

There are two striking but seemingly contradictory characteristics of Mischa Cotlar that I have long been aware of. First, his particular modesty, exemplified by his unfailing deference to his colleagues even when these were younger than he was. Yet on the other hand there was his deep knowledge, remarkable originality and his many achievements, which for almost all others, would mitigate against such modesty.

Of his achievements I want to mention only one to which I (among others) owe a great debt--the "Cotlar lemma" and the ideas surrounding it. His contribution here was not only in finding the way to such a beautiful and general principle for the L^2 theory, but also in his realization of how this idea naturally applied to the Hilbert transform, which insights led to a host of consequences that have enriched our science.

Eli Stein (Princeton University)