

**Marvin C. Wunderlich** (May 8, 1937 - September 27, 2013)

[21, 38, 1962, 1990, 2, 3, 0]

By Abdul-Ahad Butt

Marvin Charles Wunderlich, born May 8, 1937, was a mathematician from DeKalb, Illinois. He received a Ph.D. in Mathematics from the University of Colorado in 1964. He taught mathematics at State University at Buffalo, New York for three years and then at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois for seventeen years specializing in algorithmic number theory, factoring methods, and computer science. While in Illinois, he served as a computer consultant for the Illinois State Board of Elections and designed sampling software for petition certification which was used for several voter initiatives. In 1967, he published a review article on sieving methods with application in factorization. In the 1970s, he was concerned with the continued fraction method of factoring, and examined the efficiency through extensive computer experiments. At that time, factorization was still considered an unheard occupation for mathematicians, which changed with the invention of the RSA encryption method in the late 1970s. In the 1980s, Wunderlich was one of the first to implement factoring algorithms on massively parallel computers using the continued fraction method. The records made the headlines back then because in 1981, numbers as long as 50-digits, with difficult factoring properties, were still considered factoring-safe. This had an impact on the key lengths used in the RSA encryption systems.

For five years, he was the University Science Coordinator and assisted in the acquisition of many science research grants from the Federal Government. He taught database management

and used his expertise to design a home budget management system which has been used by himself and many others for over twenty years. In 1984, Wunderlich became a government employee living in the Washington, D.C. area until 1997. He designed and implemented many computer based systems which were used throughout the world. For three years, he served as the director of the Mathematical Sciences Program, which annually awarded three million dollars in grants support to young mathematicians throughout the country.

Since his retirement in 1997, he was involved in database design and had been a webmaster for numerous charitable organizations. Outside of Mathematics, he had a passion for music and travelled to many countries around the world. Unfortunately, his time came to an end, passing away on September 27, 2013 at the age of 76.