

My Testimony

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I came to know Jacob Palis in 1994 when Berlin was chosen to be the host of the 1998 International Congress of Mathematicians. Jacob, as Secretary of IMU, and I, as President of the ICM'98 Organizing Committee, had to collaborate to jointly prepare the Congress. It was a mere pleasure to work and interact with him and Suely Lima, then IMPA's head of administration, both extremely efficient and reliable persons. Jacob proved to have also masterful psychological skills, being especially successful in dealing with "difficult people" who, even in mathematics, occasionally end up – due to their mathematical talents – in IMU and other committees. He showed his virtuosity in smoothing precarious situations in particular during his term as IMU President 1999-2002. In addition to his exceptional mathematical achievements, Jacob has delivered outstanding and unparalleled administrative service to the world of mathematics: i.e., twenty years in office for IMU, eight years as member-at-large, eight years as Secretary, and four years as IMU President - a record that will never be surpassed, and which records only a small part of his precious contribution to our community.