

## Meritorious Service Awards

### Martha Abell

*Georgia Southern University*

The Southeastern Section of the Mathematical Association of America nominates Martha Abell of Georgia Southern University for the Meritorious Service Award.

Martha first became involved with the Southeastern Section of the Mathematical Association of America as a student club advisor in 1992. She joined the executive committee in 1998 as State Director for Georgia. Martha became Secretary-Treasurer of the Section in 2002 and Chair-Elect in 2006. She served in this position, as chair, and as past chair until 2010. Under her leadership, Georgia Southern hosted the 2007 Southeastern Section meeting. She was elected Governor for the section in 2012. In honor of her many contributions to the section and to MAA, the Southeastern Section awarded Martha the 2016 Distinguished Service Award. As one nominator wrote “As in all things, the way she carries out the duties of each position demonstrate her good sense, her careful attention to details, her leadership ability and her easy way of getting along with people.”

At the national level of the MAA, Martha has been a member of the Minicourses Committee, serving as chair for three years, a member of the Basic Library List Committee, and a member and chair of the Trevor Evans Award Committee. Since 2012, she has served as chair of the Committee on Teaching Undergraduate Mathematics. Most recently she served on the Leadership Team for the MAA Instructional Practices Guide 2017 and works tirelessly in ongoing efforts of its dissemination and implementation.

Martha has published over 47 articles and books and has an even more impressive list of presentations and mini-courses at state, regional, national and international conferences. She has successfully written 29 grants. Martha was the recipient of Georgia Southern University’s Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activity. Her books represent the leading edge of the mathematical community’s efforts to incorporate technology into the teaching of calculus, differential equations and statistics. She is a member of 8 professional organizations and 10 honor societies. She accomplished all of this while methodically moving up the academic ladder at Georgia Southern, from assistant professor to professor to chair of Mathematics to Dean of College of Mathematics and Science. As one nominator wrote “Martha has outstanding people skills - she works positively with people, she values the many different types of contributions which different faculty make, she is easy to talk with and willing to discuss issues and hear all sides.” We are privileged to honor Martha for the excellent service she has contributed to the Mathematical Association of America and to mathematics in general over the last many years.

### Response

I am surprised, honored and humbled to be included in this prestigious group. As a member of the Southeastern Section, I have been fortunate to work with outstanding individuals from across Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Alabama. The section leaders in place when I started my career 30 years ago, such as David Stone and Tina Straley, set a wonderful example of building strong connections across our region in order to provide greater opportunities for faculty and students to network, exchange mathematical and teaching ideas, and promote the mission of the MAA throughout our individual communities. Little did I know at my first Section meeting in April 1990 at Davidson College that I would return there years later as a member of the Section Executive Committee or that I would later work with colleagues at Georgia Southern to host over 400 Section meeting attendees on our own campus. I certainly never imagined being selected to serve on national committees or having the tremendous opportunity to

serve on the *MAA Instructional Practices Guide* leadership team. And while I never imagined these experiences happening, I am grateful that they did. I became a better faculty member, mentor, and administrator because of these collaborations, and I accept this award in recognition of all who worked with me along this incredible journey. I hope that I can continue to contribute to the success of the MAA for many years to come.

### **Biographical Sketch**

Martha L. Abell is Professor of Mathematics at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, GA, where she has been a faculty member for thirty years. After earning her BS degree in Mathematics from Mercer University, she attended graduate school at Georgia Tech where she received her MS in Applied Mathematics and PhD in Mathematics under the guidance of William F. Ames. The supportive environment at Georgia Southern made it possible for her to pursue a wide range of interests, all of which were valued by her institution. This included investigating new approaches to teaching and doing mathematics as well as contributing to the professional community through leadership positions in several organizations. Her long-time writing partnership with James P. Braselton has resulted in numerous books, papers and presentations, including *Mathematica by Example* and *Introductory Differential Equations*, both in their fifth editions. Over her career, Martha has served in various administrative roles at Georgia Southern, including Honors Director, Department Chair, and Dean. She recently returned to her faculty position full-time, where she strives to implement strategies advocated by the MAA Instructional Practices Guide to promote student engagement and equitable access to mathematics for all students.