

*Celebrating the “Mathematics” Chairs of  
the Past 100 Years at Hood College*

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This year, 2013, Hood College is proud to be celebrating one hundred years from changing the name of the college. As a current student it is important to look back on the past one hundred years and remember how the school came to be what it is today. Dr. Marie “Betty” Mayfield, the current chair of the Department of Mathematics, will be the first one to continue the tradition of overseeing and teaching mathematics at Hood College into the second one hundred years. Entering into the start of the next century Dr. Mayfield is supported by a wonderful staff. Like all of the past chairs the time will come when a new chair takes over the responsibility the same way Dr. Mayfield took it from her predecessor. Building the Mathematics Department and sustaining its usability is not a difficult task, compared to the past, due to current world needs. However, in the past one hundred years, the department had to overcome obstacles to grow, and each chair played a significant role because women mathematicians were not accepted.

Professor Lillian Olive Brown joined the staff of the Woman’s College of Frederick in 1908 as a professor of mathematics.<sup>1</sup> By taking that position she became the Head Professor of Mathematics. Similar to the significant position Dr. Mayfield is in, Professor Brown took on the role of building

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<sup>1</sup>Hood College Catalogs

the Mathematics Department in 1913 when the institution changed its name to Hood College. Professor Brown spent forty-five years in the Mathematics Department, forty of which as the Head Professor. During her time she not only helped students grow inside the classroom; she also helped them to develop and become strong women outside of the academic atmosphere. In the dedication to her in the 1954 Touchstone yearbook students described Professor Brown as an extremely friendly, dedicated, and enthusiastic person. Each group of young women who entered Hood College as freshmen were called the “Chicks” of that year. Lillian Brown took the responsibility of talking to each new class to help them relax and realize that the journey through college is an exciting adventure that should not be feared but embraced. Professor Brown engaged her students in many aspects of their college careers to help them grow into responsible adults.<sup>2</sup>

Before joining the staff at the Woman’s College of Frederick Professor Brown attended Dickinson College for her undergraduate studies, and Columbia University where she earned a Master’s degree.<sup>3</sup> During her time at Hood College she was accepted as a member into the American



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<sup>2</sup>1954 Yearbook

<sup>3</sup>Hood College Catalogs

Mathematical Society at the 214th meeting of the society.<sup>4</sup> It was a special moment for her because the meeting was held at Columbia University on February 26, 1921. As the curricula changed throughout the years Professor Brown also taught astronomy courses. The department that she was in charge of changed, in the type of courses offered, multiple times so she would have to adapt to be able to correctly oversee the different fields of study. Professor Brown started as Head Professor of Mathematics until the department changed to Mathematics and Astronomy in the fall of 1916. This is where she began to teach astronomy classes. In 1924 the college split the two departments and Mathematics was once again a separate, individual department. In 1946 Professor Brown was in charge of overseeing multiple subjects, once again, when the department changed to Mathematics, Astronomy, and Physics. The department did not change again until after she had exited from her position as Head Professor. Through the years Professor Brown had multiple different staffs support her. She was able to help students for many years until she left Hood College in 1953. Hood College presented her with the status of emeritas professor after her retirement. Her dedication and enthusiasm was so helpful and inspiring to students that Hood College

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<sup>4</sup>Mathematical Association of America

created a prize in her name. The Lillian O. Brown Prize in mathematics, given in honor of Lillian Brown, Professor Emeritas of mathematics, was awarded to the freshman student with the highest record of achievement in the introductory college mathematics courses. This award was given to deserving students for thirty years from 1958 to 1988.<sup>5</sup> Through her forty-five years of hard work Lillian Olive Brown set a high level of expectation for the Mathematics Department of Hood College.

