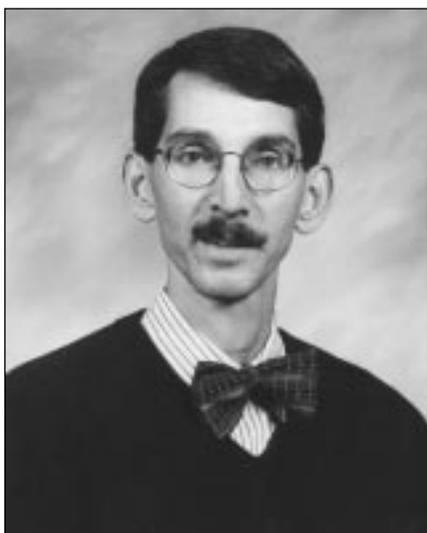


Harold Boas Appointed *Notices* Editor



Harold P. Boas

Harold P. Boas of Texas A&M University will begin a three-year term as editor of the *Notices*, starting with the January 2001 issue. He succeeds Anthony W. Knapp, who has been editor since January 1998.

Born in 1954 in Evanston, Illinois, Harold Boas is the son of Mary L. Boas and the late Ralph P. Boas. Ralph Boas, who was on the faculty of Northwestern University, was well known in the mathematical commu-

nity as an exceptionally cultured and learned person who did important research in analysis, wrote about mathematics with great clarity and elegance, and was versed in several languages. He served as editor of *Mathematical Reviews* for five years and was president of the Mathematical Association of America (MAA). Mary Boas, a physicist now retired from DePaul University, is, at the age of eighty-three, working on a new edition of her book *Mathematical Methods in the Physical Sciences*.

In this way Harold Boas has an inheritance in mathematics and in writing from both parents. This inheritance has taken some concrete forms. At the time of his death in 1992 Ralph Boas was at work on a new edition, with a new chapter, of his book *A Primer of Real Functions*. Published in the MAA's Carus Monographs series, this book has come to be seen as a model of clear exposition. Harold Boas took on the task of finishing the new chapter and preparing the new edition, and it

was published in 1996. Although he says he does not share his father's gift for languages, some of it must have rubbed off, for Harold Boas has translated over eighty mathematics papers and one book from Russian into English.

Harold Boas received his A.B. and S.M. degrees in applied mathematics from Harvard University in 1976 and his Ph.D. in mathematics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1980, under the direction of Norberto Kerzman. Boas was a J. F. Ritt Assistant Professor at Columbia University from 1980 to 1984, when he moved to Texas A&M University. He has been a visitor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and at the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute in Berkeley. In 1994 he received the Outstanding Teaching Award from the Department of Mathematics at Texas A&M, and in 1996 he received the Faculty Distinguished Achievement Award in Research from the university's Association of Former Students.

Boas works in several complex variables, and his research is mainly concerned with properties of the $\bar{\partial}$ -Neumann problem and related operators. His work combines methods from partial differential equations, differential geometry, pluripotential theory, and complex analysis. In 1995 Boas and his collaborator, Emil J. Straube, who is also on the faculty of Texas A&M, received the 1995 Stefan Bergman Prize. According to the citation for the \$20,000 prize they were honored for "spectacular progress in the study of global regularity of the Bergman projection and of the $\bar{\partial}$ -Neumann problem."

During 1998 and 1999 Boas served as the book reviews editor for the *American Mathematical*

Monthly, and since 1999 he has been on the editorial board of the Carus Monographs series. From 1987 to 1991 he was a member of the scientific board overseeing the translation into English of the *Soviet Encyclopedia of Mathematics*. He also served for four years as the managing editor of the Electronic Several Complex Variables Library, which is now a part of the mathematics archive at Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Boas says that he has always been interested in reading and writing, as well as in mathematics. In fact, his kindergarten teacher may have been responsible for his having become a mathematician. His parents taught him to read before he started school, but the teacher discouraged him from reading because she believed reading was done only in the first grade, not in kindergarten. She had no such prejudices about mathematics, though, so Boas got a year ahead in arithmetic and stayed a year ahead in mathematics throughout elementary school. Says Boas, "Maybe that's why I became a mathematician rather than a specialist in the novels of Jane Austen."

"I love mathematics, and I also love good writing," Boas notes. Therefore, becoming editor of the *Notices* "is a great opportunity to combine those two interests." He also believes the work is an important service to the mathematical community. "Like my father, I believe it is important for mathematicians to be good citizens and do something besides sitting behind a closed door and thinking deep thoughts and proving theorems," he remarks.

Boas wrote an article for the *Notices* called "The Football Player and the Infinite Series", which appeared in the December 1997 issue. "I got more feedback from that article than from any of my hardcore research papers," he observes. "I think it's really a very rewarding endeavor to write an expository article of the sort the *Notices* publishes now." With a circulation of 30,000, the *Notices* is probably the world's most widely read general interest publication for mathematicians. "Editing the *Notices* is an opportunity to have a very broad impact on thousands of people," Boas says. "So in that sense it's a very exciting opportunity to do what science is all about, which is communicating ideas to people."

—Allyn Jackson

Those interested in writing for the Notices should consult the "Information for Notices Authors" in the Reference section of the June/July 2000 issue, pages 686–687. Up-to-date information about how to contact the Notices editor and staff is in the Reference section of the current issue.

—A. J.