

Meritorious Service Awards

Ezra (Bud) Brown

Virginia Tech

Since joining Virginia Tech in 1969, Bud has influenced nearly every aspect of the department. In curriculum he developed or revamped courses in Graph Theory, History of Mathematics, Discrete Mathematics, and Cryptography. He helped establish and direct the Calculus Emerging Scholars Program (ESP). This was supported with internal grants totaling \$339,540. He has supervised seventeen undergraduate research projects in mathematics and worked with more than fifty students at the NSA Director's Summer Program. Finally, he was a member of the University Commission on Undergraduate Studies for nine years, twice serving as its chair.

Bud has dedicated himself to teaching, embodying excellence in the profession, serving as a role model to others, directly encouraging the development of other teachers, and recognizing them when they have achieved great things. In the 1990s, he led NSF workshops for high school teachers at Mount St. Mary's College. He has received many teaching awards at Virginia Tech, including the University-wide William E. Wine Award for teaching excellence and the Edward S. Diggs Teaching Scholar Award (College of Arts and Sciences Certificate of Teaching Excellence) and our MAA section (the John M. Smith Award).

Bud has also served both Virginia Tech and the MAA in recognizing others. At Virginia Tech he served on the selection committees for the Alumni Teaching Award, the Wine Award, and the Diggs Award, eventually chairing all three of these teaching committees. For the MAA he served on the Committee to Select Recipients of the Henry L. Alder Award for Distinguished Teaching by a Beginning College or University Mathematics Faculty Member and chaired the MAA MD-DC-VA Section Teaching Award Committee.

He has been extensively involved with Project NExT. He's served as a consultant since 1999 and given a Project NExT course at two MathFests and two Joint Mathematics Meetings.

The MA-DC-VA Section has recognized him with the John M. Smith Award for Teaching Excellence in 1999 and the Sister Helen Christensen Service Award in 2014. The MAA selected him for three Carl B. Allendoerfer Awards for Excellence in Expository Writing and three George Pólya Awards for Excellence in Expository Writing. He has been invited to give plenary lectures at the MAA Carriage House (Distinguished Lecture), the MD-DC-VA, Northeastern, EPaDel, and Louisiana-Mississippi sections, and MathFest.

For the MD-DC-VA Section, Bud has served as its Teaching Award Committee chair (2000–2005), its Program Chair (2004–2006), its Governor (2007–2010), as the moderator for its Student Math Jeopardy contest since 2007, as a Section Next consultant (2001–2009), and as Local Arrangements Coordinator for the Fall 2001 Section Meeting. Nationally, he has served on the Council on Prizes and Awards, the Editorial Board of *Math Horizons*, one of the *American Mathematical Monthly* problem editors for over 30 years, the Committees to Select Recipients of the Allendoerfer and Merten M. Hasse Writing Awards and the Henry L. Alder Teaching Awards. In 2013 he chaired the Search Committee for the Editor of *Math Horizons*, and he headed Task Forces on the Daniel Solow Writer's Award (2015–16) and on Senior Members and Memberships (2017–18). Finally, he was the music director and accompanist for four “stagings” of *MAA: The Musical*—three times (2011, 2012, and 2015) at MathFest and also at an EPaDel section meeting in 2015.

In short, Bud Brown's service for his university, the mathematics community, and especially for the MAA has left a mark on all of us who have seen his talks, his classes, and just his general entertaining, enthusiastic self, and we are happy to nominate him for an MAA Certificate of Meritorious Service.

Response

It is a great honor to be selected for this award by my colleagues in the MD-DC-VA section. Home is where you go for your hugs and to be with your family – and the MAA, both our section and the larger community, has been my mathematical home for almost five decades. My view of service is likewise very simple: service is a way of life. A major part of my grandparents' lives was devoted to helping others, and they taught me that service is a part of my cultural heritage. It has been a privilege and a joy to serve in our community, and I have gotten much more out of the MAA and our section than I have put into them: friendships, colleagues, and mainly people who share your views about mathematics and education. Finally, what's so special about the MAA in general and the MD-DC-VA section in particular? Simply put, you meet the nicest people there.

Biographical Sketch

Ezra (Bud) Brown grew up in New Orleans, has degrees from Rice and Louisiana State University, taught at Virginia Tech for 48 years, and recently retired as Alumni Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Mathematics. He has done research in number theory, combinatorics, and expository mathematics—and one of his favorite papers is one he wrote with sociologist C.J. Dudley titled “Social relativity: the motion of groups and actors”. He is a frequent contributor to the MAA journals and has been known to impersonate Alex Trebek at the spring meetings of the MD-DC-VA section of the MAA. He is the junior author of *The Unity of Combinatorics*, a book in the Carus Monograph series; his coauthor is the late Richard Guy. He enjoys baking biscuits (they're better if you use softened butter), singing (anything from opera to rock 'n' roll), playing jazz piano, and watching an occasional bird.