

Joe Diestel was the most American among all American mathematicians I knew.

He liked baseball, beer, he was an excellent organizer and a very clever and intelligent person. The many discussions I had with him, starting in the end of the 70's, were always warm, clever and useful.

Joe organized and led regular bi-weekly meetings in Kent for the "Ohio" group of Functional Analysis (besides Kent, also Functional Analysis groups from Cleveland and Columbus), and many experts visited these meetings from all over the world. They continued for decades, and it was already a tradition when I attended these meetings for the first time in the 70's. I believe, it is still a tradition now.

Joe organized two huge conferences in Geometric Functional Analysis, in '79 and '85. Many hundreds of people participated in them - perhaps, around 500 (!). These were the most important events in our community until '98 when a similar meeting was organized in Kiel.

I knew that Joe was very sick, but the news that he passed away was a shock for me and I received it very emotionally.

Vitali Milman