



Whatever Happened to Herb Dershem

Then	Capsule Summary	Now
	<p>Born and grew up in: Troy, OH High School: Troy High School Undergraduate Degree: BS Math, University of Dayton, 1965 Entered Purdue: Fall, 1965 Purdue Degrees: - MS CS May 1967; - PhD CS August 1969 Lived/Worked in: Hope College in Holland, MI 1969 to present</p>	
Purdue Highlights		Career Highlights
<p>Herb applied to the graduate program in mathematics at Purdue in his senior year at the University of Dayton. He had no intention of doing graduate study in computer science, nor did he know one even existed. When he received notification of his acceptance, it came in a letter from Walter Gautschi and said that he was offered an assistantship in mathematics at Purdue, but added that should he come in computer science, he would be awarded a three-year NDEA fellowship because he had a CS minor and worked his way through college as a programmer. Herb sought the counsel of Dr. Kenneth Schraut, chair of the mathematics department at the University of Dayton. "Doc" Schraut's advice was to take the fellowship because the first two years of grad study in computer science and the first two years of grad study in mathematics were virtually identical anyway so if he wished to transfer to math after two years, that would be no problem. In the meantime, it would be a great advantage to be able to devote full time to his studies for two years. Herb never considered going over to math during his four years at Purdue. He studied very little of what would be called computer science today. His two qualifying exams were in numerical analysis and mathematical analysis. His dissertation was in the field of numerical solutions of partial differential equations. Herb was the first Ph.D. student of Robert Lynch. Sam Conte and John Rice were the other two members of his committee. The fellowship rather than assistantship strategy paid off as he finished his M.S. and Ph.D. in four years' time, in 1969.</p>		<p>When Herb finished at Purdue he sought, against his professors' wishes and advice, a teaching position at a small, liberal arts college. He received offers from five schools and accepted the offer from Hope College. He chose the Hope position because it was the only one of the five that did not also include being director of the computer center. When he arrived in 1969, Herb taught the only computer science course in the math department, a FORTRAN course. In addition, he taught various math courses such as differential equations, numerical analysis, linear algebra, and advanced calculus. Year by year the students demanded that additional courses be taught until, in 1975, a computer science department was established at Hope College and a CS major was offered. Herb was chair of that department from 1975 until 2003. He taught computer science at Hope College until 2009. Since that time he has served part-time as the Hope College Director of Institutional Research, a position he still holds. Herb has had three full-year leaves at other locations. In 1977-78 he was a visiting scientist at Oak Ridge National Laboratories and Director of the Oak Ridge Science Semester. In 1982-83 he was a Professor for the Boston University Overseas Program, teaching in US military personnel in a Master's degree program in Germany. Herb was Distinguished Visiting Professor of Computer Science at the United States Air Force Academy in 1993-94. He has also served as Interim Director of Computer Services (1984) and two terms as Interim Dean for the Natural and Applied Sciences (2005 and 2012) at Hope College. In addition, Herb was a Councilor for the Council of Undergraduate Research, a reader for the Computer Science Advanced Placement Examination, and a Program Evaluator for ABET. He is the co-author of two editions of <u>Programming Languages: Structures and Models</u>. He has been the Principal Investigator or co-PI for 21 externally funded projects at Hope College with total funding of \$3.25 million.</p>