



CELEBRATING WOMEN IN MATHEMATICS

JULIA HALL BOWMAN ROBINSON

1919-1985, USA- In 1980, Robinson gave the American Mathematical Society Colloquium Lectures on computability, Hilbert's Tenth Problem, decision problems for rings and fields, and non-standard models of arithmetic. She was only the second woman to give the Colloquium Lectures, the first being Anna Wheeler in 1927.



Julia Robinson received many honours. She was the first woman to be elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 1976, and in the same year was appointed to a professorship at the University of California in Berkeley. She was elected to the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1978, became the first woman officer of the American Mathematical Society in the same year and the first woman president of the Society in 1982.

She was the American Mathematical Society Colloquium Lecturer in 1980, the Association for Women in Mathematics Emmy Noether Lecturer in 1982, and was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1984. She was awarded a John D. and Catherine D. MacArthur Foundation Prize in 1983 in recognition of her contributions to mathematics.

We end this biography by quoting Robinson's own words on how she would wish to be remembered:-

"What I really am is a mathematician. Rather than being remembered as the first woman this or that, I would prefer to be remembered, as a mathematician should, simply for the theorems I have proved and the problems I have solved."

A year after Robinson's death, her husband, Raphael Robinson, set up the Julia B. Robinson Fellowship Fund to provide fellowships for graduate students in mathematics at Berkeley. When he died in January 1995, almost all of his estate went into the Fellowship Fund.

Biography courtesy of The MacTutor History of Mathematics archive