

Meritorious Service Awards

Nancy Ann Neudauer

Pacific University

Nancy Ann Neudauer has been an active member of the Pacific Northwest section since 1998 when she started at Pacific Lutheran University and became a Project NExT fellow (silver dot). She moved to Pacific University in 2001, staying in the section. She has taken on several leadership roles in the Pacific Northwest section which include Vice Chair (2000–01, 2004–05, 2005–06), Governor (2006–09), Invited Program Chair (2006–07, 2009–10), and Chair Elect-Chair-Past Chair (2014–18). She was instrumental in establishing the Pacific Northwest Section NExT program which started in 2000 and held the position of Associate Director of Section NExT until 2018. In addition to being one of the program chairs for several PNW-MAA section meetings, she would regularly find potential speakers for our section meetings and connect them with the meeting planners. She also organized numerous special sessions and panel discussions with diverse titles such as “Research and Pedagogical Trends in Discrete Mathematics,” “Directed Reading, New Technologies, and Other Strategies for Increasing Student Engagement,” “Keeping Your Research Alive,” “Expository Writing in Mathematics,” and “A Conversation on Mathematics Outreach.” Finally, as a matroid enthusiast, she helped resurrect the Combinatorial Potlatch in 2002, which is an annual conference in the Pacific Northwest, and has been the Program Chair for it ever since (now the Cascadia Combinatorial Feast). Outside the section her contributions to the MAA are substantial and include Program Director for the Dolciani Mathematics Enrichment Grants, Associate Editor on the Board of the College Mathematics Journal, and Co-Director of the Center for Undergraduate Research in Mathematics. She is also well known internationally for her travels to Africa for which she received multiple Fulbright awards to support her work at the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences. In short, Nancy has been active in several different areas within the mathematics community and always makes a positive impact.

Response

I am surprised, delighted, and honored to be nominated for this award by my colleagues in the Pacific Northwest section. And I am humbled to be amongst those who have won the award. My involvement with the MAA has been one of my most rewarding professional experiences. I was motivated by a professional duty and a desire to give back—I had not anticipated that the more profound impact would be on me.

The MAA has given me vast opportunities to be involved in service (perhaps earlier than I was ready sometimes!) and the chance to gain leadership experience, and at the same time has offered the support to succeed in these roles. It has introduced me to an eclectic and nurturing mathematical community. These connections have resulted in numerous visitors to my university and to fruitful research collaborations. I leave MAA meetings, both section and national, feeling invigorated both personally and professionally.

I want to thank all the people with whom I have organized PNW Section meetings, sessions, and other soirées, without whom none of this would have been as much fun. I know that a community sustains through the persistence of its members. In particular, I must thank Jennifer McNulty with whom I ran PNW NExT for many years and who convinced me and Brian Gill to organize a section meeting in our first year out of graduate school. And Brian for the escapade of organizing that meeting. I thank Robert Beezer for resurrecting the Combinatorial Potlatch with me, organizing a section meeting, inviting me to Africa, and making me believe that not only was this all possible, it was the natural course of what comes next. And Frank Farris for convincing me that *Mathematics Magazine* readers would care about matroids. The greatest appreciation goes to my parents for instilling in me a strong work ethic including the impor-

tance of belonging to, and contributing to, our professional organizations. And my partner, Mark Lincoln, who has attended more mathematics conferences than many mathematicians (“Wouldn’t it be more efficient if you became a mathematician,” he was recently asked), for never letting me slow down, and for supporting me on all my adventures, which have become our adventures.

Biographical Sketch

Nancy Ann Neudauer is the Thomas and Joyce Holce Professor of Science at Pacific University. She received her MA and PhD in mathematics, with a minor in business and law, and her BBA in actuarial Science and risk management, all from the University of Wisconsin. She has been actively involved with the vast Pacific Northwest Section (comprising 10 states, provinces, and territories) and believes that section activities extend the reach of the MAA by allowing many more people to be regularly engaged than might be possible otherwise by only attending national meetings. Through national engagement she has learned of (and adopted) activities from other sections.

Actively involved with the MAA for as long as she can remember (she gave her first talk at an MAA meeting while still a high school student), she is the Director of the MAA Dolciani Mathematics Enrichment Grant Program, which funds projects for middle and high school students, a PI on the NSF-funded META Math (the Mathematical Education of Teachers as an Application of Mathematics) project, and the recipient of a Distinguished Teaching Award. She has served on, and chaired, several national MAA committees, including Invited Address Committees for both MathFest and the Joint Meetings, Gung & Hu Award for Distinguished Service to Mathematics committee, the Council on Outreach Programs, the Committee on Sessions of Contributed Papers, a CUPM Curriculum Guide study group, and the AMS-MAA Joint Lecture Committee. Nancy was the Visiting Mathematician to the national offices of the MAA, and sits on the Board of Editors of the *College Mathematics Journal*.

Beyond her primary mathematical research in matroid theory, graph theory, combinatorics, and enumeration, a current project is to build a research community of women mathematicians in Africa. She is particularly interested in bringing matroids to a wider audience by introducing them to working mathematicians and their students in every corner of the world. As a Fulbright Specialist, her outreach extends to African Institute of Mathematical Sciences (AIMS) Centres in South Africa, Tanzania, Ghana, Cameroon, and Rwanda. When not sharing the beauty of mathematics with her students, she races sailboats and travels wherever she can, rarely leaving the house without her passport and a packed bag, just in case.