

Boris Jules Kayser (1938–2024)

The Fermilab Theory Division is saddened to report the passing of our longtime colleague, Boris Kayser, on April 14, 2024, at age eighty-five following complications of a fall.

Raised on a New Jersey chicken farm, as he frequently recalled with a smile, Boris graduated from Princeton University as valedictorian of the Class of 1960. He earned his doctorate in theoretical physics at Caltech in 1964 under the guidance of Fred Zachariasen for studies of a Dynamical Model of the Σ (Hyperon). Following a postdoctoral position at Berkeley, Boris was Assistant Professor at Stony Brook and Northwestern University before embarking on a distinguished career as Program Director for Theoretical Physics at the National Science Foundation. A source of great satisfaction—in nearly three decades at the NSF—was his role in helping to establish the (Kavli) Institute for Theoretical Physics in Santa Barbara.

Boris “retired” to Fermilab in 2001 and took advantage of his newfound freedom to undertake research with new intensity, to teach and lecture around the world, and to engage in public service and advocacy. He helped shape the agenda for neutrino physics, for example by his leadership (with the late Stuart Freedman of Berkeley) of the American Physical Society’s “Joint Study on the Future of Neutrino Physics.” His attention to fundamentals, youthful optimism, and unique sense of humor (see [“Is Hinchliffe’s Rule True?”](#)) left their mark on Fermilab and the world of particle physics.

Boris is survived by his wife of six decades, astronomer Susan (née Zimet) Kayser. The couple met at a house party for finalists of the *Westinghouse Science Talent Search* hosted by Nobel laureate Roald Hoffman.

Selected Bibliography

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