

Jacob Palis, a testimony

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I will not try to describe here the huge impact of Jacob Palis as a mathematician, nor his efficiency as a powerhouse that has helped the growth of pure math across South America, and beyond. Many are more qualified than me to do that. I will only mention here why Jacob is so special to me who was not his student and is not (yet?) a collaborator.

Jacob Palis is, with Alain Chenciner, who encouraged me to become a mathematician. That may have been bad for math, but that was great for me, inasmuch as I later realized that I still had the right to do some physics, and even plenty of engineering which seems to be easier for me, and makes me more useful in Brazil.

There are not many generations of students, students of students, etc of Jacob (if any) where I cannot find some of my best friends.

Jacob even used his role in the Brazilian Academy of Sciences to help Enrique Pujals and others push mathematical attitudes into the study of quantum mechanics, at the engineering and at the fundamental levels.

Jacob has not only made possible my very first "full" papers in math (*i.e.*, papers where one proves new theorems) but later he often defended the priority of work I did, alone and mostly with others and in particular with Jean-Marc Gambaudo. He also did his best to support pure math from IBM, and he helped dynamics in France through his travels to France and the quantity of good young French mathematicians who benefited from IMPA. This multiple Quest for helping others of Jacob benefited to me in the manifold aspects I know about:

I would not be surprised to learn that Jacob has helped me in still many other ways.

I regret to not be at his 80th Birthday, and I hope that my Palis number, which is now 2 along several paths, will decrease before any of us loses his taste for mathematics.

Happy birthday Jacob, and you just lost at IMPA a prototype of the longevity we all wish you you'll have,

As we say in Jewish community: to you 120th Birthday.