

A decorative border with a repeating red floral and vine pattern surrounds the text on a light-colored background.

### **Steve Blasberg February 23, 2013**

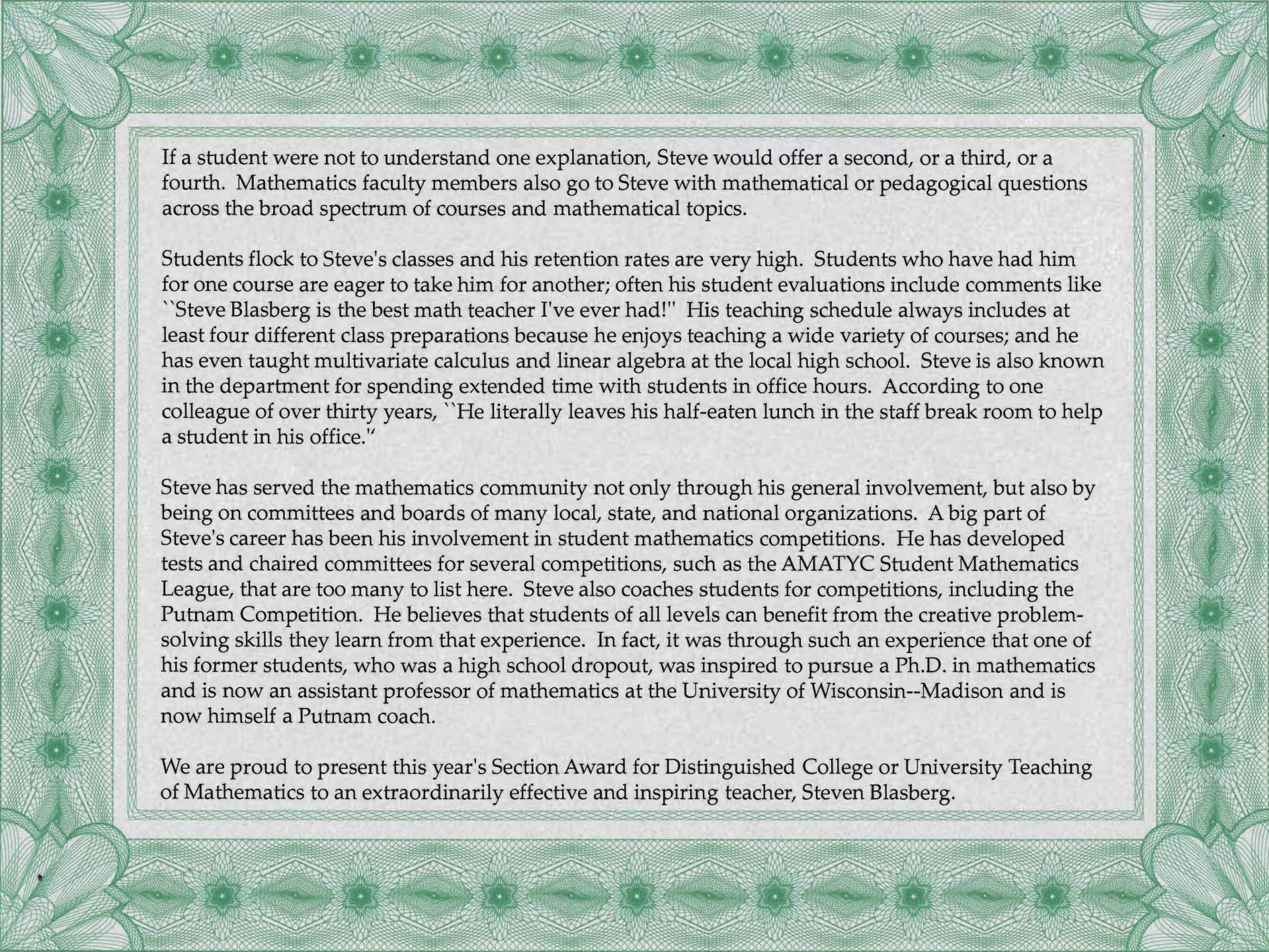
Steve is an exceptional educator with a natural feel for where mathematics education is now, how it can be improved, and the talent to find and implement ways to improve it. (Most of this citation, including that sentence, is quoted directly from students' and colleagues' testimonials.)

Steven Blasberg has been teaching mathematics at West Valley College since 1975. He earned master's degrees in mathematics, computer science, and mathematics education from Stanford University and belongs to their chapter of Phi Beta Kappa.

Steve is widely recognized as an extraordinarily successful teacher. The hallmark of his teaching is the clarity of his explanations and the depth of his knowledge, both mathematically and pedagogically, and Steve has shared his teaching expertise with the wider community through numerous presentations at many conferences. During the 1980s, Steve developed and taught the first discrete mathematics course to be offered at a community college in Northern California. He also co-authored a textbook on learning programming with the TI-92 calculator and has authored solution manuals for several textbooks.

Steve has always been an innovator---in every semester he tries something new that may improve his classes. A dynamic communicator with a gift for making complex topics seem clear, Steve is always ready with several explanations of every concept. If a student were not to understand one explanation, Steve would offer a second, or a third, or a fourth. Mathematics faculty members also go to Steve with mathematical or pedagogical questions across the broad spectrum of courses and mathematical topics.





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Students flock to Steve's classes and his retention rates are very high. Students who have had him for one course are eager to take him for another; often his student evaluations include comments like "Steve Blasberg is the best math teacher I've ever had!" His teaching schedule always includes at least four different class preparations because he enjoys teaching a wide variety of courses; and he has even taught multivariate calculus and linear algebra at the local high school. Steve is also known in the department for spending extended time with students in office hours. According to one colleague of over thirty years, "He literally leaves his half-eaten lunch in the staff break room to help a student in his office."

Steve has served the mathematics community not only through his general involvement, but also by being on committees and boards of many local, state, and national organizations. A big part of Steve's career has been his involvement in student mathematics competitions. He has developed tests and chaired committees for several competitions, such as the AMATYC Student Mathematics League, that are too many to list here. Steve also coaches students for competitions, including the Putnam Competition. He believes that students of all levels can benefit from the creative problem-solving skills they learn from that experience. In fact, it was through such an experience that one of his former students, who was a high school dropout, was inspired to pursue a Ph.D. in mathematics and is now an assistant professor of mathematics at the University of Wisconsin--Madison and is now himself a Putnam coach.

We are proud to present this year's Section Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics to an extraordinarily effective and inspiring teacher, Steven Blasberg.