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FIELDS INSTITUTE Research in Mathematical Science

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CELEBRATING WOMEN IN MATHEMATICS

LISA JEFFREY

Lisa Jeffrey is regarded as one of the world's leading up-and-coming mathematicians. In 2000, she won the McLean Award, a prize given annually to outstanding young researchers at U of T for their work in the basic sciences.

Jeffrey's father taught zoology at U of T's Scarborough campus and she attended high school at the University of Toronto Schools. But her advanced degrees were obtained elsewhere – an undergraduate degree in physics from Princeton followed by a masters degree in mathematics at Cambridge, and a doctorate at Oxford. Her route back to Toronto was a circuitous one.



She spent one year doing post-doctoral work in Britain and several more years in the U.S. in post-doctoral and junior faculty positions. In 1995 she was appointed assistant professor at McGill University before receiving tenure and being promoted to associate professor in 1996. In the summer of 1998 she moved back to Toronto and was appointed a full professor at U of T.

Jeffrey's research uses techniques from pure mathematics, most notably in what is known as “symplectic geometry”, to prove results or discoveries made by theoretical physicists using methods from quantum field theory.

Jeffrey believes that many fields of mathematics such as symplectic geometry are rapidly expanding and touching other areas of science like engineering and physics. At one time, mathematicians worked mainly on problems that originated in physics but now, mathematics and physics are converging and it is not unheard of for physicists to work on mathematical problems, she noted.

Biography courtesy of University of Toronto's, News@UofT