2000 Award for Distinguished Public Service

The 2000 Award for Distinguished Public Service was presented at the 106th Annual Meeting of the AMS in January 2000 in Washington, DC.

Proper recognition for mathematicians who contribute valuable service to the profession is a matter of great importance to the Society. The continued growth and health of the discipline depends in large part on those individuals who contribute their time to public service activities in support of mathematics. To provide encouragement and recognition for such service, the AMS Council, responding to a recommendation from the Committee on Science Policy, established the Award for Distinguished Public Service. The $4,000 award is presented usually every two years to a mathematician who has made a distinguished contribution to the mathematics profession through public service during the previous five years. Previous recipients of the award are: Kenneth M. Hoffman (1990), Harvey B. Keynes (1992), I. M. Singer (1993), D. J. Lewis (1995), and Kenneth C. Millett (1998).

The 2000 Award for Distinguished Public Service was presented to PAUL J. SALLY JR.

The award is made by the AMS Council acting on recommendation of a selection committee whose members at the time of this selection were: Frederick W. Gehring, Ronald L. Graham, Peter D. Lax, D. J. Lewis (chair), and Everett Pitcher.

The text that follows contains the committee's citation, a brief biographical sketch, and a response from the recipient upon receiving the award.

Citation

The 2000 American Mathematical Society Award for Distinguished Public Service is presented to Professor Paul J. Sally Jr. of the University of Chicago for the quality of his research, for his service to the Society as Trustee, but more importantly for his many efforts in improvement of mathematics education for the nation's youth and especially for members of minority and underrepresented groups and for his longitudinal mentoring of students, in particular the mathematics majors at Chicago.

Biographical Sketch

Paul J. Sally Jr.

Paul J. Sally Jr. graduated from Boston College in 1954. From 1954 to 1957 he taught junior high school and high school in the Boston area and did some consulting work. He began his graduate study in mathematics at Brandeis University in 1957. During his years of graduate study Sally continued to work in schools in the Boston area, and, in particular, he taught in a Summer Science Training Program for mathematically talented high school students in 1962 and 1963.

Sally received his Ph.D. from Brandeis in 1965. The same year, he joined the faculty at the University of Chicago, where he has remained ever since. He served as chairman of the department from 1977 to 1980. Along with publishing many research papers and editing several books, Sally has produced eighteen Ph.D. students in his area of research, that

is, harmonic analysis on semisimple groups over real and p-adic fields.

Sally began his involvement in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) in 1969 by running a mathematics competition and conducting classes for both students and teachers. In 1983 Sally was appointed the first director of the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project (UCSMP). He served in this post until 1987, at which point he became more involved in the staff development activities of UCSMP. In 1992 Sally founded Seminars for Elementary Specialists and Mathematics Educators (SESAME), a staff development program for elementary school teachers from CPS. Since its inception SESAME has involved more than 600 teachers from 125 Chicago public schools. In another enterprise begun in 1988, Sally has directed the University of Chicago Young Scholars Program (YSP) for mathematically talented seventh-through twelfth-graders. The YSP program runs for the month of July and twelve Saturdays during the academic year. Approximately 150 students from CPS and suburban schools participate each year.

Response

I am honored to be chosen for the AMS Award for Distinguished Public Service, and as soon as I figure out what "longitudinal mentoring" means, I'll feel really good. Whatever success I have had in mathematics and in various educational ventures has been due in large part to my having exceptional colleagues with whom I could work. It has been my good fortune to be in a mathematics department in which there is a strong emphasis on research and a true appreciation of education in mathematics. So, to my colleagues, friends, and neighbors, I say "Thanks!"