Community Updates

2019 Trjitzinsky Awards

The AMS has made awards to eight undergraduate students through the Waldemar J. Trjitzinsky Memorial Fund. The fund is made possible by a bequest from the estate of Waldemar J., Barbara G., and Juliette Trjitzinsky. The will of Barbara Trjitzinsky stipulates that the income from the bequest should be used to establish a fund in honor of the memory of her husband to assist needy students in mathematics.

For the 2019 awards, the AMS chose eight geographically distributed schools to receive one-time awards of US$3,000 each. The mathematics departments at those schools then chose students to receive the funds to assist them in pursuit of careers in mathematics. The schools are selected in a random drawing from the pool of AMS institutional members.

Waldemar J. Trjitzinsky was born in Russia in 1901 and received his doctorate from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1926. He taught at a number of institutions before taking a position at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, where he remained for the rest of his professional life. He showed particular concern for students of mathematics and in some cases made personal efforts to ensure that financial considerations would not hinder their studies. Trjitzinsky was the author of about sixty mathematics papers, primarily on quasi-analytic functions and partial differential equations. A member of the AMS for forty-six years, he died in 1973.

Following are the names of the selected schools for 2019, the names of the students receiving the awards, and brief biographical sketches of the students.

University of Notre Dame: Yuxin Lin, originally from Guangzhou, China, is a third-year honors mathematics student at the University of Notre Dame. Yuxin has a deep appreciation for mathematics and has been involved with a number of mathematical extracurriculars even as a high school student. Before coming to Notre Dame, she participated in the Ross Mathematics Program and in 2018 returned as a junior counselor. She has also been active with the Notre Dame Putnam team, earning a score of 40 points in the 2018 exam. Her main mathematical interest has been in number theory, in which she has been active, with directed readings with Andrei Jorza, and in the summer of 2019, she participated in the University of Chicago REU. Yuxin has also been an active teaching assistant in Notre Dame’s “proofs” help room for math students who are taking proof-based courses. A quote from one of her professors is: “She is very mature mathematically as evidenced in her writing, thinking, and performance in the math classes. Her mathematical sophistication is well above her peers. She is very tenacious and focused on her clearly formulated goals.”

University of Idaho: Eli Smith, from Boise, Idaho, will be the first in his family to graduate college. From a young age, he was surrounded by mental illness, constantly facing obstacles at home. Despite these hardships, Eli is thankful for his beginnings and from them has learned that there are so many factors in the world that are out of our control, from our neurochemistry to our everyday behaviors. This perspective has opened his heart to empathy for behaviors resulting from mental illness, and he was drawn to math when he realized that he could model aspects of the human brain. He began research on the brain at the University of Idaho, and he is certain that some combination of mathematics and the mind will be in his future. In school, he tutors algebra through Calculus 2, and he takes part in PME. Eli absolutely loves learning and teaching math! This was reaffirmed when the faculty at the University of Idaho awarded him the Eugene and Osa Taylor scholarship in his junior and senior years. Eli states that he is beyond thankful for this scholarship and all of the other opportunities the University of Idaho has provided him.

Baylor University: Stephen Blake Allan is a senior studying mathematics and physics at Baylor University. After a start toward engineering, he transitioned into mathematics upon realizing that his interests had a more
abstract character. He is also an active member of Baylor’s Honors Residential College and has invested in student development and tutoring programs across campus. His particular interests lie in bridging rigorous and intuitive understandings of mathematical and physical phenomena, which attracts him to areas in mathematical physics and spectral theory. Blake is also indebted to the careful instruction and mentorship of the faculty at Baylor, particularly Fritz Gesztesy and Lance Littlejohn, for his introduction into professional mathematics. Due to his passion for both the art of research and the craft of teaching, Blake hopes to pursue graduate study and eventually a professorship in mathematics.

Texas Tech University: Claudia Munoz is a senior from Wichita Falls, Texas. She is majoring in mathematics and minoring in both English and Russian. She found her love for math as a young girl, being very intrigued by the beauty of numbers. At the age of six, Claudia learned how to play chess and soon became a national and international chess champion. Throughout her chess career, Claudia has represented the United States in eight different countries, in top-caliber tournaments such as the World Junior Chess Championship. Her unified love for math and chess encouraged her to choose Texas Tech University as her home university. At Texas Tech, she has had the opportunity to work with great professors who have molded and guided her into becoming the mathematician she aspires to be. She is also on the Texas Tech chess team and president of the Knight Raiders Chess Club. Claudia recently participated in the Math in Moscow program, where she was able to grow her understanding of math. In the future, Claudia desires to open her own math and chess school and wants to be a part of teaching the next generation of mathematicians.

Florida International University: Juan Linares Cabrera, a senior in mathematics, was born (1994) and raised in Cuba. He moved to the United States following his mother, father, and brother five years ago. As a high school student in Cuba, Juan distinguished himself with his proficiency in mathematics. He was placed very high in the high school mathematics national team there, but for lack of money to cover the travel expenses, he never competed in an International Mathematical Olympiad. Juan’s parents are well educated and hold bachelor’s degrees in literature and economics, but, unfortunately, their degrees were not validated in the United States, and neither of them could practice their profession here. Like many new immigrants, Juan’s parents have modest financial means, but their children’s education is a top priority for them. Juan is considered a rising star among the math majors at Florida International. He is also pursuing a minor in computer science. Juan is a top student in challenging classes such as point set topology, advanced calculus, and algebraic structures. He currently has a 3.9 GPA and has made the dean’s list every semester at Florida International. Juan plans to attend a graduate school to study machine learning and cryptography as well, combining his love for mathematics and computers.

