



In memory of Michael O. Albertson, 1946–2009

Michael Albertson, L. Clark Seelye Professor of Mathematics at Smith College, was a prolific and enthusiastic researcher in graph theory and related topics of combinatorics. Beginning in 1973, he published in the areas of graph coloring and its generalizations to independent sets and homomorphisms, topological graph theory, graph automorphisms, and geometric graphs, among others. He pioneered work in areas that are now central to much research. For example, he and Walter R. Stromquist first introduced the concept of locally planar graphs in “Locally planar toroidal graphs are 5-colorable” (*Proc. Amer. Math. Soc.* **84** (1982), 449–457), and he and David M. Berman first studied the chromatic difference sequence of a graph (“The chromatic difference sequence of a graph,” *J. Combin. Theory Ser. B* **29** (1980), 1–12; “Critical graphs for chromatic difference sequences,” *Discrete Math.* **31** (1980), 225–233), a concept that had previously been investigated for partially ordered sets. More recently he began work on the distinguishing number of a graph with Karen L. Collins in “Symmetry breaking in graphs” (*Electron. J. Combin.* **3** (1996), 17 pp.) and on tying together the concepts of determining sets and distinguishing a graph with Debra L. Boutin in “Using determining sets to distinguish Kneser graphs” (*Electron. J. Combin.* **14** (2007), 9 pp.). His work on the interaction of crossing number and chromatic number, “Chromatic number, independence ratio, and crossing number,” appeared in the first volume of *Ars Mathematica Contemporanea*. For more details on his work and life, see www.math.smith.edu/cone and www.graphcolormike.org/. Mike was a collaborative researcher who published often with undergraduate students and colleagues. Many of the authors in this issue were his coauthors and colleagues, and many of the topics covered are those on which he worked and insightfully contributed. He was particularly skilled at asking penetrating questions and posing conjectures. His life and legacy lives on the work that we pursue, building on his many thoughtful and fundamental ideas in graph theory. It is fitting that we dedicate this issue of *Ars Mathematica Contemporanea* to the memory of Michael Albertson.

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Guest Editor