Inside the AMS

Ellen Maycock Joins AMS Executive Staff

Ellen Maycock, Johnson Family University Professor and professor of mathematics at DePauw University, has been appointed associate executive director of the American Mathematical Society, starting in September 2005. She succeeds James W. Maxwell, who has entered partial retirement and continues to work on selected projects part-time for the Society.

In hiring Maycock, the AMS brings on board a person with experience in all aspects of the mathematics profession: research, teaching, scholarship, and service. This experience will be crucial as Maycock oversees a large portfolio of AMS programs intended to serve members, support the profession, encourage young people in mathematics, and improve the public image of the field. "I feel very stimulated by the idea of learning new things [while working at the AMS]," Maycock said. "It's very exciting to think about the opportunities ahead."

Ellen Maycock

Maycock received her bachelor's degree in mathematics and economics in 1972 from Wellesley College. She earned her Ph.D. in mathematics in 1986 at Purdue University, with a dissertation on operator algebras written under the direction of Jerome Kaminker. After two years of teaching at Wellesley College, she joined the faculty at DePauw University and became a full professor there in 2001. In recognition of her outstanding record of sustained excellence in teaching, service, and professional accomplishment, DePauw University appointed Maycock as a University Professor for 2003–2007.

Maycock is perhaps best known for her development of innovative approaches to teaching abstract algebra. She created a course that used a software package called Exploring Small Groups to help students grasp algebraic concepts. "I used the old idea that most students learn by seeing concrete examples and generalizing to abstractions," she explained. "Technology gives students an easy way to generate a lot of examples, and then they can start to recognize patterns." She has also used computer technology in teaching analysis as well as Euclidean and non-Euclidean geometry. "It is hard at the undergraduate level for students to have any sense of what creative mathematics is about," she noted. "So using computer software in this way is very stimulating for them."

Maycock wrote *Laboratory Experiences in Group Theory*, which was published in 1996 by the Mathematical Association of America (MAA) in its series Classroom Resource Materials. She is also coeditor, with Allen Hibbard, of *Innovations in Teaching Abstract Algebra*, a collection of essays published in the MAA Notes series in 2002. Maycock has lectured widely on the use of technology in teaching undergraduate mathematics and has given several workshops and minicourses on the subject. She coorganized a national-level conference, supported by the National Science Foundation, that brought together mathematics faculty to explore the use of technology in teaching college-level algebra and geometry. She has also worked on ways to use writing in the teaching of mathematics, and she served for two years as the director of the "Writing Across the Curriculum" program at DePauw.

One reason for Maycock's interest in joining the AMS staff is her belief that the mathematics profession is changing in fundamental ways. She noted that there is a "new atmosphere" in the profession, in which all mathematicians are expected to take on combined responsibilities in scholarship and teaching. "The old myth of mathematicians doing research and putting minimal effort into teaching cannot hold anymore," she commented. "We cannot be one-dimensional as professionals....We are all teacher-scholars." The balance between these two roles varies from

institution to institution and also evolves over the course of a career in mathematics. "[It] is very challenging to do both simultaneously and well," Maycock commented. "The Society needs to continue to find ways to support young mathematicians in these dual roles." Another issue she believes needs attention at the national level is encouraging underrepresented groups in mathematics.

"We're all sad to see Jim Maxwell step down, but eagerly awaiting Ellen's arrival," said AMS executive director John H. Ewing. "She brings valuable experience to the Society and fresh ideas. And she will forcefully remind us that the AMS represents all mathematicians, from the largest universities to the smallest colleges. This is a great opportunity for us."

In her new position Maycock oversees the meetings, public awareness, and membership departments of the AMS. In addition to ensuring a smooth transition for Maycock, Jim Maxwell will continue to manage the Annual Survey and will assist with other AMS projects. Maycock noted the professionalism and competence of the AMS staff and said she looks forward to working in such a positive environment. "It is very exciting to think about being involved at the national level," she remarked. "The profession is changing rapidly, and there are new pressures on all of us. I have always been interested in not only the subject of mathematics but also the people in mathematics: mathematicians. I feel I might have a chance of making a difference for them."

—Allyn Jackson

AMS Advocates Research Funding

The AMS joined other professional societies and educational institutions in participating in the 10th Annual Science-Engineering-Technology Congressional Visits Day (CVD) on May 10–11, 2005. CVD is a two-day annual event that brings diverse representatives of the scientific community to Washington to meet with legislators to discuss the importance of federally funded research to our nation.

Some 200–300 scientists, engineers, and business leaders converged on Washington DC to call on Congress to support an increased and balanced federal investment in scientific research. Samuel M. Rankin III, associate executive director of the AMS and the director of its Washington office, along with William Fitzgibbon of the University of Houston and Karen Parshall of the University of Virginia, met with congressional staff as part of this effort.

To learn more about Congressional Visits Day and how it helps to support the scientific enterprise, please visit the CVD website, `http://www.aas.org/policy/cvd/`.

—AMS Washington office

Deaths of AMS Members

PAUL CIVIN, professor emeritus, from Portland, OR, died on April 22, 2005. Born on April 29, 1919, he was a member of the Society for 65 years.

JACK T. KENT, retired, Texas A&M University, died in May 1999. Born on September 26, 1908, he was a member of the Society for 49 years.

ROBERT H. OEHMKE, professor, University of Iowa, died on October 10, 2003. Born on August 6, 1927, he was a member of the Society for 50 years.

JAMES F. PORTER, professor, from Hattiesburg, MS, died on January 25, 2005. Born on August 21, 1935, he was a member of the Society for 40 years.

RAYMOND M. REDHEFFER, of the University of California, Los Angeles, died on May 13, 2005. Born on April 17, 1921, he was a member of the Society for 58 years.

WILLIAM SALKIND, retired, from Brooklyn, NY, died on June 10, 2005. Born on November 6, 1913, he was a member of the Society for 59 years.

NATHAN SENTNER, from Brooklyn, NY, died on October 17, 2004. Born on February 20, 1926, he was a member of the Society for 15 years.

THOMAS J. WILLMORE, professor emeritus, University of Durham, England, died on February 20, 2005. Born on April 16, 1919, he was a member of the Society for 56 years.