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I don't remember exactly where I first met Kiefer Ferenc, better known to many of us in the diminutive, Feri. It had to be Cambridge, or New York, or Budapest, or somewhere else in Europe. Regardless, after our first long conversation over dinner I thought to myself, shamelessly swiping Humphrey Bogart's iconic last line in *Casablanca*: "I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship." (Well, Bogart's rendition obviously had more cachet!) And indeed, an oh so beautiful friendship developed over many, many decades.

Over the years, we met at conferences in Europe, and at professional and personal visits in New York and Budapest. When he was in New York, Feri coveted the Metropolitan Opera, Broadway, and fine dining. One of his favorite eateries was a Chinese restaurant on the corner of 2nd Avenue and 42nd Street, to which he was first taken by his good friend, the great Jerry Katz. Our last Broadway show together was *A Streetcar Named Desire*, with Natasha Richardson playing Blanche. Unfortunately, a few years later she lost her life to a skiing accident.

When I visited Budapest, whence my family emigrated, and Feri was in town, we had our routine: He invited me to the august restaurant of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, where for us, dining over red wine was mandatory. And yes, he always reserved his favorite booth overlooking the Danube.

No matter the venue, we had a great time talking shop and enjoying each other's company over a fine meal and/or a glass of wine or two. Our conversations were strictly in Hungarian – always. Perhaps my most memorable dining experience with Feri was in Amsterdam, where we both attended a conference. Sitting at the table was Feri, Farrell Ackerman, his wife, my first girlfriend from New York, Kati (to some of you obviously Hungarian), and I. You know the adage "We danced the night away" – well, we laughed the night away. It was way too easy: Feri's contagious laughter and sparkling smile soothed the spirits of everyone around him.

Over and beyond the multitude of accolades Feri garnered nationally and internationally, his knack for administrative leadership, getting things done, as a

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macher, treating fellow humans with respect – what I cherish and miss Feri the most for is: his laughter and his smile.

Feri was truly both a gentleman and a scholar. They don't make them like that nowadays.

Rest in Peace