

I was the second last student out of Maarten's ten PhD graduates according to the [Mathematics Genealogy Project](#). Our first encounter dated all the way back to 1985 when I took the Data Structures course from Maarten in my third year at the University of Waterloo. That was not a very exciting experience. The only thing I could recall was that Maarten always asked us to prepare the coursework at home and reserved the last hour of each week for us to ask him questions about the course. Obviously, nobody asked any questions and Maarten would happily declare the end of class after two minutes into the class. Maarten was a pioneer in what today is called "Flipped Classroom". In my fourth year in 1986, I took the Logic and Functional Programming course from Maarten and that was life-changing. I fell in love with Prolog and logic programming. I was also applying for postgraduate studies at that time. When Maarten agreed to take me as a Master's student in early 1987, I just accepted the offer and never looked back.

I started working for Maarten on the IBM-sponsored TuplePipes project even when I was in the final semester of my undergrad studies. By the time I started my MMath degree officially in the fall of 1987, Maarten had already moved to the University of Victoria (UVic). I was supervised by Maarten remotely and looked after locally by Mantis Cheng, who was a PhD graduate of Maarten and later became a long time colleague of Maarten at UVic. In December, 1987, Maarten invited me and Mantis to visit him in Victoria. While being there, I submitted my application for PhD studies. In the fall of 1988, I joined UVic as a student and Mantis joined as a faculty member. Two of my fellow classmates, David Rosenbluth and Paul Strooper, also joined as PhD students a year prior to us. In 1986, Eric Manning from Waterloo joined UVic as the Dean of Engineering. He said his goal was to turn UVic Engineering into "Waterloo of the West". I can tell that taking Maarten and his entire research group over could be part of Eric's grand plan to achieve his goal.

I would like to share four pieces of anecdotes between Maarten and I during my four years at UVic. First, Maarten was fond of Chinese Dim Sum. In (Waterloo and) Victoria, I was frequently invited to join his Saturday Dim Sum brunches with Mantis. The conversations during the meals were 95% technical discussions. To me as a young grad student, the meals were sumptuous both in food and learning. Second, Maarten was a gentleman, but strict with academic and writing standards. Seeing Maarten in the weekly meetings was always a nerve wracking experience when I was a student. Having to submit my writing to him was even worse. He often could not read past the first page, and returned my writing to me. Overly confident with my English writing skills, I "confronted" Maarten one day. That did not end in a shouting game. He only said to me in his typical calmest tone, "Jimmy, there's no need to argue. Let's use Strunk & White as the standard." I can never thank him enough for his insistence on rigor in technical writing even until today. I am not sure if I can ever attain the standard he wanted.

Third, I failed my PhD candidacy examination and had to redo it. I was totally devastated. When I told Maarten that I wanted to give up, he said, "Jimmy, don't quit. I am willing to coach you until the end." Those were the most touching words that were said to me in my life. As much as Maarten was a strict supervisor, he had his side of loving care for his students. Fourth, we were invited to Maarten's place for a gathering a few times. That was where I met Jos and Eva. I could still remember the homemade bread made by Maarten. The food was simple but the company of Maarten's family and fellow classmates was always part of my fond memories. Learning from Maarten, I now organize a gathering for all my former and current students every year around Xmas.

Upon graduation, I returned to Hong Kong for a faculty position in 1992. That was the time before we had Zoom or the likes. I met Maarten in person again the first time only at ILPS-94, which was held in Ithaca. Maarten was an Invited Speaker there. I was chatting to him while enjoying the food and drinks at the conference reception. Our conversation quickly

converged to my PhD work. Maarten suggested that I documented what I thought as mundane details of interval operations. I impatiently asked Maarten whether that was publishable. He said, "Jimmy, the purpose of writing/publication was to avoid duplication of effort." I am glad that the reception was held in a room with low light. Or else, people must have been able to see my face burning red. I felt extremely ashamed since I was "contaminated" so easily. I felt extremely ashamed since I had already forgotten the true meaning of being a researcher only after two short years in the materialistic world. It was Maarten who brought sanity into my mind again.

Held in Boston, CP-96 was my first conference in constraint programming. At the end of the conference, the PC Chair, Eugene Freuder, had a few conference coffee mugs left, and decided to use some excuses to give them away. I received a mug for the so-called Best Presentation Award. Maarten congratulated me and told me a few people saw my presentations and asked him who that strange face was. He said he replied proudly, "He was my student." My former supervisor's words of recognition were just music in my ears.

During the last thirty years, I kept in touch with Maarten. Besides seeing him in conferences a few times, I also made a handful of visits to Victoria. We also wrote regularly to each other a few times a year. The last time I visited Maarten was in 2014 when he enthusiastically discussed his paper with me upon my arrival. We also had a 5-hour smoked salmon and bagel brunch at his place with Jos and friends. That was the first time I saw Maarten singing. Jos and Maarten visited Europe and Cambridge that summer. My elder son, Jasper, was lucky enough to have attended Maarten's talk at Microsoft Research at Cambridge, and was invited to lunch together with Maarten, Simon Peyton-Jones and Tony Hoare. Jasper was blessed to have such an opportunity. I was going to visit Victoria in June, 2020, to see Maarten and Jos. There was the dreadful pandemic for all and the rest was history.

Just a few months ago, I started planning for a visit to Victoria in 2023 but everything was too late. The lesson was that if one wants to see someone and say how much you respect and love them, don't wait.

I hope my short commemoration piece shows the different facets of Maarten, as a scholar, a supervisor, a mentor, a teacher, a gentleman and a friend. To me, Maarten was my academic father. My life would not have been the same without him accompanying me at different stages. His teaching and kindness will always stay with me. I will miss Maarten and Jos dearly.