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Norman Levitt

Norman Levitt, Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at Rutgers University and a fierce critic of pseudoscience, died on October 23, 2009, in New York City, according to the [obituary](#) [4] in eSkeptic (October 26, 2009). Born on August 27, 1943, in New York City, Levitt received his B.A. from Harvard University in 1963 and his Ph.D. from Princeton University in 1967. After a brief stint at New York University, he spent the rest of his career at Rutgers University, with visiting professorships at Århus University, Stanford University, and the University of British Columbia; he retired from Rutgers in 2007. A specialist in topology, he authored *Grassmannians and Gauss Maps in Piecewise-Linear Topology* (Springer-Verlag, 1987), but he was better known to the general public for his critiques of pseudoscience and obscurantism, including *Higher Superstition: The Academic Left and Its Quarrels with Science* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), coauthored with Paul R. Gross, and *Prometheus Bedeviled: Science and the Contradictions of Contemporary Culture* (Rutgers University Press, 1999).

While creationism was hardly Levitt's only target, he was certainly concerned about it, especially in its recent manifestation of "intelligent design," which he described — in a [press release](#) [5] (PDF) announcing *SciPolicy's* amicus curiae [brief](#) [6] (PDF) for the plaintiffs in *Kitzmiller v. Dover* — as "not new science, fringe science, nor even junk science. It is merely window-dressing for a movement that is social, political, and, above all, theological down to its core, and which never had the least intention of doing

disinterested science." In the wake of the *Kitzmiller* verdict, he [castigated](#) [7] the sociologist Steve Fuller's testimony on behalf of "intelligent design" in a review of Fuller's *Science vs. Religion? Intelligent Design and the Problem of Evolution* (Polity Press, 2007) for *Skeptic* and [reviewed](#) [8] Michael Shermer's *Why Darwin Matters: The Case Against Intelligent Design* (Times Books, 2006) for *Reports of the NCSE*. His widow Renée Greene Levitt asks for memorial contributions to be sent to NCSE in lieu of flowers.

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