Merci, Neil

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Meeting Neil in 1985 was like starting a book in the middle. Jointly with Peter Sestoft and Harald Søndergaard, he was reporting one of the scientific breakthroughs of his career: the effective self-application of a partial evaluator [1, 2]. Ever since, it is like I have been catching up with him in both directions: for what he had achieved before and for what he has achieved since as a scientist, as a teacher, as a mentor, as a ground breaker, as a textbook writer, as a host, as an organizer, and as a leader with the shoulders of a giant.

So thanks, Neil: for having relentlessly shown the example, surfing the tide of scientific inspiration when it was there, and never losing sight or hope when the wind was blowing in the other direction; for your sense of humor and for your compassion; for your achievements and for your inspiration; and for having served in my thesis committee and in the thesis committees of my students.

I rejoice to see you moving on, I rejoice to see you taking more time for Lene and you to be happy together, and I am looking forward to your continued scientific career.

May your hands always be busy,
May your feet always be swift,
Thank you for our strong foundations
As the winds of changes shift.
May your heart always be joyful,
May your song always be sung,
May you stay forever Neil.

– Bob Dylan (well, almost)

References

[1] Neil D. Jones. Mix ten years after. In William L. Scherlis, editor, *Proceedings of the ACM SIGPLAN Symposium on Partial Evaluation and Semantics-Based Program Manipulation*, pages 24–38, La Jolla, California, June 1995. ACM Press.

[2] Neil D. Jones, Peter Sestoft, and Harald Søndergaard. An experiment in partial evaluation: The generation of a compiler generator. In Jean-Pierre Jouannaud, editor, *Rewriting Techniques and Applications*, number 202 in Lecture Notes in Computer Science, pages 124–140, Dijon, France, May 1985. Springer-Verlag.