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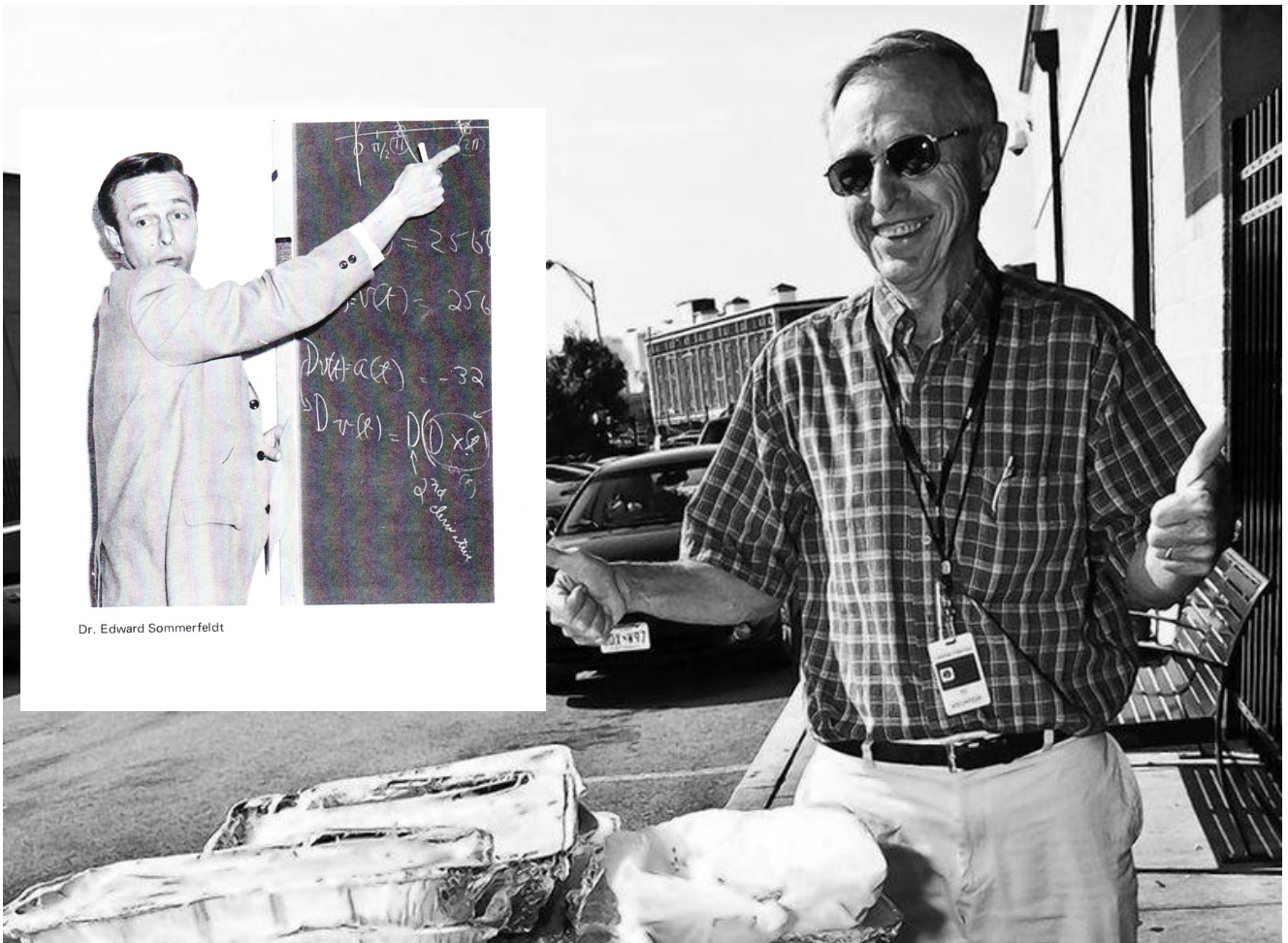
OBITUARIES

Edward E. Sommerfeldt, former Coppin chair

By **BY SUSAN REIMER and THE BALTIMORE SUN**
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Dr. Edward Sommerfeldt





Edward E. Sommerfeldt, who founded the computer science program at Coppin State University where he taught for 39 years and served as a mentor to students and faculty, died May 14 of complications from brain cancer at Gilchrist Hospice in Towson. He was 74.

"Dr. Sommerfeldt is a true Coppin champion," said interim math and computer science chairman Sean Brooks. "Not only did he single-handedly establish the computer science program at Coppin, in doing so, he strengthened the mathematics program."

Dr. Brooks said that when he was a Coppin student in the 1980s, he helped Dr. Sommerfeldt drill holes in a cinder block wall between a classroom and the room where a new computer was housed. Together, they ran cables through the wall so that students could begin immediately to access the computer and learn programming skills.

"That was just his way," said Dr. Brooks. "He was a really smart guy, but he was also a doer. He really wanted to get things done." He added that the drilling effort for which he was recruited probably saved Coppin money, too.

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Dr. Brooks credited Dr. Sommerfeldt with putting Coppin at the forefront of computer science education and successfully defending the program against efforts by the state to cut it back because it duplicated other computer science programs in Maryland.

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"He said that Coppin was doing more than its share, graduating more African-American males in computer science than any other institution in the state."

A key element of Dr. Sommerfeldt's innovation was the requirement that math

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discipline was a fundamental principle.

Dr. Sommerfeldt was born in Dallas, where his father was an insurance executive and his mother was a ballet teacher.

After graduating from a Jesuit high school in Dallas, he entered the Jesuit order, where he earned a degree in physics from Spring Hill College, a Jesuit college in Alabama and one of the oldest in the country, and a doctorate in physics from Catholic University of America in Washington.

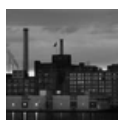
He came to Maryland to attend Woodstock College, which was until 1974 a Jesuit seminary outside Baltimore, where he met his future wife, Mary Nicholas Pascullis.

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He joined the faculty of Coppin State in 1968, teaching physics, math and computer science and chairing the math and computer science departments.

While at Coppin, Dr. Sommerfeldt earned a master's degree in computer science from the Johns Hopkins University.

Dr. Sommerfeldt was a communicant of St. Matthew Roman Catholic Church and was an active volunteer in the neighborhood association for Original Northwood, where he raised his family.



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He and his wife volunteered at the St. Vincent De Paul Society and organized the donation and delivery of food to families in Southwest Baltimore. He enjoyed reading, music, racquetball and golf.

After his retirement from Coppin, Dr. Sommerfeldt joined the Ignatian Volunteer Corps and helped as a mathematics aide at Cristo Rey Jesuit High School in East Baltimore. He also volunteered at Christopher Place, an outreach program at Our Daily Bread, where he taught basic math four days a week to those working toward a GED.

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"Dr. Sommerfeldt was an incredible, giving person," said Dr. Brooks. "He could be demanding, but he was also willing to put things on the line, too."

A memorial service will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday, June 9, at St. Matthew Catholic Church, 5401 Loch Raven Blvd.

In addition to his wife of 43 years, survivors include two sons, Paul Sommerfeldt of Chesapeake, Va., and Tai Sommerfeldt of Baltimore; a sister, Sue Power of Dallas; and four grandsons.

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