

In Memoriam

The Department of Mathematics is saddened to announce the death of our friend and colleague, Dr. Jean Simutis, who passed away on July 30, 2024. Dr. Simutis was a valued member of the Department and a dedicated and effective teacher. She had a long career - 27 years, before retiring in 2017. Dr. Simutis had the distinction of being the first woman to earn a Ph.D. in Mathematics from UC Davis, and the first lecturer in Cal State East Bay's history to be granted the recognition of emeriti status, normally reserved for tenured faculty.

Dr. Simutis was an enthusiastic teacher of teachers. She served as a liaison for the department at the Concord campus, teaching and developing curriculum for the "future teacher" student cohorts at that site. Dr. Simutis played a key role in developing and implementing curriculum for students who intend to become K-12 educators which require specialized knowledge in pedagogy and content. As prior Chair Dr. Julie Glass noted, "These courses have an impact beyond [Cal State East Bay]. The students in these classes go on to teach middle school and elementary school — carrying with them their notions of mathematics as a discipline and a way of thinking." She brought this expertise to a collaboration with faculty from Math and Teacher Education in professional development workshops for 3rd-8th grade teachers in Contra Costa County.

Dr. Simutis contributed to the university within and beyond the classroom. She collaborated with other faculty to develop new course materials, served as Chair of the Budget Committee, and served on the advisory board for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. Beyond the university, Dr. Simutis was active with the California Math Council and the annual conference they host at Asilomar every December, being instrumental in encouraging future teachers to attend. Among her honors, she was recognized twice as the Concord campus' Professor of the Year (1995-96 and 2001-02).

She is survived by a sister, Kathy, her husband, John, two adult children, Jack and Joan, and three grandchildren.