

Committee on Steele Prizes

General Description

- Committee is standing
- Number of members is nine
- Term is three years

These prizes were established in 1970 in honor of George David Birkhoff, William Fogg Osgood, and William Caspar Graustein, and are endowed under the terms of a bequest amount to \$145,000 from Leroy P. Steele. From 1970 to 1976 one or more prizes were awarded each year for outstanding published mathematical research; most favorable consideration was given to papers distinguished for their exposition and covering broad areas of mathematics. In 1977 the Council of the AMS modified the terms under which the prizes are awarded. Since then, up to three prizes have been awarded each year as stated in the following section.

ARTICLE FIFTH

All the rest, residue and remainder of my estate, both real and personal, of every nature and description and wherever situated, of which I may die seized or possessed, or to which I may be in any way entitled, or over which I may have any power of appointment, I give, bequeath, devise and appoint to the AMERICAN MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY, a corporation organized under the laws of the District of Columbia, (hereinafter referred to as the Society) or to its successors for the purpose of using the income for establishing and awarding, from time to time, a prize or prizes for outstanding published mathematical research, the prize or prizes to be made in such amounts, at such intervals and for such types of mathematical research as the Council of the Society shall in its sole discretion determine. It is suggested but not required that in awarding the prizes, the Council consider original research in such fields as projective geometry, differential geometry, theory of functions, differential equations, analysis situs (topology), abstract spaces, theory of ensembles, logical foundations of mathematics and theoretical dynamics. It is also suggested but not required that prizes in the appropriate fields be named the BIRKHOFF prizes, in memory of DR. GEORGE D. BIRKHOFF, who contributed so much to the advancement of mathematics. It is also suggested but not required that prizes in appropriate fields be named the OSGOOD prizes, in memory of DR. WILLIAM FOGG OSGOOD, who also did so much for mathematical science. It is also suggested but not required that prizes be awarded for research in any of the several fields of geometry be called the GRAUSTEIN prizes, in memory of DR. WILLIAM CASPER GRAUSTEIN, who specialized in these fields.

Principal Activities

This is a selection committee. It makes recommendations to the Council (actually to the Executive Committee) through the Secretary of candidates to receive prizes at each Annual Meeting of the Society. The will of LeRoy P. Steele calls for “establishing and awarding, from time to time, a prize or prizes for outstanding published mathematical research, the prize or prizes to be made in such amounts, at such intervals and for such types of mathematical research as the Council of the Society shall in its sole discretion determine. It is suggested but not required in such fields as projective geometry, differential geometry, theory of functions,

differential equations, analysis situs (topology), abstract spaces, theory of ensembles, logical foundations of mathematics and theoretical dynamics.” Awards of such prizes were made in the years 1970-1975 but none was made in 1976 or 1977. The Council of April 16, 1976 reconstituted the prizes according to the following plan: (1) For cumulative impact of the total mathematical work of the recipient, high level research over a period of time, particular influence on the development of a field, and influence on mathematics through Ph.D. students; (2) For a book or substantial survey or expository-research paper and (3) For a paper, whether recent or not, which has proved to be of seminal or lasting importance in its field, or a model of important research.

The 14 August 1993 Council accepted the recommendation of an ad hoc Committee on Prizes and formalized the three categories of the prize by naming each of them¹:

1. The Leroy P. Steele Prize for Lifetime Achievement;
2. The Leroy P. Steele Prize for Mathematical Exposition; and
3. The Leroy P. Steele Prize for Seminal Contribution to Research.

With respect to the Seminal Contribution to Research Prize, the Committee established a five-year cycle on fields, which was revised in 2015 to the following six-year cycle:

- Analysis/Probability (2020);
- Algebra/Number Theory (2021);
- Applied Mathematics (2016);
- Geometry/Topology (2017);
- Discrete Mathematics/Logic (2018);
- Open (2019).

The amount of the prizes is set by the Council. Beginning in 1978 it is \$1,500. There is reluctance to divide or share prizes except in the instance of joint work. Beginning in August 1993 the amount of the prize was set at \$4,000, and in 2002 the amount was raised to \$5,000. Beginning with the prize awarded in 2016, the amount for the Lifetime Achievement Award was raised to \$10,000.

The full bibliographic reference is needed for the prize for a book or a paper. Prizes for general contributions need a “short” citation that will fit on a certificate as well as a longer one for the program and *Notices*.

Other Activities

The Committee should be aware of a second action of the Council of April 1976 that “Steele Prizes [are] established as a supplement to and under the names of the Bôcher, Cole, Veblen, Birkhoff, and Weiner Prizes in such amounts as the Council shall recommend from time to time.” This provision does not appear to require the attention of the Committee but does require allocation of funds by the Trustees.

¹These new categories took effect with the August 1993 awards.

