

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION
JULIUS M.E. MORAVCSIK
(1931-2009)

Julius Matthew Emil Moravcsik, Professor of Philosophy, emeritus, was born April 26, 1931 in Budapest; he died June 3, 2009 in Palo Alto.

Moravcsik was a renaissance man with a broad spectrum of interests and knowledge in music, art, and history – topics that he loved to discuss with friends. He was devoted to classical music, tennis, golf, spectator sports, hiking, and travel. His main professional interests were in Greek philosophy – especially Plato, Aristotle, and the pre-Socratic philosophers. Two of us, Suppes and Follesdal, remember well the two occasions on which we joined Julius in giving a seminar on Aristotle's *De Anima*. Julius' careful interpretations of the Greek text were a scholarly high point. More generally, his interests and competence were uncommonly wide, and he made important contributions also to the philosophy of language, aesthetics, metaphysics, and ethics. In particular, he was engaged by the notion of friendship. He wrote five books:

- 1975 *Understanding Language: a study of theories of language in linguistics and in philosophy* (Mouton, The Hague)
- 1990 *Thought and Language* (Routledge, London)
- 1992 *Plato and Platonism* (Blackwell, Oxford)
- 1998 *Meaning, Creativity, and the Partial Inscrutability of the Human Mind* (CSLI, Stanford)
- 2004 *The Ties that Bind* (CEU Press, Budapest)

He also wrote over 90 articles on a variety of topics and he edited and co-edited a number of volumes. One of his first articles, "Being and Meaning in the Sophist" (1962), pioneered the use of techniques of analytical philosophy and logic to the interpretation of classical philosophy, and became a staple in seminars on Plato throughout the sixties. It has been reprinted in the Bobbs-Merrill classic philosophy series. Similar attention was given to many of his later works.

During two periods, 1972-75 and 1983-86, Moravcsik served as Chair of the Philosophy Department. He contributed greatly to building up an excellent department. He made a number of first-rate appointments, including Stuart Hampshire and J. O. Urmson from England and the Canadian philosopher Ian Hacking. Moravcsik had an uncanny ability to sniff out philosophical talent and appointed many of our eminent colleagues before they were so recognized, such as John Perry, Michael Bratman and Tom Wasow. Also his ability to pick out the best of our many graduate school applicants was remarkable.

Moravcsik was a dedicated teacher and he had many excellent students. One of them, Scott Soames, writes:

“Julius played an important role at a pivotal time in my life -- introducing me both to the philosophy of language and generative grammar, teaching me more Plato than anybody else could, ratifying my decision to go to graduate school ... I took every opportunity to return during summers and sabbaticals, always checking in with Julius to compare notes, absorb his infectious enthusiasm, and bask in the warmth of his continued support. ... In addition to his role in my philosophical life, he also played an important role in helping me maintain my ties to Stanford, and to the philosophy department, for which I have great affection. I will miss him greatly.”

A volume of papers by former students and colleagues, presented at a conference honoring him on the occasion of his retirement was published in 2009: *Logos and language. Essays in honor of Julius Moravcsik.*

While at Stanford Moravcsik enthusiastically encouraged the development of interdisciplinary initiatives. He helped forge strong connections between Philosophy and Classics. His advocacy was important in the formation of the Linguistics Department and the development of a History of Science Program. He was the Principal Investigator on a Sloan Cognitive Science Grant in the 1970's. Many important relationships developed and common interests were discovered, at the many conferences and colloquia and courses that Moravcsik sponsored. These connections among philosophers, linguists, psychologists, computer scientists and others, not only from Stanford but also from research institutes such as SRI and Xerox-PARC, were important in formation of the Center for the Study of Language and Information and the Symbolic Systems Program.

Moravcsik left his native Hungary for the US at the age of 17. He earned his BA in philosophy at Harvard University, class '53. Subsequently, he spent a year of study at Oxford and then received his PhD from Harvard in 1959. His first academic position was at Drexel Institute (now Drexel University) in Philadelphia, PA, where he stayed a year. Next came a nine-year stay at the University of Michigan, where he went from Instructor to Associate Professor. In 1968 he came to Stanford as Professor of Philosophy. He taught at Stanford for 39 years until he retired in 2007. He lectured at more than 50 colleges and universities in the US, as well as in 26 countries around the world.

Moravcsik won a Humboldt Prize in 2002, was elected an external member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 2002 and was also made an Honorary Citizen of the City of Rhodos. He received Santayana, Guggenheim and ACLS fellowships and was a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences and at the Collegium Budapest. He served as president of the American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division, 1987-88 and of the Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy 2003-04. He was also a member of the Board of Trustees, the American Society for Aesthetics, 1988-92, and in 1975 he was co-founder of the West Coast Aristotelian Society.

Julius M.E. Moravcsik Memorial Resolution—continued...

He is survived by his wife Rita née Truninger, older son Adrian and his family, younger son Peter, and sister Edith.

Mr. Chairman, I have the honor, on behalf of a committee consisting of Patrick Suppes, Dagfinn Follesdal, and John Perry to lay before the Senate of the Academic Council a Resolution in the memory of the late Julius Moravcsik, Professor of Philosophy, emeritus, in the School of Humanities and Sciences.

Committee:

Patrick Suppes, (Chair)
Dagfinn Follesdal
John Perry