



## Ralph A. Morelli

August 6, 1947 - July 14, 2023

Ralph A. Morelli died peacefully in his home, surrounded by his loving family in Cary, NC on July 14, 2023. He was 75 years old.

Ralph was born in Waterbury, CT on August 6, 1947, the son of Ralph C. and Anne (Accetura) Morelli. Ralph is survived by his wife of 46 years, Choong Lan How; daughters, Meisha Mandal and Alicia Morelli; sons-in-law, Sudeep Mandal and Rayn Sakaguchi; grandchildren, Kirin & Siona Mandal and Talyn & Jolen Sakaguchi; sisters and their husbands, Diane & Tom McBroom and Karen Morelli & John Maxwell; nieces, Kacey McBroom, Margaret McIlvaine, and Madelyn Kotosky; as well as many brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, and nieces and nephews on the How side of the family.

Ralph was an enthusiast of life, an optimist, a person who found humor in any situation, and someone who inspired many others. He exuded a playful sense of ease, often instilling calmness into many situations. Many found a friend in him, appreciating his sincerity, curiosity, and engaging conversation.

Ralph graduated from Torrington High School in 1965, where he was co-captain of the baseball team in his senior year. He earned his bachelor's degree from UConn. That was followed by a two-year stint in the U.S. Army. He spent a year "bumming around" and surfing in Europe, after which he earned Ph.D. and M.S. degrees from the University of Hawaii.

Ralph taught for more than 30 years at Trinity College in Hartford, CT, where he helped create the Computer Science (CS) department. He loved collaborating with his colleagues, oftentimes on their daily runs around Goodwin Park. Together with them, he published two books, a textbook of the Java programming language, and a collection of papers on artificial intelligence, as well as several scientific articles.

Ralph worked with colleagues from other colleges to create the Humanitarian Free and Open Source Software (HFOSS) project, designed to get undergraduates to create

software to help nonprofit and humanitarian organizations. Trinity students helped support relief efforts in Haiti, Chengdu, China, and other places. A strong advocate for CS education, he collaborated with local high schools and other colleges to help create an Advanced Placement CS course that is used in Connecticut and other states.

Running with friends and competing in road races was one of Ralph's passions. He completed dozens of marathons and half marathons. His favorite race was the Thanksgiving day Manchester Road Race, which he completed more than 30 times with his family and friends. He was a big fan of the Boston Red Sox and the UConn men's and women's basketball teams. He was happy to have lived to see them win so many championships. Ralph was an avid crossword solver, an interest which he often turned into a social activity. He also found great joy in playing the piano, alone or during parties where others could sing along.

Throughout his life Ralph was devoted to his family, often leading them into adventures. He took pleasure in leading his grandchildren on expeditions of all sorts, such as hiking Haleakala as near toddlers and teaching them to bike, then encouraging them to complete an "epic" 15-mile trek of the American Tobacco Trail. He spearheaded Bellows camping trips and even got some aunts and uncles to run marathons! He also acted as a steady upholder of family traditions.

The family would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to all the loved ones who have reached out and kept Ralph in their hearts.

A celebration of life will be announced at a future date. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to ALS Therapy Development Institute (ALS TDI) in Ralph's memory. Donations can be made through the website at <https://www.als.net/donate/> or via mail to 480 Arsenal Street, Suite 201, Watertown, MA 02472.

# Tribute Wall

BD

“ It is with a heavy heart that I write this tribute to an extraordinary educator and a remarkable human being, Professor Ralph Morelli. Today, as I was reminiscing about my college days, Professor Morelli's classes came to mind. His passion for computer science was infectious, and his ability to unravel its complexities with such clarity and enthusiasm made every lesson not just a learning experience, but a joy.

*Learning of his passing has deeply saddened me. I extend my heartfelt condolences to the Morelli family. Professor Morelli's legacy lives on in the many students he inspired, including myself. His teachings, kindness, and wisdom have left an indelible mark on our lives. We are all better for having known him, and may you find comfort in knowing how much he was loved and respected by so many. May his soul rest in peace.*

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**Bemnet Demere** - December 15, 2023 at 12:01 AM

WY

“ Deep condolence to the Morelli family. Ralph is so dearly remembered for his leadership, his kindness, and the light and inspirations he brought to everyone around him. His legacy lives on.

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**Winnie Yu** - September 11, 2023 at 09:47 PM

TC

“ When I think of Ralph, I think of the joy he had for life. I took the photo below in early March 2020 (right before Covid hit). We were on the causeway beach leading to Sanibel Island, the last day of a Red Sox spring training trip. We saw this big and interesting sea bird. Ralph was able to get right up close to the bird, and then he started imitating the poses being made by the bird!

