

MAA Award for Inclusivity

The MAA Award for Inclusivity was established in 2019. This award is the Association's recognition of the importance of its core value of Inclusivity to building a healthy and vibrant mathematical community where all are welcome and encouraged to flourish. The MAA Award for Inclusivity is awarded annually to a person or persons (not a program) who has performed significant, sustained work to broaden access to mathematics. The award may be made based on one or several activities that exemplify inclusivity and embrace and affirm diversity. The contribution should be such as to influence the community and culture of mathematics or mathematical education in a significant and positive way on a national scale or have that potential.

William "Bill" Hawkins

University of the District of Columbia

Director of the MAA Office of Minority Participation

The Inclusivity Prize Committee (comprised of Sylvia Bozeman, Lloyd Douglas, Chris Goff, Dave Kung, Jennifer Switkes, and Deanna Haunsperger) would like to recommend that William 'Bill' Hawkins, Jr. receive the 2021 MAA Prize for Inclusivity.

Hawkins, a native of Washington, DC, earned a BS in mathematics and an MS in physics from Howard University, then an MA and PhD in math from the University of Michigan. Hawkins was an Associate Professor and Chair of the Mathematics Department at the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) for the five years leading up to 1990, when he took leave from his position at UDC to become director of the new SUMMA Program at the MAA. SUMMA's goal was "to increase the representation of minorities in the fields of mathematics, science and engineering and improve the mathematics education of minorities." The nomination for Hawkins says in part:

"Hawkins began building the SUMMA Office programs and activities. Over the next 20+ years he led the SUMMA Office to establish a range of activities that addressed a more inclusive environment at the national meetings of the mathematics organizations, addressed undergraduate mathematics education at minority institutions, and related issues. In some of these efforts he was joined by Florence Fassanelli and the team reached out to predominantly Black, Hispanic and Native American campuses to offer consulting and resources. The SUMMA Office worked closely with the MAA Committee on Minority Participation in Mathematics.

"...In the early days of SUMMA, [Hawkins] implemented a plan which helped the small group of faculty from minority populations to see other minority faculty and hear minority speakers, a small group on a large program of presentations, at national mathematics meetings. Hawkins was well known for creating a list of speakers on the program who were from minority groups and having copies of his list available for anyone who desired them. By helping the few minorities present to attend talks and interact with other minorities, he ... reduced the feelings of being "the only one" or "one of a very few." ... His practice became so well-known that Hawkins was often sought out for his list of minority speakers as soon as one arrived at the meetings. In this way he was able to help newcomers learn other attendees and to help create a sense of community for attendees from minority populations."

Under Hawkins's leadership, the SUMMA Office created an archival record of American PhDs in mathematics and mathematics education who are members of minority groups, initiated the Minority Chairs Breakfast annually, established the Tensor-SUMMA projects "to encourage the pursuit and enjoyment of mathematics by students who are members of groups historically underrepresented in the field of mathematics," organized panels at JMM on issues that affected minority institutions or populations, published a

poster on African and African-American Pioneers in Mathematics, and provided guidance to those who wanted to establish an intervention project.

For these reasons and many others, we wish to recommend that William ‘Bill’ Hawkins, Jr. be awarded the MAA Prize for Inclusivity 2021.

Response

I would like to express my deep appreciation to the Mathematical Association of America for giving me the 2021 MAA Inclusivity Award. As much as I enjoyed teaching mathematics to minority and other students, the MAA and its Strengthening Underrepresented Minority Mathematics Achievement (SUMMA) Program enabled me to have an impact far beyond my home institution. The support of the MAA Executive Directors, MAA staff, Dr. Florence Fasanelli, and the MAA Committee on Minority Participation was absolutely critical to the success of the various SUMMA initiatives.

I am especially pleased that Dr. Candice Price, Assistant Professor at Smith College, is the new director of the MAA Tensor-SUMMA Program for minority pre-college students participating in mathematical science activities at colleges and universities. She was a participant in one of the first SUMMA-funded undergraduate research programs at California State University - Chico directed by Dr. Thomas Mattman. So the circle remains unbroken. Once again, thank you so very much.

Biographical Sketch

William “Bill” Hawkins is a native Washingtonian who was educated in public and parochial schools. After graduating from Howard University with a BS in mathematics and a minor in physics, he taught at a local public high school for 7 months and developed a lifelong love of teaching mathematics. He earned an MA in mathematics from the University of Michigan and an MS in physics from Howard University before starting to work at Federal City College in DC (a predecessor of the University of the District of Columbia [UDC]). He later completed his PhD in mathematics at Michigan.

He became the Director of the MAA Office of Minority Participation under the late MAA Executive Director Marcia Sward in 1990 and was ably assisted by Florence Fasanelli during some five years of leave from UDC. Sward’s successors, Tina Straley and Michael Pearson, were enthusiastic supporters and facilitators of various SUMMA initiatives. The MAA Committee on Minority Participation under Manuel Berriozabal and Sylvia Bozeman also provided oversight. Funders such as the Carnegie Corporation of New York, NSF, and the Tensor Foundation made possible a wide range of activities. SUMMA held workshops in MAA Sections to solicit members to seek funding to run precollege intervention programs or undergraduate research programs for minority students. SUMMA sponsored Minority Chairs Breakfasts as well as dissemination sessions at the Joint Meetings. SUMMA collected and disseminated information on minority PhDs in the mathematical sciences and published a poster on early African American PhDs.

In the mid-1990s, an upcoming RIF at UDC necessitated his return to full-time teaching. His direct involvement with SUMMA continued through his retirement from UDC in 2015 but his wife’s declining health has necessitated a reduction in his involvement in MAA since 2017.