OBITUARY

Douglas Grant Michael 1960–2005

Douglas Michael, a well known experimental particle physicist at Caltech and co-spokesperson of the MINOS collaboration, died on Christmas Day after a year-long struggle with lymphoma.

Doug was born in Grant, Nebraska, US, on 9 May 1960 and moved with his family to Arizona when he was three years old. He attended Stanford from 1978 to 1982, where he strengthened his long-standing interest in mathematics and science. His initiation into high-energy physics was through a senior-year research project, in which he and another student built and operated a two-man experiment to test quantum electrodynamics in the waning days of the old SPEAR ring at SLAC.

Doug did his graduate work in physics at Harvard, receiving his Masters degree in 1984 and his PhD in 1990. His thesis experiment, performed under the guidance of Frank Pipkin and Dick Wilson, was E-665, a study of deep-inelastic muon scattering at Fermilab’s Tevatron. Upon graduation, he moved to Caltech, where he became an essential member of an energetic group building the MACRO experiment to search for magnetic monopoles at Gran Sasso. Doug’s work on MACRO fuelled his strong interest in neutrino physics and led to his proposal in 1994 for GENIUS, a long-baseline neutrino-oscillation experiment at Fermilab. He became a founding member of the MINOS collaboration that same year and was instrumental in designing and constructing the MINOS long-baseline neutrino-oscillation experiment.

During the past few years Doug devoted much of his energy to leading a drive to organize the improvements to the Fermilab accelerators that are essential for producing the intense neutrino beam for MINOS. His strong encouragement of young particle physicists to work on accelerator upgrades for MINOS has been a critical component of a “back to our roots” culture-shift at Fermilab in recent years.

Doug enjoyed playing the piano, painting and cooking. At Stanford he was on the track team and became proficient at throwing the hammer and discus. His taste for fine wine and good food, his extravagant use of the English language, and his fearless honesty in expressing strongly held opinions have become legendary among his colleagues. He will long be remembered for his high-spirited energy and boundless optimism, his deep insights into particle physics and detectors, and his ability to inspire and motivate those who had the privilege of working with him. His short, intense and productive life was celebrated at a memorial service at Caltech on 28 January.

Dave Ayres, Charlie Peck and Stan Wojcicki.