There was one year that Lillian Brown was unable to be the Head Professor of the Mathematics Department. It is not documented whether it was due to illness, research, family, choice, or another cause. In 1914 Hood College hired Professor Helen E. Whitney as the Head Mathematics Professor. Professor Whitney did have a Bachelor's degree at the time she was hired but she did not have any level of graduate degree. Professor Whitney left the college in the spring of 1915 after just one year of being a professor. The school may have asked Professor Brown to retake the position as Head Professor, if Professor Brown chose to exit the position, but it is unknown what the situation was. Professor Whitney only taught mathematics courses during her short term at Hood College. It is unknown why Helen Whitney was only

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<sup>5</sup>Schaffert

employed by the college for one school year. No matter the circumstance Professor Brown resumed the duties as Head Professor.<sup>6</sup>



Once Professor Brown exited the position as Head Professor for the last time Professor Elinor Ware took the responsibilities of Head Professor in 1949. The department once again changed its title to Physical Sciences. Professor Ware earned her undergraduate degree and Master's degree at Mount Holyoke College, and then continued to Yale University where she earned a Doctoral degree. The department at this time encompassed Astronomy, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Physics. Professor Ware taught chemistry courses while also doing research in the field of study. She published multiple papers that provided necessary information for research and study in chemistry at the time. Some of her published work was done in collaboration with other professors and chemists while other articles were written alone. Dr. Ware exited the position as Head Professor in 1960.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Hood College Catalogs

<sup>7</sup>Hood College Catalogs

Interestingly, after Professor Ware stepped down as Head Professor another Mount Holyoke College graduate, Dr. Phyllida M. Willis, took the position. At



this time Dr. Willis became the first professor to have the title *Department Chair* of Mathematics. As mentioned Dr. Willis completed her undergraduate studies at Mount Holyoke College, earned her Master's degree at Smith College, and then completed her Doctoral degree at Columbia University which was the college of choice for Professor Lillian O. Brown.<sup>8</sup> Dr. Willis was not a professor of mathematics but of chemistry. During her time as Department Chair the department changed from Physical Sciences to Physical Sciences and Mathematics. Though it is not a large change it shows an important increase of focus on mathematics considering Hood College was still a female only school. Phyllida Willis was the Department Chair from 1960-1971 which was a time when women were starting to work for equal. Women throughout the county were entering into the work force and making strides even in the fields of science. Even though women mathematicians still have some discrimination today this time period was very important for the college because criticism came with the study of mathematics for women.

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<sup>8</sup>Hood College Catalogs

During her time as chair Professor Willis was the Maryland Chapter Chair for the Phi Beta Kappa Society.<sup>9</sup>



In the fall of 1971 the Department of Physical Sciences and Mathematics changed to the Department of Mathematics. This shows that Mathematics was still growing and people were coming to Hood College wanting to advance their own knowledge of mathematics.

Professor Phyllida Willis, being a chemistry professor, could no longer be the Department Chair. Dr. George Trytten, who joined the Hood College staff in the fall of 1970, took the position as Department Chair for the Department of Mathematics. Professor Trytten had completed his undergraduate studies at Luther College, earned a Master's degree at the University of Wisconsin, and earned a Doctorate at the University of Maryland. Dr. Trytten was able to manage the new department as he taught only mathematics courses during his time as chair. He left after the spring semester of 1972 once a new chair for the department was found.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>PhiBetaKappa

<sup>10</sup>Hood College Catalogs

The next chair that took over the department not only changed the Mathematics Department but also started another one. Professor Paul J. Gowen took over a chair of the Department of Mathematics in the fall of 1972. Dr. Gowen completed his undergraduate studies at Georgetown University, earned a Master's degree at the University of Virginia, and earned a Doctorate at the University of Virginia. He later earned another Master's degree at The Johns Hopkins University. During his time at Hood College Professor Gowen oversaw the mathematics and computer science courses. As Department Chair Dr. Gowen introduced one computer science elective course that he nurtured carefully and helped grow the one course into an entire department. He taught in both fields of study but his interest eventually fell to the Computer Science Department. Hood College made a monumental purchase when it purchased its first computer for only 20,000 dollars under Gowen's guidance.<sup>11</sup> Even though Professor Gowen was extremely dedicated to the department he also served as acting co-dean of academic affairs twice and served as president of the faculty senate in his years at Hood College. Through the years he took the responsibility of being on every major committee of



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<sup>11</sup>ACM Hood College

the college as well. The dynamic of both the Mathematics and Computer Science departments changed while he was the Department Chair and still today both departments are very strong. As chair he was involved in hiring fellow University of Maryland graduate Dr. Elizabeth Chang, and Dr. Marie Mayfield. Both of these professor later became the Department Chair of Mathematics.

