

## **Kenneth Stolarsky (b. May 9, 1942)**

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By Abdul-Ahad Butt

Kenneth Stolarsky, born May 9, 1942, is a mathematician from Champaign, Illinois. He graduated from the California Institute of Technology and received a M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in mathematics from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. He spent a year as a postdoctoral fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University. Stolarsky was then recruited by Paul Bateman to join the University of Illinois math faculty in 1968. He soon became active both as chair of the Honors Committee and as a Putnam Competition coach.

His research interests included: exponential polynomials, location of zeros, inequalities, number theory, geometry, Diophantine approximation, and special functions. It was specifically the interests in recurrence relations, generating functions, and  $q$ -analogues which led Stolarsky to study the great achievements of Ramanujan in these areas. Stolarsky's favorite concept from Srinivasa Ramanujan were his remarkable identities as he found those to be the most interesting. In his research, he worked at University of Illinois with J. Ralph Alexander on geometric extremal problems, introducing the "Alexander-Stolarsky formula", and later with Horacio Porta on Beatty sequences. In addition, in 1975, Stolarsky introduced the "Stolarsky mean", which was a generalization of the logarithmic mean. A further frequent collaborator was Karl Dilcher, from Dalhousie University, with whom he studied polynomial sequences and shared a 2006 Lester R. Ford Award. Among those whose graduate studies he supervised was Barry Greenstein, author of

“Ace on the River – An Advanced Poker Guide” and who later became a University of Illinois math department benefactor.

Stolarsky believes he has taught the various incarnations of Differential Equations more often than any other faculty member at Illinois, and also was its longest serving course captain there. After serving 42 years in the Department of Mathematics at the University of Illinois, Stolarsky retired in August of 2010. After his retirement, he has still remained active in research and is doing editorial work for The American Mathematical Monthly of the Mathematical Association of America (MAA). Outside of Mathematics, Stolarsky enjoys his free time playing Table Tennis.