I first met Prof. Katzoff as a research (doctorate) student. I was in my forties at the time, but his classes were full of far more students younger than I, so I had the perspective, actually the advantage, of a side observer while experiencing relations with him.

As a class teacher he was very respectful of and caring for his students. His classes never took the form of long boring speeches, because he did not just lecture. He encouraged his students’ participation in the lessons, developing fruitful discussions. At times he would stand there watching them, while they were exchanging views. Often he inserted modern examples in order to illustrate and bring into life ancient, centuries-old issues and points. When his classes took place during the afternoon fatigue hours, he would stop his lectures in mid-class, letting the students refresh themselves and even using gymnastic exercises to inject vitality back into them. I asked other students then, and they heartily confirmed my views.

Prof. Katzoff is the best of mentors. He bridged the usual gap between supervisor and student by keeping close contact with me naturally, not placing himself at a higher level. He would often turn to me (at the end of a class) asking whether I was in need of a research consultation on that day, rather than wait for me to approach him. His guidance was dynamic, strict, very
pedagogical and profound. During our hours-long meetings I found him to be highly intelligent and a quick thinker. The talks with him were very inspiring and enriching.

He once told me: “While checking the chapters of your thesis I will pose as your worst adversary. I will be harsh and not sympathetic, pointing out every tiny mistake. All with good will and intentions so that you will be better prepared to confront your referees.”

In time, when my thesis was approved, typically of his benevolent nature he knew how to make the transition from a supervisor into a colleague. Whenever I turned to him for advice and academic assistance, he always extended to me whatever he could.

In the name of his students I would like to wish him and his family the best of everything on his 75th birthday, or as we are accustomed to say in Israel:

איחולים לברח เมיל דMonday.