

# MAA Prizes Presented in Washington, DC

The Mathematical Association of America (MAA) presented a number of prizes during the Joint Mathematics Meetings in Washington, DC, in January 2000.

## **Gung-Hu Award for Distinguished Service to Mathematics**

The Yueh-Gin Gung and Dr. Charles Y. Hu Award for Distinguished Service to Mathematics is the most prestigious award made by the MAA. This award, first given in 1990, is the successor to the Award for Distinguished Service to Mathematics, awarded since 1962, and has been made possible by the late Dr. Charles Y. Hu and his wife, Yueh-Gin Gung. Hu was not a mathematician but a retired professor of geology at the University of Maryland. He had such strong feelings about the basic nature of mathematics and its importance in all human endeavors that he felt impelled to contribute generously to the discipline of mathematics.

The 2000 Gung-Hu Award was presented to PAUL R. HALMOS. The citation states in part: "No mathematician alive today has influenced American mathematics more than Paul Halmos. He has written important research papers in operator theory, ergodic theory, and logic. He has edited major journals and served on many committees for the AMS and MAA. He has written textbooks and expository articles. His lectures always give us new insights."

Halmos came to the United States from Hungary as a teenager. He graduated from the University of Illinois in 1934 and received his Ph.D. there in 1938, working with J. L. Doob. Halmos has held faculty and visiting positions in a number of institu-

tions around the world and is currently professor emeritus of mathematics at Santa Clara University. He is especially well known for the clarity of his mathematical exposition, which earned him the MAA Chauvenet Prize, the MAA Pólya Prize, and two MAA Lester R. Ford Awards; the AMS has awarded him the Steele Prize for mathematical exposition.

The citation concludes: "With his extraordinary energy and exceptional talent for exposition, Paul Halmos has been an invaluable asset to the mathematical community."

## **Haimo Awards for Distinguished Teaching**

The Deborah and Franklin Tepper Haimo Awards for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics recognize teachers who have been widely recognized as extraordinarily successful and whose teaching effectiveness has been shown to have had influence beyond their own institutions. Deborah Tepper Haimo was president of the MAA during 1991-92.

There are three recipients of the 2000 Haimo Award. ARTHUR T. BENJAMIN was cited for "widespread recognition as a truly extraordinary teacher, his passionate dedication to mathematics and its pedagogy, and his nationwide reputation as one of the most successful ambassadors for mathematics." Benjamin is known as a scintillating lecturer as well as a magician and "lightning mental calculator." Benjamin is an associate professor of mathematics at Harvey Mudd College.

The citation for DONALD S. PASSMAN calls him "a mathematician of exceptional intelligence, keen insight, extraordinary mathematical ability, and keen sensitivity, who has a deep and natural

understanding of the learning process in mathematics. He brings all these attributes to bear on both his teaching and research." The author of more than 140 research publications and 5 books, Passman is the Richard Brauer Professor of Mathematics at the University of Wisconsin.

According to the citation for GARY W. TOWSLEY, "[t]he hallmarks that set [him] apart from other excellent teachers are versatility, creativity across many disciplines, and personal qualities of integrity, helpfulness, and caring." Truly a "Renaissance man", Towsley has taught a wide range of mathematics courses as well as a medieval studies course for English majors, history and philosophy of science as an interdisciplinary offering, and "Roots of 20th Century Science" for the college honors program. Towsley is the Lockhart Professor of Mathematics at the State University of New York in Geneseo.

### Beckenbach Book Prize

The Beckenbach Book Prize is awarded for distinguished, innovative books published by the MAA. DAVID M. BRESSOUD of Macalester College has received the prize for his book *Proofs and Confirmations, the Story of the Alternating Sign Matrix Conjecture* (MAA Spectrum Series, jointly published with Cambridge University Press, 1999).

The prize citation states: "This book has several outstanding features. First and foremost, it carefully presents a significant chapter of mathematics. Moreover, it demonstrates how mathematics is actually created. It brings out the interplay among several seemingly unrelated branches, and also discusses unsolved problems ... Bressoud's book is a model of how a mathematics book should be written."

### Chauvenet Prize

The Chauvenet Prize for expository writing is given for an outstanding expository article on a mathematical topic by a member of the MAA. DON B. ZAGIER of the Max-Planck-Institut für Mathematik has received the prize for his paper "Newman's short proof of the prime number theorem", which appeared in the *American Mathematical Monthly* **104** (1997).

The article, which Zagier dedicated to the prime number theorem on the occasion of its 100th birthday, gives a completely self-contained yet concise analytic proof of the theorem. The prize citation says that the article "is a masterpiece of excellent mathematical exposition and is accessible to anyone with a minimum background in complex analysis."

### Certificates of Meritorious Service

Certificates of Meritorious Service are presented for service to the MAA at the national level or for service to an MAA section. Those recognized for

2000 are: STANLEY ELIASON of University of Oklahoma (Oklahoma-Arkansas Section); MARIO MARTELLI of California State University at Fullerton (Southern California Section); SISTER M. STEPHANIE SLOYAN, emerita of Georgian Court College (New Jersey Section); KATHLEEN TAYLOR of Duquesne University (Allegheny Mountain Section); and ELIZABETH J. TELES of Montgomery College and the National Science Foundation (Maryland-District of Columbia-Virginia Section).

—From MAA prize announcements