*Ralph was a fun person to be around. I miss him.*



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**Tim Curran** - August 25, 2023 at 06:10 PM

LT

“ I'm working in MIT App Inventor today and I'm nostalgic. This patient and kind man worked with my cohort in 2016, and I am truly grateful. All of us became strong educational forces as a result of Ralph's passion for CS education. Every block of MIT App Inventor reminds me of Ralph and I am truly grateful for his teachings and support throughout my journey as a CS educator. He will be missed and remembered.

Leon Tynes

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Leon Tynes - August 15, 2023 at 03:10 PM

JG

“ I first met Ralph about a decade ago while we both were working on the CS Principles pilots for the College Board. His passion for wanting to help young students learn about computing was an inspiration to us all. His compassion for using computing for social good was the focus of many of our conversations and I looked up to him as sort of an academic mentor during those days. He will be deeply missed by the CS education community. Jeff Gray, University of Alabama

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Jeff Gray - August 05, 2023 at 10:40 AM

MH

“ Ralph was an inspirational teacher and was so devoted to those he was in touch with. It was always a pleasure to listen to his classes and the enthusiasm with which he led them.

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mh - July 28, 2023 at 10:17 PM

TM

“ 4 files added to the album Trinity



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Takunari Miyazaki - July 26, 2023 at 09:57 PM

A'

“ My deepest condolences to Profession Ralph Morelli's family and loved ones. I still remember vividly back in the early 1990s at Trinity College as I was struggling to understand much about computer science. He always was kind-hearted to ensure I understood the material and took extra time to personally walk me through some of the challenges. Even though I never took another computer science class after that, his kindness and passion for the subject always stuck with me, and I hope I carry a little bit of his compassionate and passionate light when I teach in my coaching school. I was heartbroken to see the news of his passing, and I'm sure he's missed by many. You're light has been passed on - Prof. Ralph!



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**Aska Naito (Class of '97)** - July 24, 2023 at 12:34 PM

ST

“ My condolences to Professor Morelli's family. I will always remember the life lessons you taught me.



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**Steve** - July 22, 2023 at 12:46 PM

CT

“ Sincere condolences to Ralph's family and loved ones! I have not worked with him in some time but know firsthand that his work to bring CS education to K-12 in CT was inspiring and instrumental to countless educators and students. When MoblieCSP was first introduced, Ralph willingly shared resources (including a full class set of devices) so that I could bring the experience to my students. I know of several kids who went on to successful careers in CS thanks to this introduction. Rest in peace Ralph and know that you have made a real difference in CT and in the world. You will be missed but your legacy will live on!

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**Cheryl Tokarski** - July 21, 2023 at 04:09 PM



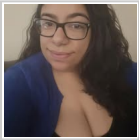
“ Deepest condolences to Professor Morelli's family and so much gratitude that our paths crossed. His enthusiasm for increasing access to computer science for all children in CT and beyond was striking and changed my career path as a public school teacher. He was so kind, funny, and genuine, willing to give his time and wisdom to those of us just starting out in CS education. He has impacted my life and the lives of so many K-12 students with his visionary leadership and I echo comments above that his positive impacts will live well into the future!

Dana Maria - July 20, 2023 at 11:56 PM

NT

“ My deepest condolences to Professor Morelli's family. I was lucky to have Prof Morelli as my First-Year advisor at Trinity. It was my first year in the US and so many things were unfamiliar to me. He was very kind and patient in guiding me through that difficult year.

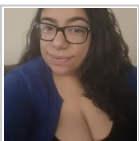
Nhon Trinh - July 20, 2023 at 10:57 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



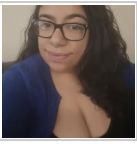
Paula Lake - July 20, 2023 at 10:19 PM



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Paula Lake - July 20, 2023 at 10:14 PM



“ *Ralph's impact on my life, both personally and professionally, is truly beyond words. I feel incredibly fortunate to have had him as a guiding presence throughout my journey. His gentle leadership and sense of humor had a magical way of coaxing me out of my shell and achieving things I never thought possible—well, almost anything, except eating calamari! The memories we created together are priceless, and the path of opportunities he provided for countless students in the field of computer science will continue to shape their futures for years to come. His absence is deeply felt, and there's a void that cannot be filled.*

*Ralph, you will always hold a special place in my heart. Thank you for everything you brought into my life, shaping me into who I am today. With love and gratitude  
-Pauline aka your secret sauce.*

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**Paula Lake** - July 20, 2023 at 10:13 PM

LA

*He always said the rings were okay, but he really loved the calamari legs.*

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**Lanning** - July 22, 2023 at 08:49 PM

LC

“ *I can't express how devastating it was when I learnt of Ralph's passing. Ralph is a wonderful, wonderful person and the best colleague one could ask for. His warmth and kind spirit, his vision and impact to Trinity College and Computer Science education, will forever be remembered.*

