



CELEBRATING WOMEN IN MATHEMATICS

MARY ELLEN RUDIN

1924- , USA -When Mary Ellen entered the University of Texas in 1941, she did not have high expectations, nor did she have any set ideas about the subjects she wanted to study. It was almost by accident that she came to study mathematics.

Mary Ellen had registered for Robert Lee Moore's trigonometry class and she would take one of his classes every year until she graduated with her BA degree in 1944. Moore spotted Mary Ellen's mathematical talent right from the start and he was determined that she would become a mathematician.



When Mary Ellen graduated with a BA in 1944, mathematics was still only one of several subjects she had taken. At this stage she was not certain what subject she wanted to pursue in her graduate studies. However when offered an instructorship in mathematics she began research for her doctorate in topology under Moore's supervision. She received her PhD in 1949. Moore arranged an instructorship for her at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, where she began teaching the same year.

In 1981 Rudin became the first holder of the Grace Chisholm Young Professorship at Wisconsin. She remained at the University of Wisconsin for the rest of her career, retiring as professor emeritus. In 1998, Rudin published a sequence of four papers aimed at characterizing the Hausdorff continuous images of compact linearly ordered spaces. These confirm a conjecture by J. Nikiel that they are precisely the compact Hausdorff monotonically normal spaces.

Rudin has received many honours for her work, including at least four honorary doctorates, and will continue to receive further awards. She was elected Vice-President of the American Mathematical Society in 1980-81 and has been Governor of the Mathematical Association of America. She is also a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Science, and was elected to the Hungarian Academy of Science.

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