

# Contents

Preface to the English Edition	vii
To the reader	vii
Acknowledgements	vii
Family Background	1
The tale of career choice	1
Father's side of the family	1
Mother and her family	3
Father and professor	7
Exceptional Talent Emerges	9
The first years of life	9
Wunderkind	11
Student of mathematics	13
Mathematical breakthrough	16
Mathematical Renown Secured	21
Doctor and academic teacher	21
Marriage	22
Active researcher	26
Masterwork	27
To America and Back Again	31
First impressions at Harvard University	31
Fields Medal	32
Research in a cultural milieu	35
Return to Finland	37
War Years in Finland	41
André Weil	41
The Winter War	42
The Continuation War	44
Leaving Finland	47
In Sweden and Switzerland	51
Waiting in Sweden	51
Professor at the University of Zürich	54
Visiting the Copenhagen Congress	57
Professorship at Harvard University	59
To the United States permanently	59

Collaboration with Arne Beurling	61
Invitation to Sweden	62
International Congress of Mathematicians at Harvard	64
Social talent	65
Educator	67
The Legacy of Riemann and Teichmüller	71
The idol Bernhard Riemann	71
Classification of open Riemann surfaces	72
Clearing up Teichmüller's work	73
Teichmüller spaces	75
An interlude concerning Riemann surfaces	76
The boundary function of quasiconformal mapping	76
Complex analysis colloquium in Helsinki	77
Rapid development of the theory of quasiconformal mappings	78
Quasiconformal mappings come to Finland	80
New Research and Return to the Old	83
The Beltrami differential equation	83
Quasicircles and literature	84
Contacts with Soviet mathematicians	85
Kleinian groups	86
Seminar in Romania	88
Monograph on conformal invariants	88
Complex analysis at the University of Maryland	89
Distinctions	91
Wihuri International Prize	91
Summer place in Maine	91
International Congress in the native city	93
Wolf Prize	96
Honorary president of ICM-86	98
Other honors	100
Additions to the Portrait	103
Research work ends	103
Direction indicator for complex analysis	105
Cultural pursuits	106
Final years	107
Epilogue in Finland	111
Fields Medal to Helsinki	111
Lars' and Erna's ashes to the Ahlfors family grave	111
Lars Ahlfors Centennial Celebration	113
Sources	119
Books and journals	119
Archives	121
Private sources	121
Index	123