



## CELEBRATING WOMEN IN MATHEMATICS

### ANNA JOHNSON PELL WHEELER

1883-1966, USA- In 1899, Anna entered the University of South Dakota where she showed great promise in mathematics. A professor of mathematics, Alexander Pell, recognized her talents and helped to persuade Anna that she should follow a career in mathematics. She received an A.B. degree in 1903.

After winning a scholarship to study at the University of Iowa, she was awarded the masters degree in 1904 for her thesis *The extension of Galois theory to linear differential equations*. A second master's degree from Radcliffe was awarded in 1905 and she remained there to study under Maxime Bôcher and William Fogg Osgood.



Beginning in 1911, Anna Pell taught at Mount Holyoke College and then at Bryn Mawr from 1918. Anna Pell's husband Alexander, who was 25 years older than she was, died in 1920. In 1924 Anna Pell became head of mathematics, becoming a full professor in 1925. She remained at Bryn Mawr until her retirement in 1948.

The direction of Anna Wheeler's work was much influenced by Hilbert. Under his guidance she worked on integral equations, studying infinite dimensional linear spaces. This work was done in the days when functional analysis was in its infancy and much of her work lessened in importance as it was absorbed into the more general theory.

Perhaps the most important honour she received was becoming the first woman to give the Colloquium Lectures at the American Mathematical Society meeting (1927).

*Biography courtesy of The MacTutor History of Mathematics archive*