1995 Award for Distinguished Public Service to Mathematics

Proper recognition for mathematicians who contribute valuable service to the profession is a matter of great importance to the Society. The continued growth and health of the discipline depends in large part on those individuals who contribute their time to public service activities in support of mathematics. To provide encouragement and recognition for such service, the AMS Council, responding to a recommendation from the Committee on Science Policy, established the Award for Distinguished Public Service. The $4,000 award is presented every two years to a research mathematician who has made a distinguished contribution to the mathematics profession through public service during the previous five years. Previous recipients of the award are Kenneth M. Hoffman (1990), Harvey B. Keynes (1992), and I. M. Singer (1993)

The 1995 Award for Distinguished Public Service was granted to DONALD J. LEWIS of the University of Michigan. The award was presented at the 101st Annual Meeting of the AMS in San Francisco in January 1995. The award is made by the Council, acting through a selection committee consisting of William Browder (chair), Kenneth M. Hoffman, Harvey B. Keynes, John C. Polking, and I. M. Singer.

The text below contains the committee's citation, the recipient's response upon receiving the award, and a brief biographical sketch.
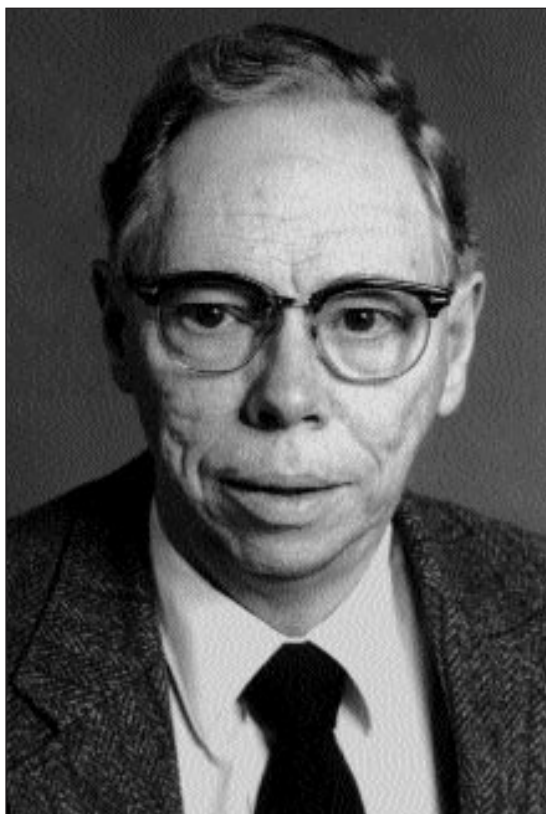
Donald J. Lewis

Citation

The 1995 Award for Distinguished Service to Mathematics is awarded to Donald J. Lewis, University of Michigan, for his many contributions to mathematical education, mathematics policy, and mathematical research and administration during a career that has spanned several decades.

Lewis has capped a distinguished career as a number theorist by serving as chair of the Department of Mathematics at the University of Michigan for the past several years, serving the Society and profession in many capacities, including trustee of the AMS and advising government at all levels on research and educational policy.

While chair of the Department of Mathematics at the University of Michigan, Lewis was instrumental in obtaining approval for new ultramodern quarters for the department. Sometime in 1996 the department will move into quarters remodeled for a modern mathematics department. The department that will take over this space will also have been restructured to meet the future needs of a mathematics department, due largely to Lewis's efforts. Lewis has encouraged the members of the department to adopt new teaching techniques; he has encouraged mentoring of young faculty and post-doc appointees. He has advocated for better industrial and other nonacademic career preparation for students. And he has been involved in important studies to improve the atmosphere for females and other underrepresented groups to participate more fully and be successful in mathematics.

He has been a frequent advisor to the National Science Foundation, both at the Directorate for Mathematical Sciences and the Directorate for Education and Human Resources. He

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has led or participated in several important studies of manpower and resource needs for the mathematical sciences. He has been very active in the founding of the Mathematics Education Reform Network.

Lewis is now serving the second of five years as trustee of the Society.

Response

I am pleased and flattered to receive this award for public service to mathematics. An award such as this gains its significance from the list of preceding awardees, and it is a distinct honor to now be included in the list of recipients.

In mathematics we rightly place our emphasis on quality research. But for research to thrive, attention needs to be paid to the environment in which it takes place, to developing the next set of researchers, and to inculcating an appreciation in others for the power and beauty of our subject. I did what I did because I felt it was needed if mathematics was to flourish. It is very satisfying to receive public acknowledgment that what was done was worthwhile. As a community we will face some trying times in the decade ahead, and I hope many will join in the effort to make it possible for mathematics to flourish for decades to come. Proving beautiful theorems will not be sufficient.

A significant portion of the citation refers to accomplishments in Ann Arbor. One can have a

vision, and one can foster and promote the visions of others, but to bring them to reality requires the energy, commitment, and the hard work of others. I received such from my departmental colleagues, and they deserve much of the credit for what was accomplished. It was a team effort, not the work of one. It is also appropriate at this time to publicly acknowledge the support I have received throughout my career from my wife—one often needs someone on whom to lean.

Thank you. I will treasure this award.

Biographical Sketch

Professor Lewis received his B.S. from the College of St. Thomas in 1946 and his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in 1950. He began his academic career at the Ohio State University (1950–1952), followed by positions at the Institute for Advanced Study (1952–1953 and 1990–1991), Notre Dame University (1953–1961), and the University of Michigan (1963–), where he also served two terms as chair.

His experience and expertise have resulted in several visiting appointments, including the University of Manchester (1959–1960), University of Cambridge (1960–1961), Trinity College, Cambridge (1969), Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science (1974), Brasenose College, Oxford (1976), University at Heidelberg (1979–1980 and 1983), and the Max Planck Institute, Bonn (1986).

Among his awards are recognition from the National Science Foundation as a Postdoctoral Fellow (1952–1953) and Senior Postdoctoral Fellow (1959–1961), the University of Michigan Distinguished Faculty Achievement Award (1978), and the Alexander Humboldt Stiftung, Humboldt Preis (1980 and 1983).

Professor Lewis has contributed to the mathematics profession in many ways. He served on the editorial boards of *Mathematical Reviews* (chair, 1974–1977), the *Notices* (1969–1972), and *Duke Mathematical Journal* (1970–1975). He is associate editor of *Acta Arithmetica* (1965–), *Journal of Number Theory* (1969–), and *Zentralblatt*, (1980–). He has also loaned his efforts to the National Research Council on two committees: in 1987 on the Committee on Science and Technology Centers (R. Zare, chair) and in 1991–1992 on the Committee on Doctoral and Postdoctoral Study in the United States (R. Douglas, chair). He was a member of advisory committees of the National Science Foundation and chaired the AMS Task Force on Employment. He has also served on many committees for the University of Michigan.

Lewis has given several invited addresses both in the U.S. and abroad. His mathematical interests include number theory with emphasis on Diophantine equations, algebraic numbers, and function fields.