*When I first moved to Connecticut, I didn't know what to expect. Ralph and his family immediately put me at ease with their grace and generosity. Ralph is always willing to share his wisdom and vision through his extraordinary example. My respect and admiration for Ralph have never ceased to grow in the years since. His impact and legacy have touched generations of students, K12 teachers, faculty colleagues and beyond. I firmly believe many of them will credit Ralph with their success.*

*At this difficult time, my family and I send our deepest sympathies to Choong, their children, grandchildren; and everyone who knew and loved this remarkable man.*

*Lin Cheng  
Karl W. Hallden Professor and Chair  
Department of Engineering  
Trinity College*

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**Lin Cheng** - July 20, 2023 at 11:25 AM

KL

“ I met Ralph through my work with the MIT App Inventor team. He helped me out a couple of summers teaching the Master Trainer course and was a magnet for all the students in the course. He was an amazing teacher and leader in CS education. Ralph was a genuine, kind, and gracious man who will be missed by many. My sincere condolences to Choong Lan and his entire family.

Karen lang - July 20, 2023 at 10:10 AM

LL

“ Ralph and I met in Spring 1975 at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Ralph, pursuing his MA in Philosophy, and I my BA in English, had the good fortune to enroll in a course on British Empiricism covering Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. Due to the extremely dry nature of the subject matter, we found ourselves needing to meet, after every single class, in order to rehydrate with vast quantities of beer. From that time on, 48 years ago, we've tried to keep our fluid levels up, even though we've lived miles apart. If I could have traveled more, we'd have been better able to monitor those levels. I'm so glad I was able to get to CT and Ralph to Hawai'i as often as we could to have our tune-up sessions.

*If you've not read Ralph's stories, let me tell you he was a terrific writer. His memories of growing up in CT are unforgettable for their blend of his signature wry sense of humor with a nostalgic glowing over bittersweet days gone by.*

*Ralph was the best friend I ever had, and I will miss him forever.*

Lanning Lee - July 19, 2023 at 05:57 PM

M'

“ I arrived at Trinity College one year after Dr. Morelli, as a freshman. I learned my craft from him (and the others in the Department) and have enjoyed a long career. I have never wanted for work because of the fundamentals I acquired and I am eternally grateful for the gift of knowledge which Dr. Morelli generously shared with me and my peers. His gift will live on in perpetuity, passed one person to another. I have personally taught and mentored hundreds of other people and I know countless other students over the years have done the same. Rest in peace, Dr. Morello, knowing you have made the world a better place.

Matt Rodriguez '90 - July 19, 2023 at 03:30 PM

EP

“ Ralph was such a wonderful individual. I remember the first opportunity I had to interact with him at a MIT App Inventor Master Trainers event--he was so positive, warm and enthusiastic about everything. I think every time I spoke with him he had something to share about the Red Sox as well. I am saddened I won't have the opportunity to interact with him around generative AI and education given his expertise. My sincerest condolences go to Ralph's family at this time.

Evan Patton - July 19, 2023 at 01:55 PM

MD

“ I will always remember his kindness and wisdom. He will be missed.

Marisol Diaz - July 19, 2023 at 01:42 PM

ED

“ The world has lost a marvelous teacher. He was brimming with humor and a true love for learning. He wore the surfer, laid back look, but I have never known a person who worked harder or more tirelessly. He was, above all, dedicated to bringing teachers and students along on his journey of learning and teaching. I met Ralph when he attended a CSTA meeting in the spring of 2010. I spent the summer of 2010 delving in to CS and App Inventor. I was part of the first AP prep cohort and I continued working with him right up to his retirement. He taught me so much. Thanks Ralph.

*He seemed ageless. He is gone from this world too soon.*

Elizabeth Dillard - July 19, 2023 at 01:40 PM

JT

“ My condolences to the Morelli family. I got my start as a CS educator thanks to Dr. Morelli and programs he helped create. You should know that his legacy is still in its earliest chapters, and the impact he has had on computer science education truly will write a new history. He was a brilliant, kind, and wonderful person, and it was my privilege to work with him.

