



## Martin Brent Halpern

August 26, 1939 - January 21, 2018

Martin Brent Halpern – World Renown Theoretical Physicist - loving father, grandfather and husband, died in Tucson, AZ on January 21, 2018

As a child, Martin Brent Halpern was drawn to chemistry experiments and other physical concepts such as tesla coils, perhaps to the consternation of his parents, Dr. Melvin Halpern and Blanche Halpern. Marty enjoyed playing practical jokes with his pals, including an infamous stunt involving a pound of limburger cheese. He was also active in the Boy Scouts for many years.

As a teen, Marty focused on the sciences, winning the Westinghouse Science Talent Search at the age of sixteen. His work in the field of physics began as a chemistry and math major at the University of Arizona, where he was University Valedictorian. As Marty's questions became more fundamental, his professors directed him to the physics department and Marty changed his focus from pre-med to physics, going on to earn a PhD in physics from Harvard in 1964.

During his post doctorate studies, he was awarded a NATO fellowship at CERN in Geneva, Switzerland (1964-1965), a post-doctorate at the University of California at Berkeley (1965-1966), and was a postdoctoral fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton in 1966-1967. While at UC Berkeley finishing his post doctorate, he was invited by Julius Robert Oppenheimer to Princeton on a fellowship in the late 1960's. He returned to UC Berkeley, quickly moving up the ranks from assistant professor to full professor, from 1972 until he retired as emeritus.

His body of research contributed to Quantum Field Theory, String Theory and Orbital Theory, among others. He returned to CERN most summers and for a one year sabbatical in 1996 to continue his research.

His awards and honors include Harvard Fellowship, 1960-61: National Science Foundation Predoctoral Fellow, 1961-64: NATO Fellow (Postdoctoral), 1964-65 at CERN,

the European Organization for Nuclear Research, post-doctorate at the University of California at Berkeley (1965-1966), Post Doctoral Position at Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, 1966-1967. He was a visiting scientist at the Niels Bohr Institute, Copenhagen, Spring, 1984. Visiting Scientist at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, Spring 1989. Visiting Scientist at RIMS Workshop on Infinite Analysis, Kyoto, Summer, 1991. Visiting Scientist at CERN, Geneva, 1995-96. Miller Professor, UC Berkeley, Spring 1999.

Outside of physics, Martin was a life-long, avid weight lifter, a devotee of books, theater, film and music, as well as a passionate comic book collector. Armed with a sense of humor and a well-traveled passport, Martin Halpern was able to explain the laws of physics in creative and colorful ways to his daughter from his first marriage, the filmmaker Tamar Halpern, his grandson, and his second wife, Penelope Dutton Halpern whom he with for over thirty nine years. He enjoyed discussion with his grandson, the film composer Jordan Halpern Schwartz, about theoretical utopian societies, focusing on the best aspects of various countries, governments and cultures, both over time and geography. Marty fulfilled a lifetime dream of retiring to his childhood hometown of Tucson, Arizona in 2012.

As an illustration of Marty's spirited and unique sense of humor, and his enduring love of adventure no matter how small, he orchestrated a family and friend outing in Berkeley, in which everyone dressed up in clown makeup and went to a pizza parlor and a rather somber war movie, Gallipoli. He joyously hosted water gun and water balloon parties, dressing up as a Sergio Leone type character, armed with water balloons in the lining of his floor-length duster. His signature black Stetson hat completed his seriously playful and original approach to life.

Marty worked hard and played hard. He was a pleasure to be with and kept everyone around him sharp with his keen wit, analytical mind and endless curiosity.

Funeral Services were held at Evergreen Mortuary in Tucson Friday, January 26, 2018, at 2:30pm.

# Cemetery

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## Evergreen Cemetery

3015 North Oracle Road

Tucson, AZ, 85705

# Events

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**JAN**

**26**

## Graveside Service

02:30PM

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Evergreen Cemetery

3015 North Oracle Road, Tucson, AZ, US, 85705

# Comments

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“ Michael Santini lit a candle in memory of Martin Brent Halpern



**Michael Santini** - June 02, 2018 at 03:00 PM



“ Marty was a close friend of mine from Berkeley. He was always an inspiration and had such a positive and uplifting spirit. He was a true listener, who gave value to you and your views. Marty was also an intellect and continual learner. He had a great sense of humor as well. We talked on the phone every 3-4 months for 45 minutes to an hour without fail. I will miss that conversation so much! He had a great marriage to Penny and was a happy man. I'm so sorry you are gone Marty and will always love you dearly.

**Michael** - June 02, 2018 at 03:11 PM

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“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



**Michael Santini** - June 02, 2018 at 01:56 PM

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“ I was so sorry to hear of Marty's sudden death. I remember how generously Marty and his wife, my friend Penny, invited me and my two young sons to share Thanksgiving with them at their home in Berkeley. I loved all the interesting details about Marty's life in the obituary that Penny and Marty's daughter Tamar wrote for him. They made me wish I had gotten to know him better. My condolences and best wishes to Penny and Marty's family at this difficult time. Ellen Hershey

**Ellen Hershey** - February 14, 2018 at 10:58 PM

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“ So sorry to hear the news of Marty's passing and my deepest sympathies go out the Halpern family. It was very interesting to read about Marty's life and all of his adventures and accomplishments. I had the pleasure knowing Marty for the last 25 years and always enjoyed his sharp mind and humor - he will be missed.

All my best to the family, Rick Strand

**Rick Strand** - February 01, 2018 at 04:28 PM

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“ 4 files added to the album Memories Album



**Evergreen Mortuary, Cemetery & Crematory** - January 25, 2018 at 02:51 PM