

MAA Awards Presented in Baltimore

The Mathematical Association of America (MAA) presented several awards at the Joint Mathematics Meetings in Baltimore in January 2003.

Chauvenet Prize

The Chauvenet Prize, first awarded to Gilbert Bliss in 1925, is presented for an outstanding expository article on a mathematical topic by a member of the MAA. The prize is named in honor of William Chauvenet (1820–70), who was a professor of mathematics at the U.S. Naval Academy.

The 2003 Chauvenet Prize was awarded to THOMAS C. HALES of the University of Pittsburgh for his article “Cannonballs and Honeycombs”, *Notices Amer. Math. Soc.* **47** (2000), 440–9.

The prize citation states: “The classical sphere packing conjecture, also known as the Kepler Conjecture, asserts that the natural cannonball arrangement gives the maximum density packing of the Euclidean 3-dimensional space with congruent solid balls. The problem evaded solution for almost 400 years, until Thomas C. Hales, the author of this article, gave a difficult, computer-aided, yet ingenious proof. Another old problem tackled by Hales and described in the article, the Honeycomb Conjecture, is of equally appealing geometric character: Any partition of the plane into regions of equal area has perimeter at least that of the regular hexagonal honeycomb tiling.

“‘Cannonballs and Honeycombs’ is an extremely worthy recipient of the Chauvenet Prize. It has humor, history, talks about real people, presents significant mathematics, and has handholds throughout the article so you can keep finding

good things even if you choose not to follow all the details as you go. The writing is delightful. It connects us to famous scientists of the past and to nature, it talks about the resolution of a centuries-old conjecture, it points out philosophical issues about mathematics and rigor, and it describes intriguing, understandable open questions that have an interesting history, thereby situating us in the flow of history and the challenges of the future.”

Haimo Award

The Deborah and Franklin Tepper Haimo Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics, established in 1991, honors college or university teachers who have been widely recognized as extraordinarily successful and whose teaching effectiveness has had influence beyond their own institutions.

The 2003 Haimo Award was presented to JUDITH V. GRABINER of Pitzer College, RANJAN ROY of Beloit College, and PAUL ZEITZ of the University of San Francisco.

Grabiner was honored “[f]or her extraordinary scholarship in the history of mathematics, her remarkable teaching, and her compelling exposition to every audience.” The award citation states: “Professor Grabiner enjoys an international reputation as a scholar of the history of mathematics. Her teaching career spans 35 years, with most of that at California State University, Dominguez Hills and (since 1985) Pitzer College. She is universally praised for the depth and range of her knowledge of mathematical history and is famous for giving talks that are knowledgeable, witty, charming, and

beautifully organized and that hold the interest of both the trained mathematician and the 'I hate math' undergraduate. She is a sought-after speaker." She has won three Allendoerfer Awards and two Ford Awards for outstanding writing.

The citation for Roy reads in part: "Professor Roy teaches mathematics as a body of ideas of great depth and beauty, and as a way of thinking which can improve the lives of all who study it. He has read systematically the original works of Newton, Euler, Gauss, Jacobi, and Ramanujan, and uses his deep familiarity with their creative methods to show students that mathematics can be lived. He has an uncanny ability to find ways to connect mathematics to individual students' lives. He teaches, using mathematics as his example, that the key to successful thinking in any discipline is to master a few important ideas deeply and reason from those ideas to solve new problems. 'Ranjan is the kind of teacher who changes your life,' say many students. Professor Roy was Beloit College's Teacher of the Year in 1986 and again in 2000. Professor Roy is also a creative mathematician and a nationally-known expositor of mathematics."

The citation for Zeitz reads in part: "Paul Zeitz's passion for problem solving permeates his teaching. 'Charismatic' is the best descriptor of his teaching style. A teacher at the University of San Francisco since completing his Ph.D. at U.C. Berkeley in 1992, he has been teaching and participating in mathematical contests since he was captain of the Math Team at Stuyvesant High School. In 1974 he took first place in the USAMO (USA Mathematical Olympiad) and was a member of the first U.S. team to compete in the IMO (International Mathematical Olympiad). Although he did not major in mathematics at Harvard, Zeitz taught high school mathematics for six years after graduation. This experience, as well as his talent and enthusiasm for mathematical competitions, led him to be recruited to write problems for the Committee on the American Mathematics Competitions."

Gung and Hu Award

The Yueh-Gin Gung and Dr. Charles Y. Hu Award for Distinguished Service to Mathematics is the most prestigious award made by the MAA. The 2003 award was presented to CLARENCE STEPHENS of the State University of New York, Potsdam.

Stephens, born in 1917, received his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in 1943, becoming the ninth African American to receive a Ph.D. in mathematics in the U.S. From 1969 until his retirement in 1987, he was chair of the Department of Mathematics at the State University of New York at Potsdam. Stephens is honored "for his role in achieving the 'Potsdam Miracle' in the production of undergraduate mathematics majors at SUNY Potsdam in the 1980's, which led to a model for

creating a welcoming atmosphere for undergraduate mathematics majors at many other institutions." He had already received accolades for a long and distinguished career in undergraduate mathematics education by the time he came to SUNY Potsdam in 1969.

The citation states: "Though SUNY Potsdam is a relatively small regional state college with a total enrollment of just over 4,000 students during Stephens' time there, in 1985 the college "graduated" 184 mathematics majors, the third largest number of any institution in the U.S. that year (exceeded only by two University of California campuses). This represented about a quarter of the degrees given by SUNY Potsdam that year, and over 40 percent of the institution's honor students were mathematics majors. The 'Potsdam Miracle' was not in any sense accomplished by lowering standards, but rather by raising the standards for teaching the students and providing a supportive environment for them....For his pioneering accomplishments in undergraduate mathematics education, and the provision of a national model for institutions that wish to replicate the 'Potsdam Miracle', the MAA Gung-Hu Award Committee is pleased to recommend Clarence Stephens for this award."

Certificates of Meritorious Service

Each year the MAA presents Certificates of Meritorious Service for service at the national level or for service to a section of the MAA. Those honored in 2003 are: KARIN CHESS of Owensboro Community College, Kentucky Section; LESTER H. LANGE of San Jose State University, Northern California Section; LUISE-CHARLOTTE KAPPE of the State University of New York at Binghamton, Seaway Section; LARRY J. MORLEY of Western Illinois University, Illinois Section; ALVIN R. TINSLEY of Central Missouri State University, Missouri Section; and FREDRIC TUFTE of the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, Wisconsin Section.