Professor Greene also told how he wrote a few papers early on in his intellectual career that were tangentially related to Srinivasa Ramanujan, one of them being Bijections related to statistics on words, *Discrete Math.*, 68 (1988), 15-29. He also told me a story where Professor Zeilberger challenged him \$25 to show a specific kind of bijection between two different statistics of multiset partitions. In that paper I listed above, Professor Greene gave a different kind of bijection, and so for his efforts Professor Zeilberger gave him 80% of the bet which was \$20.

Another paper he described which was tangentially related to Srinivasa Ramanujan was *The greedy match in Young's lattice*, *Order*, 6 (1990), 351-366. In this paper he was hoping for a proof that a specific kind of matching algorithm would produce a complete combinatorial matching through at least the middle of Young's lattice, but it did not work. Although he did get some nice results regardless. He says, I quote, "The problem was an obsession of Doron's at the time". He did say that shortly afterwards, Katherine O'hara, who was also in attendance of the conference, gave a nice almost combinatorial proof.

Next I asked him about the conference and how much of it does he remember? He didn't remember too much about the conference, he did tell me that he gave a talk on a paper he wrote *On a conjecture of Krammer*, *Journal of Combinatorial Theory, Series A*, 56 (1991), 309-311, where he used a finite version of the RR identities to settle a conjectured series evaluation. He also recalls speaking with Professor Zeilberger and talking to great lengths about Young's Lattice. He says Professor Zeilberger was very supportive and very enthusiastic about him even though his ideas did not pay off.

Not only did he tell me about his career, but he also told me details about himself. Many people assume every mathematician must have loved math since they were a child, but Professor Greene told me how when was a child the first thing he wanted to do was become a firefighter. But like many others, those childhood desires to do those hero-like jobs usually fades away, and a similar

thing happened to Professor Greene. By the time he was in late elementary school, he wanted to become a scientist. Out of all the sciences, the one he was most interested in was Astronomy. His love for science led him to double major in Physics and Mathematics in college, but quickly he found math to be more intuitive, and so therefore he chose to pursue Mathematics in graduate school. Outside of the world of mathematics, he also told me about his various hobbies. He says to keep his mind fresh and active, he loves to play intellectually stimulating games. Growing up he was addicted to playing chess. He also loves to exercise, as he believes a healthy body is a requirement for a healthy mind. To accomplish this, he does a lot of walking, and told me how he has walked every day for the past 10 years. He loves it so much that he is one fewer than 100 people in the United States who has walked 100 miles in 24 hours in a sanctioned race. Professor John R. Greene was a wonderful person to talk to, and I'm happy to have been able to interview him, and I hope this paper gave us a little insight into his life.