



CELEBRATING WOMEN IN MATHEMATICS

RÓZSA PÉTER

1905-1977, Hungary- Rózsa Péter studied at Loránd Eötvös University in Budapest where her interest in mathematics was aroused by Lipót Fejér's lectures. Another person who had an important influence on Rózsa Péter was László Kalmár, a fellow student at Loránd Eötvös University.



After graduating in 1927, unable to obtain a permanent job, Péter earned her living tutoring mathematics. Her first post, at the Budapest Teachers Training College, was obtained in 1945. There, she wrote in German a charming book *Playing with Infinity* (1955). When the College closed in 1955, she became a professor at Loránd Eötvös University and remained in this post until she retired in 1975.

Her first research topic was in number theory, but she became discouraged on finding that her results had already been proved by Leonard Eugene Dickson. For a while Péter wrote poetry but around 1930 she was encouraged by Kalmár to return to mathematics. He suggested to Péter that she study Gödel's work, and in a series of papers she subsequently became a founder of recursive function theory.

In 1952 S.C. Kleene described Rózsa Péter in a paper in the *Bulletin of the American Mathematical Society* as “the leading contributor to the special theory of recursive functions”.

Beginning in the mid 1950s, Péter applied recursive function theory to computing. Her final book on this topic was *Recursive Functions in Computer Theory* (1976).

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