

## Some memories of Cy Derman

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I came to Columbia in 1968 as an undergraduate in the engineering school. I didn't know what I wanted to major in, and declared an interest in nuclear engineering, so that I could take as many physics courses as I wanted. But the summer after my freshman year I took a summer job in Washington D.C. at an Army lab for which I had qualified by taking a civil service exam. They had an OR group, and I returned to school as an OR major.

In the manner of undergraduates, I didn't have a clear idea of what my teachers did. But I recall admiring Cy Derman's attitude: he seemed not to take himself too seriously. I recall he wore turtleneck shirts and talked about tennis, and summers at Stanford.

When it came time to think about graduation, Cy urged me to think about grad school in OR, and volunteered to write a letter for me. Some time later, in a reflective moment, he said something to me like "I wrote you a very good letter. I'm not exactly sure why; you didn't do all that well in your courses. But I have a feeling that you might be good at research." Cornell and Stanford were the programs he recommended, and when I was accepted at both, his preference was clear, and I followed his advice, which set me on a path I'm still following.

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