John Tusch  
Theme Coach  
CREC Academy of Computer Science and Engineering, Enfield CT

John Tusch - July 19, 2023 at 10:53 AM

HA

“ *Ralph was an inspiration to us all at MIT. He was a guiding light for everyone in computing education. His wisdom will be sorely missed.*

*Hal Abelson*

*Prof. of Computer Sci, and Eng.,  
MIT*

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**Hal Abelson** - July 19, 2023 at 07:54 AM

BS

“ *So many happy times with Cousin "Little Ralph" as we called him, had great sense of humor, big laugh, smile and heart. My prayers, thoughts and love to ALL his family and friends. Though we've been miles apart, you are always on my mind and in my heart. I will miss you greatly Ralph. Love Cousin Barbara Sindelar 🥺*



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**Barbara Sindelar** - July 19, 2023 at 02:37 AM

MW

“ *My condolences to the Morelli family! I'm so saddened to hear this news. Professor Morelli was an amazing professor and person, who I had the pleasure of knowing during my years at Trinity. He was influential in me deciding to pursue a CS degree which I'm thankful for 25 years later. His influence was not only through his teaching, but through his engagement on a personal level as well. I fondly remember him both helping me to deal with my father being sick as a freshman far from home & his invite for a cookout and volleyball at his house for the intro CS class (we were a small group at that time)! He just made me feel like part of his extended family.*

*Again, so sorry for the loss. Please know his memory will live on through all those, like me, who's life he had such a positive impact on.*

*Mike Weiner*

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**Mike Weiner** - July 18, 2023 at 07:58 PM

CU

“ It is devastating to learn of the passing of the giant of Computer Science, Professor Ralph Morelli. Ralph cared so much about people and the future of this world. When being around him, both his warmth and vision stood out. Ralph wanted all students to be well prepared for their future and to be effective contributors to society. He championed computer science (CS) education because he understood the impact of CS to our world. I was privileged to know Ralph. We shared a common vision of equitable access to CS for all K-12 students. Beyond authoring a college level CS book, we worked together to develop the first full AP CS Principles course, MobileCSP. Ralph was kind, patient and smart. He did not have a negative bone in his body. He willingly shared his knowledge and trained many Connecticut teachers in CS and supported them to implement CS in their classrooms through research grants he was awarded. Because of Ralph, generations of students in our world, most especially in Connecticut, have access to Computer Science education. Ralph respected and valued all people. I was blessed to know him and will miss him dearly. May his soul rest in peace. God grant Choong, his children and all who loved him comfort at this difficult time.



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**Chinma Uche** - July 18, 2023 at 07:38 PM

DM

“ My condolences to Professor Morelli’s family! He was a special man and a great professor who was a huge influence on me professionally and personally. I was just think about Dr Morelli and his passion for AI and wondering what he thought of the current advances!

*Best wishes to his family!*

*Dave Messinger*

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**Dave Messinger** - July 18, 2023 at 07:35 PM

DH

“ I am so sorry to get the news. I was on the committee that hired Ralph at Trinity and he quickly became a good friend and colleague. I most enjoyed running with Ralph and the Trinity running group several days a week. Those runs might be occupied with discussions of sports, but more often were fertile ground for collaboration between departments. Ralph's contributions to getting the Computer Science Department created were critical to its becoming such a popular and powerful one. My condolences to the family.

David E Henderson - July 18, 2023 at 04:07 PM

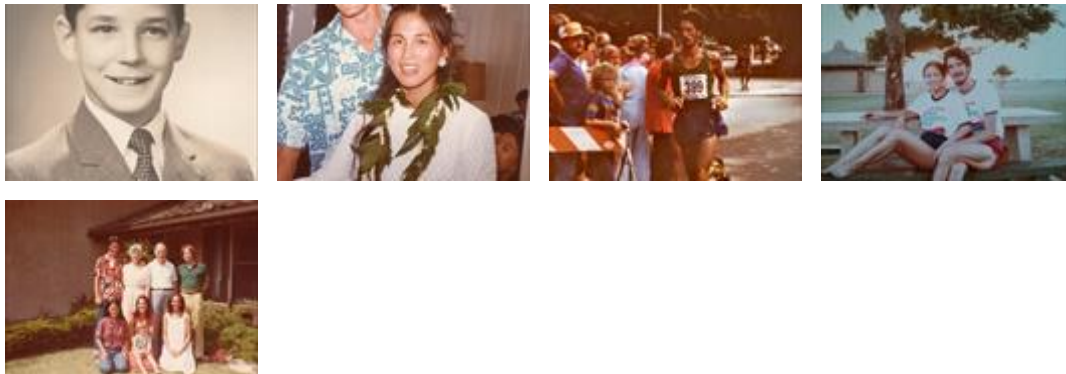
KN

“ Very sorry to hear about Prof. Morelli. My condolences to the family. I took a couple classes with Prof. Morelli and also did a summer internship with him and always found him to be super friendly, accessible and helpful. His dedication and work in free and open source software space is commendable. He will be missed.

Kumud Nepal - July 18, 2023 at 02:47 PM

AL

“ 13 files added to the album Photos



alicia - July 18, 2023 at 01:18 PM

AM

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall

Atsuko Miyazaki - July 18, 2023 at 07:24 AM

TM

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall

Takunari Miyazaki - July 18, 2023 at 07:12 AM

AL

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alicia - July 17, 2023 at 11:13 PM