

## **A few memories of, and lessons from, Kenneth Arrow**

Ken taught us lots of things, and one of the most important is to ask many questions, and about everything. As I tell our students, even though none of us can be Ken Arrow – there's really only one of him a century or so – we can still act like him. One key to being a great photographer is not just knowing how to take a good picture, but to take lots of them. The same with being a social scientist.

My first memory of Ken was from a seminar series run by John Ferejohn in the mid 80's when I was a student. In came this man with a bike helmet and a bag of food who plopped down in the front and started asking questions. By the end of the end of the seminar I understood more from his questions than from the presentation.

Just last summer, at the Jerusalem summer school, one of the delights was staying at the Mishkenot Sha'ananim with Ken. Each morning a group of us would share a cab from the hotel to the university. If you asked *any* question about local architecture, history, or current politics, Ken had answers, as well as his own questions. He was in his mid 90's and still as curious and thoughtful as ever.

Last fall, I had questions about the history of thought behind externalities, and it was obvious whom to ask. Ken did not disappoint and knew details that are not easy to find. In telling me about Pigou's writings on the subject he pointed out that part of what led Pigou to write about externalities was a critique by Allyn Young in 1913 about a writing of Pigou in which Pigou does not really address the issue, and Young points out how important and deserving of investigation it is. A few years later Pigou's seminal work on it appears. How did Ken know all this? He had asked himself about the history of thought on externalities at some point and kept digging until he had the answers.

His insatiable curiosity led him to be a voracious reader. My wife and I love films and entered a contest run by a local paper to predict the Oscars. Using a few hunches, and some information from the betting odds, we got lucky and won. Early in the morning that the paper printed the outcome, we got a congratulatory email from Ken! Who else was reading the local paper that closely?

I will miss Ken and our periodic lunches at which he would ask about networks and what they can teach us about inequality, polarization, economic fluctuations, and growth. His questions were incredibly helpful to me. It was a luxury.

Most amazingly, Ken just kept going. After a lunch a couple of years ago we were walking back to the department when he apologized and said that he should take the elevator rather than the stairs – he had had a heart valve operation a few days ago!

Thank you Ken for everything, and not only for the many lessons you taught us, but also for the many questions that you asked and answered.

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