

Tao Awarded Nemmers Prize

Northwestern University has announced that **TERENCE CHI-SHEN TAO** has received the 2010 Frederic Esser Nemmers Prize in Mathematics, believed to be one of the largest monetary awards in mathematics in the United States, for outstanding achievements in the discipline. Awarded to scholars who made major contributions to new knowledge or to the development of significant new modes of analysis, the prize carries a US\$175,000 stipend.

Tao, a professor of mathematics at University of California, Los Angeles, was honored “for mathematics of astonishing breadth, depth and originality”. In connection with the award, Tao will deliver public lectures and participate in other scholarly activities at Northwestern during the 2010–2011 and 2011–2012 academic years.

Tao, who has been dubbed the “Mozart of Math”, was born in Adelaide, Australia, in 1975. He started to learn calculus when he was seven years old. At the age of eight he scored a 760 on the mathematics section of the SAT. He competed in his first International Mathematical Olympiad in 1986 at the age of ten. Over three years he won a bronze, a silver, and a gold medal; he remains the youngest gold medalist, at thirteen, in the history of the competition. He earned his Ph.D. at the age of twenty from Princeton University under the direction of Elias Stein. He joined UCLA that year and was promoted to full professor at age twenty-four. He is hailed for unraveling extraordinarily complicated mathematical problems and is well known for a proof, in collaboration with British mathematician Ben J. Green, of the existence of arbitrarily long arithmetic progressions of prime numbers (the Green-Tao theorem).

Tao received a MacArthur Fellowship (nicknamed the “genius award”) in 2006. In that same year he was awarded the Fields Medal for his contributions to partial differential equations, combinatorics, harmonic analysis, and additive number theory. The Fields Medal citation referred to him as “a supreme problem-solver whose spectacular work has had an impact across several mathematical areas...who combines sheer technical power and other-worldly ingenuity for hitting upon new ideas”.

He has also held Sloan Foundation (1999–2001) and Packard (1999–2006) fellowships and received

numerous other awards, including the Salem Prize (2000), the Bôcher Prize (2002), the Clay Research Award of the Clay Mathematics Institute (2003), the SASTRA Ramanujan Prize (2006), the Ostrowski Prize (2007), the Waterman Award (2008), and the King Faisal Prize (cowinner, 2010). He is a Fellow of the Royal Society, the Australian Academy of Sciences (corresponding member), the U.S. National Academy of Sciences (foreign member), and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Tao’s research interests include harmonic analysis, partial differential equations, combinatorics, and number theory. He is an associate editor of the *American Journal of Mathematics* (2002–) and of *Dynamics of Partial Differential Equations* (2003–) and an editor of the *Journal of the American Mathematical Society* (2005–2010) and of *Analysis & PDE* (2007–).

Northwestern University also announced that Elhanan Helpman, Galen L. Stone Professor of International Trade at Harvard University, has been awarded the ninth Erwin Plein Nemmers Prize in Economics, which also carries a US\$175,000 stipend.

The Nemmers Prizes are made possible through bequests from the late Erwin E. Nemmers, a former member of the Northwestern University faculty, and his brother, the late Frederic E. Nemmers, both of Milwaukee. The prizes are awarded every other year. Previous recipients in mathematics are Yuri I. Manin (1994), Joseph B. Keller (1996), John H. Conway (1998), Edward Witten (2000), Yakov G. Sinai (2002), Mikhael Gromov (2004), Robert P. Langlands (2006), and Simon Donaldson (2008).

Consistent with the terms of the Nemmers bequests, the Erwin Plein Nemmers Prize in Economics (named in honor of the Nemmers’ father) and the Frederic Esser Nemmers Prize in Mathematics (named by Erwin in honor of his brother) are designed to recognize “work of lasting significance” in the respective disciplines.

—Elaine L. Kehoe



Terence Tao

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