LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Additions to Browder Biography in December 2018 *Notices*

To the Editors:

We write to correct the biographical sketch in "Felix Browder (1927–2016)" in Vol. 65, No. 11, of the *Notices*. The authors, in recounting "The Difficult Years," omit all mention of his career between his army service (ending 1955) and his appointment at the University of Chicago. The senior author of this letter was his colleague at Yale from 1956, and three of his first four graduate students, including the junior author, were his advisees there 1961–64.

Much credit for his (tenured) appointment at Yale in 1956 is due to G. A. Hedlund, Chair of the Department, and to A. Whitney Griswold, President of the University, who persisted in persuading members of the Yale Corporation of the merits of his appointment. While at Yale, Felix was very successful in research, in advising graduate students, and in promoting the status of the Department. He and the senior author convinced the Yale administration to introduce a prestigious postdoctoral program, the Gibbs Instructorships, that yielded immediate dividends in young mathematicians who have risen to distinction.

—*George B. Seligman*
—*Richard Beals*
Hamden, Connecticut

(Received December 20, 2018)

On "Looking at the Mathematical Literature" by Edward Dunne, *Notices*, February 2019

Dr. Dunne's article gives a much needed explanation of the inner workings of MathSciNet. He makes it clear that the only articles that are reviewed are those published in Mathematical Journals or mathematical book chapters that are peer reviewed. The database that MathSciNet uses is gleaned from the included articles. Thus, in the information on citations, there is another reason why the numbers in, say Google Scholar and MathSciNet don't match. A mathematics article that is cited in e.g. Physics Review Letters will not show up in the MathSciNet citations database but it will in that of Google Scholar. Similarly, mathematics published in a professional journal without mathematics in the title is not included in MathSciNet.

I am not advocating any changes in the policies of MathSciNet since it is an amazing, unique resource for mathematicians.

—*Nolan R. Wallach*
Professor Emeritus UCSD

(Received March 1, 2019)

We invite readers to submit letters to the editor at notices-letters@ams.org.

Regarding the new eligibility criteria for Simons Collaboration Grants

I read with great interest Dr Randrianantoanina's letter entitled "Regarding the new eligibility criteria for Simons Collaboration Grants" that appeared in the in the *Notices* of the AMS, Volume 66, Number 1. For the benefit of the readers of the *Notices*, I would like to share my own experience with the Simons Foundation, as it sheds some light on the current situation and raises some interesting questions.

On January 2018, just a few months after the new rules were implemented that exclude applicants from non-PhD granting departments, I applied for a Simons Collaboration Grant. As it turns out both the Office of Sponsored Programs here at East Carolina University and I missed this particular stipulation; my home department does not host a PhD program and therefore I was ineligible to apply. Nevertheless my application was processed by the Foundation and it was deemed successful as it was recommended for funding on May 24, 2018. (Award Number: 579144). It was a few months later that the mistake was caught when the contract letter arrived with all the stipulations clearly stated. (Actually the mistake was caught by a colleague of mine here at East Carolina University who was also awarded a grant.) Subsequently, my award was cancelled (and so was my colleague's award).
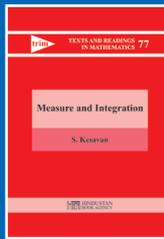
In my subsequent communications with the Simons Foundation, I inquired about the nature of the exclusion. Dr. Elizabeth Roy, Senior Program Manager for the Division of Mathematics at Simons Foundation, offered the following explanation regarding the new rules:

> "Our aim was not to be discriminatory, nor do we view primarily undergraduate-serving institutions as unworthy of consideration. Rather, it was an attempt to refine a program that has become increasingly popular and difficult to administer and review due to the large volume of applications we receive. Last year, we received 665 applications for a budget of 140 awards and this year, even with the eligibility change, we received almost 600."

Like Dr Randrianantoanina, I am grateful for all the impactful support that the Simons Foundation provides to the mathematical community and I fully understand that the Foundation can do as it pleases when it comes distribution of funds. However I cannot help but wonder what happened to the funds that were supposed to support my award. Were the funds distributed to a less competitive proposal that originally did not make the cut? Have we reached the point where the ease of administering a program has become more important than the quality of the applications it is supposed to fund?

—*Elias Katsoulis, Professor*
Department of Mathematics, East Carolina University
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