
Max Schiffer and the Technion

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Max Schiffer's contributions to Israeli mathematics in general, and to the Technion and its Faculty of Mathematics in particular, deserve special mention. Schiffer visited the Technion frequently, from the 1950s into the 1980s. In 1973, he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Technion; and in 1978, after his retirement from Stanford, he received a long-term appointment in the Technion's Department of Mathematics, which enabled him to visit the department whenever he pleased. (Paul Erdős also held such a position, and Haim Brezis currently enjoys such an appointment.)

During his long-term visits, Schiffer delivered lecture series on various subjects. The ones I remember best dealt with differential equations, integral equations, calculus of variations, fluid dynamics, and general relativity. The lectures were, quite simply, wonderful. Max's rare combination of detailed knowledge on an unusually wide front, together with his deep understanding of both mathematics and physics, made him a great teacher. He was also a fantastic

lecturer. Students and professors from all the different faculties came to hear him (and many, dazzled by his exceptional erudition, stayed on to ask him questions concerning their own problems in mathematics, physics, and even engineering). I still recall Harold Shapiro's reaction when he learned about the great impact of Schiffer's lectures at the Technion: "I think you should translate the lecture notes into English and publish them properly." As Harold put it, "Schiffer belongs to the world." (It can still be done, I believe, and would be well worth the effort.)

In 1976, a special volume of *Journal d'Analyse Mathématique* was published on the occasion of Max Schiffer's 65th birthday. It is, I think, a remarkable volume, with contributions from Agmon, Ahlfors, Garabedian, Gehring, Hayman, Hörmander, Lehto, Nehari, Pfluger, and Pólya, among many others. I am particularly proud that my first paper with Harold Shapiro on quadrature domains appears among the papers of that volume.