Wellesley College: Amy (Qing Hai) Li is a senior math major at Wellesley College. She took IB Math in high school but wasn’t interested in calculus until her AP Physics teacher showed her how those mathematical tools helped make sense of the world around her. At Wellesley, Amy continued to take math classes as a requirement for the physics major but didn’t feel that she was a “math person.” However, she was hooked by the proofs in her linear algebra class. Here was a game where, once the rules and assumptions were fixed, one could be sure of their conclusions! Amy enjoyed her analysis and algebra classes so much that she switched to the math major. She has done research in physics, applied analysis, and algebraic geometry. Amy is passionate about math research and communication and can’t wait to work on her senior thesis in topology.

Bucknell University: Jordan Kovacs, a senior at Bucknell University, will be graduating with a BS in mathematics with a statistics concentration and a minor in Italian studies. Ever since he was a child, he has loved the field of mathematics, and he has found comfort in applied fields of statistics. In Jordan’s first summers at Bucknell University, he participated in the STEM Scholars Research Program, where he first studied spatial health care accessibility for people in rural Colorado and, second, studied the factors of the spread of the Zika virus via sensitivity analysis. While this research experience was unique and interesting, Jordan is studying to become an actuary. He had an actuarial internship this summer with Nationwide Mutual Insurance, where he learned about annuity pricing and actuarial industry trends, and this internship furthered his desire to work in the field. Outside of academia and work, Jordan likes to watch movies, read, or play video games; he also likes to go hiking and kayaking and going to the beach. Regardless of the activity, you will find him...
listening to music: from classic rock to hip-hop to country, he enjoys it all.

California State University, Dominguez Hills: Valeria Arredondo has always felt that mathematics chose her. When she first came to the United States, while she did not speak any English, she felt that math spoke a universal language that gave her both confidence and joy. Since then, she has been on a path toward achieving her degree in mathematics as a member of the class of 2021 at California State University, Dominguez Hills. Valeria is the first member of her family to go to college. She is active on campus as a spirited member of the Math Club and also serves as the event coordinator for the immigrant student alliance, Espiritu de Nuestro Futuro. She has been both a tutor and a supplemental instructor for several math classes at CSUDH. She is passionate about both mathematics and education and plans to earn her Single Subject Teaching Credential in Mathematics so that she can share her passion with others, and, as a female student with all male math teachers until her senior year of high school, she is excited to add representation to the field and inspire others.

—AMS Trjitzinsky Fund announcement

Erdős Memorial Lecture

The Erdős Memorial Lecture is an annual invited address named for the prolific mathematician Paul Erdős (1913–1996). The lectures are supported by a fund created by Andrew Beal, a Dallas banker and mathematics enthusiast. The Beal Prize Fund is being held by the AMS until it is awarded for a correct solution to the Beal Conjecture (see www.math.unt.edu/~mauldin/beal.html). At Mr. Beal’s request, the interest from the fund is used to support the Erdős Memorial Lecture.


Andrei Okounkov of Columbia University will deliver the 2020 Erdős Memorial Lecture at the 2020 Fall Western Sectional Meeting on October 24, 2020. See https://www.ams.org/meetings/lectures/meet-erdos-lecture for more information.

—AMS announcement

Deaths of AMS Members

Salvatore D Bernardi, of Escondido, California, died on August 11, 2013. Born on April 12, 1919, he was a member of the Society for 67 years.

Marie R. J. Charpentier, of France, died in 1994. Born on October 29, 1903, she was a member of the Society for 46 years.

Myron A. Coler, of La Jolla, California, died on September 20, 2004. Born on March 30, 1913, he was a member of the Society for 63 years.

John L. D’Arcy, of Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania, died on May 23, 2009. Born on January 24, 1945, he was a member of the Society for 34 years.

Dan Laskov, professor, Royal Institute of Technology, died on October 25, 2013. Born on July 10, 1940, he was a member of the Society for 34 years.

Esther Seiden, professor, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, died on June 6, 2014. Born on March 3, 1908, she was a member of the Society for 64 years.

T. P. Srinivasan, professor, University of Kansas, died on June 8, 2013. Born on December 24, 1932, he was a member of the Society for 47 years.

From the AMS Public Awareness Office

Mathemati-Con at the 2020 Joint Mathematics Meetings (JMM) will include the Who Wants to Be a Mathematician Championship game, the Mathematical Art Exhibition, presentations by JPBM Communications Award winners Chris Budd (“What Have Mathematicians Done for Us?”) and James Tanton (“A Dozen Proofs That 1=2: A Misguided Review of Mathematics”), AMS Math Poetry Contest readings, the Julia Robinson Mathematics Festival, and the Porter Lecture by Rajiv Maheswaran (“The Fantastic Intersection of Math and Sports: Where No One Is Afraid of a Decimal Point”). The events take place on Saturday, January 18, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, free and open to the public, and we look forward to seeing mathematicians at JMM there as well. See jointmathematicsmeetings.org/meetings/national/jmm2020/2245_mathcon.

—Annette Emerson and Mike Breen
AMS Public Awareness Officers
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