

Michael Pimsner, Mathematics

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Mihai (Michael) Pimsner, a professor of mathematics in the School of Arts and Sciences, passed away on July 17 from lung cancer. He was 69.

Born in Wallachia (part of Romania) in 1953, Dr. Pimsner was educated in his home country. In 1984, he received his PhD from INCREST in Bucharest. After occupying a tenured position in Germany, he joined Penn's faculty in 1991 as a professor of mathematics, a position he held for the rest of his life. He taught classes in calculus and contributed to Penn's math department's research presence, especially in the K-theory of operator algebras. Dr. Pimsner's research was renowned; he spoke at one of the quadrennial International Congresses of Mathematicians and was an honorary member of the Institute of Mathematics of the Romanian Academy of Sciences. In 2016, Dr. Pimsner joined Penn's 25-year club. "A modest but gifted man who spoke at least three languages fluently, he had a warm ingratiating smile and personality—quiet but effective and he was loved by his students to whom he was exceptionally kind," said the department in an online tribute. "All his colleagues enjoyed their interactions with him and will miss him and the steady, reasoned part he played in the department."

Dr. Pimsner is survived by his daughter, Ingrid; and his granddaughter, Sybill.