

## **George Piranian**

George Piranian, 95, died peacefully on August 31, 2009 at his home of 37 years on Englave Drive, Ann Arbor, Michigan. George was born to Bertha Piranian (née Walser) and Badwagan Piranian on May 2, 1914 in Thalwil, Switzerland. In 1929 he moved with his family to Utah. When his family returned to Switzerland 2 years later, George remained in the U.S. and was informally adopted by a friend's family so he could continue his passion for education. He attended Utah State Agricultural College, where he earned a B.A. and M.S. in botany. A Rhodes Scholarship allowed him to study for 2 years at Oxford University, where he redirected his studies to mathematics. After spending a summer cycling around Europe, he returned to the U.S. to pursue a Ph.D. in mathematics at Rice Institute in Houston, Texas. As a graduate teaching assistant he met a student, Joe Louise Mills, whom he married in 1941. In 1943 he completed his Ph.D. dissertation: A Study of the Position and Nature of the Singularities of Functions Given by Their Taylor Series.

George joined the University of Michigan Mathematics Department in 1945 where he remained until his retirement in 1983 and afterwards as Professor Emeritus. In 1954 he became managing editor of the then floundering Michigan Mathematical Journal, which, under his leadership, gained international recognition. He has 83 mathematical publications and an Erdős number of 1/14.

His passion for life found many forms. He shared his love for literature by teaching a freshman literature seminar. For over two decades he and his wife, Louise, were active in the University of Michigan Sailing Club, where they taught, raced, and helped with general service. He was a long time violist with fellow mathematicians in the Sub-Harmonic String Quartet.

Just as his mind was not limited to mathematics, his life was not constrained to intellectual pursuits. By the mid 1950's he was known as the man with a beard who rode his bike to work year around. Into his late 80's, he chopped and split all the wood for his and Louise's supplemental wood stove. Throughout his life he and his family spent many summers camping, hiking, and backpacking.

George is preceded in death by his brother, David, and his sister, Ausdrig. He is survived by his wife, Louise; his 5 daughters, Libby, Maggy, Inga, Barbara, and Deb; three grandchildren; great-grand children; and a great-great-grandson.

For photos and more information regarding his professional career, see [www.georgepiranian.com](http://www.georgepiranian.com)  
In lieu of flowers, the family would appreciate donations to St. Joseph Mercy Hospice or the charity of your choice.