Equal Opportunities for Women

The Business Meeting of the January 19, 1972 passed the following resolution:

Resolved that:

1. the American Mathematical Society will work actively for equal opportunities for women in the following areas:
 - a. employment at all levels: this will include the search for a recruitment of qualified women.
 - b. advancement and tenure in academic positions.
 - c. admissions to graduate schools.
 - d. graduate and postdoctoral fellowships and assistantships.
 - e. membership on advisory boards and panels; and
2. the Society will include more women on:
 - a. Society programs and panels, including invited speakers and section chairmen.
 - b. Society committees and governing boards.

The Council of August 29, 1972 instructed the Secretary to call part two of the resolution regularly to the attention of individuals in charge of various parts of Society programs.

The Secretary proposes to do this by distributing this sheet from time to time as follows:

Colloquium Editorial Committee
Committee on Summer Institutes
Committee on Applied Mathematics
Organizing Committees for Institutes, Seminars, and Symposia
Associate Secretaries

He asks in turn that the Associate Secretaries see that their Section Program Committee and the organizers of informal sessions and chairmen of invited twenty minute papers receive copies.

Miscellaneous Information

The business of this committee can be done by mail, electronic mail, or telephone, expenses which may be reimbursed by the Society.

A call for nominations should be published in the 2 issues of the *Notices* prior to the committee's deadline. It should look something like this:

**Call for Nominations
for
Steele Prize**

The Selection Committee for the Steele Prize requests nominations for consideration for the 20xx Award. The Steele Prize is awarded every year at the Joint Mathematical Meetings in three parts:

2. The Leroy P. Steele Prize for Lifetime Achievement;
3. The Leroy P. Steele Prize for Mathematical Exposition; and
4. The Leroy P. Steele Prize for Seminal Contribution to Research.

Nominations, with supporting information should be sent to (Secretary, mailing address)

The deadline for nominations is _____.

Note to the Chair

Committee chairs should be informed, at the beginning of each fiscal period, of the budget of their committees and cautioned to remain within the budget. Such items as travel reimbursement, accommodations, and meals for guests of any kind fall within these budgets.

Work done by committees on recurring problems may have value as precedent or work done may have historical interest. Because of this, the Council has requested that a central file system be maintained for the Society by the Secretary. Committees are reminded that a copy of every sheet of paper should be deposited (say once a year) in this central file. Confidential material should be noted, so that it can be handled in a confidential manner.

Authorization

The pertinent parts of the Steele will are attached to the Council minutes of August 26, 1969 and other places, including an attachment to the Council Minutes of January 21, 1976 titled "HALMOS PLAN." The initial terms of the award are spread through many sets of Council minutes and are no longer in force. The current specification is on pp.4-5 of the Council minutes of April 16, 1977.

14 August 1993 Council Minutes, Item 3.2.2: Steele Prizes were given three names.

06 January 1998 Council Minutes, Item 2.3: Starting in 1997, the prizes are awarded at the Annual Meetings. Therefore, the terms of the committee members were changed from a July-June period to 1 February to 31 January.

20 April 2013 Council Minutes, Item 4.6.1: Steele Prize for Lifetime Achievement and Mathematical Exposition are to remain active for three consecutive years.

January 2015 Council Minutes, Item 4.6.1: Steele Prize for Lifetime Achievement increased to \$10,000.

January 2015 Council Minutes, Item 4.6.2: Subject-area rotation for Seminal Contribution to Research Award is changed from the five-year cycle (1) Analysis; (2) Algebra; (3) Applied mathematics; (4) Geometry/Topology; (5) Logic (Alternating with Discrete Mathematics) to the current six-year cycle.

10/05/89; updated 10/90; 12/92; 3/94; 6/94; 8/94; 5/95; 10/95; 9/97; 8/09; 1/14 Note, Misc, winners, members

Past Prize Winners

A list of Steele Prize Winners from 1970 through 1992 is available here:

<http://www.ams.org/profession/prizes-awards/pabrowse?purl=steele-prize>

A list of Steele Prize for Lifetime Achievement Winners is available here:

<http://www.ams.org/profession/prizes-awards/pabrowse?purl=steele-prize?LA>

A list of Steele Prize for Mathematical Exposition Winners is available here:

<http://www.ams.org/profession/prizes-awards/pabrowse?purl=steele-prize?ME>

A list of Steele Prize for Seminal Contribution to Research Winners is available here:

<http://www.ams.org/profession/prizes-awards/pabrowse?purl=steele-prize?SCR>

Note: there was not a Summer Meeting in 1992 so these prizes were awarded in January 1993. Starting in 1997, the prizes were awarded at the January meetings.

Past Committees

A list of current and past committee members (from 1989 onwards) is available here:

<http://www.ams.org/about-us/governance/committees/steele-past.html>

AMS Website

<http://www.ams.org/profession/prizes-awards/ams-prizes/steele-prize>