

ABRAHAM ADRIAN ALBERT

1905–1972

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Adrian Albert, one of the foremost algebraists of the world and President of the American Mathematical Society from 1965 to 1967, died on June 6, 1972. For almost a year before his death it had become apparent to his friends that his manner had altered from its customary vigor to one which was rather subdued. At first they attributed this to a letdown which might have resulted from Albert's having recently relinquished a very demanding administrative position (Dean of the Division of Physical Sciences at the University of Chicago) that he had held for a number of years. Eventually it became known that he was gravely ill of physical causes that had their origin in diabetes with which he had been afflicted for many years.

Albert was a first generation American and a second generation American mathematician following that of E. H. Moore, Oswald Veblen, L. E. Dickson and G. D. Birkhoff. His mother came to the United States from Kiev and his father came from England.¹ The father had run away from his home in Vilna at the age of fourteen, and on arriving in England, he discarded his family name (which remains unknown) and took in its place the name Albert after the prince consort of Queen Victoria. Albert's father was something of a scholar, with a deep interest in English literature. He taught school for a while in England but after coming to the United States he became a salesman, a shopkeeper, and a manufacturer. Adrian was born when his father was fifty-five and his mother was thirty-five. It was a second marriage for both parents; his father's first wife had died in childbirth, and his mother was a widow with two children when she married his father. Adrian was the middle child of a set of three children which his parents had in common. He grew up in a family that was formally orthodox Jewish but not strongly religious. In common with most immigrant families of the period the family had a strong drive toward assimilation and a determination to make the most of the opportunities offered by a comparatively free society undergoing rapid economic expansion with no limits in sight.

Albert spent all of his school years in the Midwest and all but two of these in Chicago. He attended public schools at Chicago and at Iron

¹ We are indebted to Mrs. Frieda Albert for background material on Professor Albert's family.