

Looking back ...

The Indiana Section Governor Position and its First Occupant

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At each spring meeting of the Indiana MAA Section, the section chair presents a slate of proposed candidates for election as section officers, with the exception of section governor, who is elected by section members every three years in an election administered by the national MAA Office. All MAA section governors are elected in this manner, and it's reassuring to know that all the twenty-nine MAA sections are guaranteed such high-level representation in the Association.

It may come as a surprise to some readers that the concept of MAA Section Governors was not established until 1947, thirty-two years after the MAA was organized and thirty-one years after the first meeting of the Indiana MAA Section. During the decade prior to 1947 the Board included, along with Governors at Large, Regional Governors representing members from fourteen geographical regions. Some of our section members' names can be found on the lists of members of these groups. For example, W. L. Ayres of Purdue University served as a Governor at Large for 1942-1944 [1]. Ayres went on to fill the position of First Vice President of the Association for 1946-1947 [2] and then returned to the Board as a Governor at Large for 1948-1950 [3]. Another Indiana Section member, K. P. Williams of Indiana University, served on the Board as a Regional Governor for the two year term 1945-1947 [2].

During the years 1947 through 1949 the fourteen Regional Governor positions were gradually eliminated and replaced by Section Governors.

The new Section Governors would serve three-year terms and would join the Board in one of three phases. As there were twenty six MAA sections then, nine new Section Governors would take office in July of 1947, nine more in July of 1948, and eight more in July of 1949 [3]. The Indiana Section had its turn in the 1948 group, and at the spring 1948 Indiana Section meeting, which was held at Purdue University on May 8, the section elected Professor Prentice Dearing (P. D.) Edwards of Ball State Teachers College (now Ball State University) as its first Governor [4].



P. D. Edwards received a B.S. degree in mathematics from Oakland City College and went on to earn an M.A. degree in mathematics from Indiana University. His thesis (1923) was entitled *On the Properties and Applications of e* [5]. He served as an instructor of mathematics at Harvard University during the 1924-1925 year [6] before returning to Indiana to complete his Ph.D. degree. His 1929 dissertation was entitled *Functions Possessing an Addition Theorem from the Standpoint of a Functional Equation given by Abel* [7]. Edwards spent most of his career at Ball State Teachers College, where he served as department chair from 1951 to 1962. He was highly regarded there, and his name is still prominent at Ball State through the “Edwards Memorial Scholarships” that were endowed in his memory by Harry and Jane Edwards McColm and established to encourage outstanding incoming freshmen to pursue mathematics degrees [8]. In the 1960s he spent a few years on the teaching faculty at Rose Polytechnic Institute (now Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology) where he also served as interim chair of the mathematics department.

It is not at all surprising that Edwards was elected to be the first Indiana Section Governor, since by 1948 he had become somewhat of a record holder with respect to service to, and knowledge of, the section. His service to the section began the year after he completed his Ph.D. when he was elected to serve as the section chairman during the 1930-1931 year [9]. Two years later in 1933 he was elected to serve as section secretary, a position he held for eight consecutive years [10], a record in that respect shared by only two other secretaries, his predecessor H. T. Davis of Indiana University, secretary for 1924 – 1933, and J. C. Polley of Wabash College, who held the position from 1950 to 1958. Later, in 1941, Edwards accepted the

nomination for, and was elected – again – to the position of section chairman [11].

Not only does P. D. Edwards own the distinction of being the first Indiana Section Governor, but apparently he also is the only individual to serve as the Indiana Section Governor more than one term. In 1954 Ralph Hull of Purdue University was elected to serve as Governor for 1954-1957. When Hull was unable to continue his service beyond the second year, P. D. Edwards accepted the appointment to complete Hull's term during the 1956 – 1957 year. [12]

The composition of the Board of Governors has continued to evolve as the MAA, its membership, and its services to the membership and the general mathematics community has changed. In addition to the Officers of the MAA, the Section Governors, and the Ex-Officio Governors (other officers, some committee chairs and representatives, publication representatives, and past and former presidents), the current Board includes a group of designated Governors-at-Large that is organized around themes somewhat different from those envisioned when the MAA was established. This group includes Governors-at-Large for Canadian membership, high school teachers, interests outside academia, and minority interests.

For further current information on the Board of Governors, visit MAA Online at <http://www.maa.org/Aboutmaa/bog.html> . For a complete list of Indiana Section Governors, visit the Indiana Section homepage at <http://www.ipfw.edu/math/INMAA/govern/History/GovernorsHistory.doc> .

References

- [1] *Officers of the Association*, American Mathematical Monthly, **51**(1, Part 2) (1944), p. 3.
- [2] *Officers of the Association*, American Mathematical Monthly, **52**(10, Part 2) (1945), p. 3.
- [3] *Officers of the Association*, American Mathematical Monthly, **56**(10, Part 2) (1949), p. 2.
- [4] *The May Meeting of the Indiana Section*, American Mathematical Monthly, **56**(3) (1949), pp. 217-220.

[5] Prentice Dearing Edwards, *On the Properties and Applications of e*, Masters Thesis, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana (1923).

[6] *President and Fellows Announce Appointments*, The Harvard Crimson (April 7, 1924) (<http://www.thecrimson.com/article.aspx?ref=169296>)

[7] Prentice Dearing Edwards, *Functions Possessing an Addition Theorem from the Standpoint of a Functional Equation by Abel*, Ph. D. Dissertation, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana (1929).

[8] *Edwards Memorial Scholarships*, Ball State University (<http://www.bsu/math/edwards.htm>)

[9] *The Seventh Annual Meeting of the Indiana Section*, American Mathematical Monthly, **37** (1930), pp. 395-398.

[10] Annual Reports of Meetings of the Indiana Section, 1933-1940, American Mathematical Monthly, **40**(7), **41**(10), **42**(10), **43**(9), **44**(6), **45**(8), **46**(7), **47**(10).

[11] *The Eighteenth Annual Meeting of the Indiana Section*, American Mathematical Monthly, **48**(8, Part 1) (1941), pp. 507-511.

[12] *Officers of the Association*, American Mathematical Monthly, **64**(3) (1957), p. 220.

Photograph of Prentice Dearing Edwards from the 1965 Rose-Hulman Modulus yearbook, p. 97 – courtesy of the Rose-Hulman Logan Library.