In Memory of Ted Belytschko

My mother, an English teacher at one time, read to me as a child the words of Longfellow in his “Psalm of Life”, which contains one of my favorite verses that I feel is appropriate for this moment. It goes

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime
And departing leave behind us
Footprints in the sand of time.

Our beloved Ted was a great man who left many footprints. They provide lasting evidence of his unique life and the impact it had on those who knew him and on those who will follow his footprints in the future. The path is many faceted: research results will leave a path to be followed by all students in computational mechanics long into the future; the national and international communities in computational mechanics that he helped create and organize will stand as lasting monuments of his vision; the outstanding group of colleagues, students and scholars he pulled together and supported will be forever touched by his guidance and philosophy; his loving family will move onward with treasured memories of their live with him and the inevitable influence of their outlook on life that he imparted to them. All these will forever mark the path he left in the sands of time.

I met Ted 44 years ago, not long after he earned his Ph.D., and we were buddies thereafter. We worked together to help found the USACM, to coauthor National Research Council Reports on Research Directions in Computational Mechanics, on the NSF Blue-Ribbon Panel Report on Simulation-Based Engineering Science; he served on the Board of Visitors of our Institute for Computational Engineering and Sciences, and we met at countless conferences, symposia, workshops, panel meetings, and committee meetings over four decades. In all such meetings ahead of us, we will always note an emptiness created by his absence. Like all of us here, I will miss his friendship, his insight in both technical and human matters, and like all of us, I will treasure the time we had together and the dear memories of Ted, his infectious sense of humor, his passion for his work, his camaraderie, and his kindness. All of us, in some way, have touched the path left by his footprints in the sands of time.

Tinsley Oden
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