

Evocaciones Personales / Personal Evocations

Personal statement about Ron Giere

I was Ron Giere's student in the Department of History and Philosophy of Science at Indiana University in the mid 1980s. Ron was an important presence in my education and my life.


From an intellectual standpoint, Ron was the person who taught me most about the virtues of the cognitive science approach to understanding scientific method. I recall with fondness his course on the Foundations of Scientific Inference. At the start of the course I viewed the attempt to replace the methods of analytic philosophy with those of the cognitive sciences with the youthful arrogance of the 'typical analytic philosopher' (in the pejorative sense of that phrase). By the end of the course it had become self-evident to me that insofar as science was a cognitive activity, it was essential to see science through a cog sci lens.

More meaningful still was the warmth, interest and encouragement Ron showed to me both in my student days and in subsequent years. In early days he convinced me that I was more capable of doing history of science than I had dared believe. Toward the end of grad school I had, for a time, lost direction in my studies and it was unclear if I would finish the PhD Ron took the initiative to take me out to lunch, expressed concern about where I was headed, and helped me think through various options by which I might finish the degree. His support helped me get back on track. Through the years when we would run into each other at conferences Ron was always friendly and quick to praise whatever small achievement of mine he was aware of. It was always great to see him.

Ron Giere was an important part of the philosophical community that has nurtured me over many years. I remember him with gratitude and respect.

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