

# Awards and Prizes

## Inaugural MAA Award for Inclusivity

### Sylvia Trimble Bozeman

*Spelman College*

The MAA is pleased to honor Sylvia Trimble Bozeman with the inaugural Award for Inclusivity.

Dr. Bozeman served on the faculty at Spelman College beginning in 1974 until her retirement in 2013.

In her four decades as a Professor of Mathematics, Dr. Sylvia Trimble Bozeman has taught, supervised and mentored countless students, showing an unwavering commitment to bringing more African-Americans—as well as women and individuals from other under-represented groups—into the field of mathematics. She has taken on significant leadership roles in the mathematics community: in 1997, Sylvia Bozeman became the first African-American to be elected a Section Governor (Southeastern) in MAA's history, and she has been on the Executive Committees of the AWM and NAM.

Dr. Bozeman was, with Rhonda Hughes, the co-founder of the Enhancing Diversity in Graduate Education (EDGE) program, and continues to serve on the Board of the EDGE Foundation. She also currently serves as co-chair of the National Association of Mathematicians' Golden Anniversary Campaign Committee.

The purpose of the EDGE Program, a collaboration of Spelman and Bryn Mawr, is to increase the number of women and minority students who successfully complete graduate programs in the mathematical sciences. As of June 2018, more than 90 alumni of the EDGE program had obtained PhDs. The EDGE program was recognized in 2007 as a Mathematics Program that Makes a Difference by the American Mathematical Society, and in 2018 was awarded the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. The EDGE program continues to provide mentoring at critical transition points through participants' careers, and alumni often return to give back to the program.

Alejandra Alvarado, who joined the program in 2002 and is now an associate professor at Eastern Illinois University said "I can state with certainty, if it wasn't for the EDGE family, I would not be where I am today. And so I will give EDGE everything I can for as long as I can, in hopes for brighter days ahead."

This sentiment is shared by many EDGE participants, and by many more in our community, who have witnessed and benefitted from Dr. Bozeman's personal attention and dedication to broadening participation in our discipline.

### Response

What a great honor it is for me to have been chosen to receive the MAA Inaugural Award for Inclusivity! In accepting this award, I do so in honor and recognition of Dr. Lida Barrett, a past MAA President and an esteemed colleague, who took as a central mission of her presidency to make the MAA more diverse and inclusive. I am aware that the MAA leadership has continued that effort and has brought us now to the existence of an Award for Inclusivity.

I have felt some connection to the MAA since my high school years when I was awarded an MAA pin for performance on a comprehensive mathematics exam. In later years, my first public research talk was given at an MAA Southeastern Section Meeting, beginning a long history of work within the MAA and

support from the MAA. It has been an ongoing challenge for many who attended the segregated schools of the south (and beyond) to learn how to be inclusive. In the process I have benefitted significantly from colleagues, as we worked toward common goals, and from students whom I sought to mentor.

My connection to the EDGE Program and to the students there has had a tremendous effect on my understanding of diversity and the need for inclusive attitudes and actions. I thank the participants, faculty, and staff in the EDGE community, as well as those at Spelman College, for creating environments that encourage collaboration, mutual support, and other inclusive practices.

Kudos to the MAA for initiating an Award for Inclusivity that emphasizes this core value of the Association. I thank the nominator, the selection committee and the MAA Board of Directors for this honor.

### **Biographical Sketch**

Sylvia Trimble Bozeman earned the BS degree at Alabama A&M University, the M.A. at Vanderbilt University and the PhD at Emory University. During more than 38 years on the faculty at Spelman College, her many roles included Chair of the Department of Mathematics for ten years, Associate Provost for Science and Mathematics, and, currently, Professor Emeritus.

Bozeman's early publications focused on Fredholm Operator Theory. Inspired by her colleagues at Spelman College, she began addressing the need for more inclusion of African Americans, women, and other underrepresented groups at the highest levels in the mathematical sciences. It was this interest that led Bozeman and Rhonda Hughes to the cofounding of the EDGE Program in 1998 and to publications on improving the graduate experiences of students in mathematics. Bozeman was the recipient of the Dr. Etta Z. Falconer Award for Mentoring and Commitment to Diversity at the 2007 Infinite Possibilities Conference and the recipient of a Mentor Award from the American Association for the Advancement of Science.