Preface

Gender minorities continue to be underrepresented in the mathematical sciences, and this underrepresentation only becomes more critical as we move further up the academic ladder. For example, women make up 19% of all tenure-track positions in the U.S. [1], while fewer than 9% percent of all math journal editorial positions are held by women [2]. Factors for this underrepresentation are nuanced. They include gender-science stereotypes regarding mathematical and scientific abilities [3,4] and biases which push them out of STEM careers [5,6]. These factors are further exacerbated for those who are also marginalized based on ethnic and racial identities. Unsurprisingly, these challenges make the attainment of tenure and leadership roles arduous. Yet, some gender minority mathematicians are aspiring and inspiring in tenured and leadership roles in academic mathematics.

Each person’s journey to tenure and leadership will not be the same, and there is beauty that lies within the uniqueness of the journeys. The pursuit of tenure and leadership is not for the faint of heart. There may be obstacles and dreams deferred, but there will also be growth, maturity, finding your own way, networks, collaborations, and happiness. Successes, traumas, triumphs, joys, pains, and lessons learned are not often shared to reach back, to pull others forward, to give guidance, to provide different paths to desired goals and dreams in academics, and to encourage others to take giant steps despite life or systemic circumstances.

This book contributes personal narratives of women and gender minority mathematicians who tell us what it took for them to succeed as an academic and what they have learned along their journeys that could help those in the academic pipeline be better prepared to succeed. The stories of those who earn tenure and fill leadership positions in the mathematical sciences are as unique as the mathematics they do. Selecting chapter contributors with varying academic and leadership experiences allowed us, as underrepresented women mathematicians, to see ourselves reflected in their stories; stories which have been unwritten for far too long.

It is our hope that as you aspire to tenure and leadership in academic mathematics, that you will be inspired and that your own journeys will inspire others. We urge you to pursue your dreams, apply for the job, be happy both in your life and career. You deserve all good things, and academic mathematics needs you.

Bibliography


