

Game theorist and mathematician John Nash passed away

Tribute by the speaker of the Center for Social and Economic Behavior,
Prof. Dr. Axel Ockenfels

John Nash and his wife, Alicia, died in a taxi accident last week. He invented game theory's equilibrium concept. Game theory is the theory of rational decision making and at the same time the basis for much of the behavioral and design research conducted in our Center and in our Faculty. Indeed, what is probably less known is, that John also conducted some of the first economics experiments in order to better understand human decision making, and that he was fascinated by the many exciting applications that are currently popping up.

I invited John to visit Cologne in 2006. He talked about his current theoretical research agenda as well as his interest in human behavior and cooperation in our faculty's research seminar. We also organized a public symposium on game theory and experimental economics, which was easily the most overcrowded scientific event at the University of Cologne ever. While many of those who could snatch a seat in the University's auditorium expected to see an eccentric scientist, he struck everybody as a wonderful, curious and warmhearted person, interested in virtually all aspects of life. Afterwards he stayed in contact with Cologne and was interested to hear what we have been building up in the last ten years.

I was very shocked to hear of his and his wife's sudden death. My thoughts are with their son.

We will continue enjoying his contributions every day and can smile with memories of his moving life and beautiful mind.



John Nash an der Universität zu Köln im November 2006