Professor Elizabeth Chang took the position of Department Chair of the Mathematics and Computer Science Department in fall of 1984. This was 12 years after she joined the Hood College staff in 1972. This is the year the first computer science elective course was introduced to the mathematics curriculum. She is proud to be the current Computer Science Department Chair because she was one of the professors who taught the first computer science course offered at Hood College. She has enjoyed watching the program grow with such a rapid pace to be where it is now. Dr. Chang, along with being the Department Chair, is currently teaching computer science courses, and is the Director of the Masters of Science Program in the Management of Information Technology. Furthermore Professor Chang was an elected Commissioner of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. When Elizabeth Chang was hired she taught mathematics and the one

computer science course. <sup>12</sup>

Dr. Chang completed her undergraduate studies at Millersville State College, and earned her Master's and Doctorate at the University of Maryland. From her time at Hood College she has been able to build the computer science program with the help of Paul Gowen and Marie Mayfield. She has also made strides in fields outside of Hood College. Professor Chang published a book titled *Practical Perl with CGI Applications* in 2004 , published by the publishing company Addison-Wesley. <sup>13</sup>



Once the Mathematics and Computer Science departments split from one another Professor Elizabeth Chang became the chair of the Computer Science Department leaving the position in the Mathematics Department vacant. In 1999 mathematics professor Betty Mayfield took the position as Department Chair. Professor Marie “Betty” Mayfield had joined Hood College’s Mathematics Department in 1979. At this time Dr. Mayfield was teaching mathematics and computer science. The strong southerner Professor Mayfield studied at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro during her time as an undergraduate, and earned her

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<sup>12</sup>Hood College Computer Science Department Website

<sup>13</sup>Hood College Computer Science Department Website

Master's and Doctorate at the University of Rhode Island.<sup>14</sup>

In 2003 the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science changed to Mathematics after the Computer Science Department was strong enough to go out on its own. As the current Department Chair, Professor Mayfield is in charge of overseeing and organizing multiple mathematics activities along with teaching mathematics courses. These activities include Math tea, a weekly get-together to do mathematical games, Sonya Kovalevsky day, celebrating Euler's Birthday, and other activities.

Dr. Mayfield also attends different mathematical meetings across the region and nation. This is due to Professor Mayfield helping students with summer research opportunities and national mathematical meeting presentations.



She is also a strong advocate of the progress of women studying and working in mathematics. Her research on women mathematicians during the time of Euler is one of her published research materials. While at Hood College Professor Mayfield became an Honorary Ion of the College Ionic Society and has received the Mortar Board Excellence in Teaching Award. Being a member of the Mathematical Association of America Professor Mayfield has served

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<sup>14</sup>Hood College Catalogs

as Governor of the MD-DC-VA Section and as national First Vice President for the association.<sup>15</sup>

The past one hundred years as *Hood College* has been a journey for the college as a whole but also for each department. The Mathematics Department had to blend and split with different departments multiple times but now it stands alone as a strong and independent department. As the college proceeds to advance the mathematics department is ready for the journey that lies ahead for the next one hundred years. This department has grown through the dedication of many professors who took the challenge of being the head of the department. To celebrate one hundred years of growth the Mathematics Department will continue to grow and advance with confidence as it starts the next one hundred years with Dr. Betty Mayfield as Department Chair.

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<sup>15</sup>Hood College Website, Mathematical Department

# Bibliography

- [1] 35 Years of Hood Computing [Online image]. Retrieved April 3, 2013 from <http://acm.hood.edu>

The Association of Computer Machinery (ACM) has a website section for Hood College. This website was used to find information pertaining to Dr. Elizabeth Chang and Dr. Paul Gowne. Digital images were also used from this site. This site contained useful and correct information that proved to be helpful in verifying information.

- [2] Ann Maginnis (Reference Desk, April 1, 2013). Personal Interview.

Ann Maginnis from the Hood College Library Reference Desk helped me to find the proper way to cite sources such as school yearbooks, catalogs, and other miscellaneous item.

- [3] Gasteiger, Marian Sipe. "1920 Yearbook." *The Touchstone*. 1919. ("The Guards." Faculty and Officers of Administration 2)

The Hood College yearbook that was published in year 1920 held a picture of Lillian Olive Brown and was used to verify what the department name was in that year.

- [4] Hood College. (2013). Hood College Catalog 1913-1992. Frederick, MD: Collected by Hood College Library.

The Hood College catalogs were helpful in research while I was determining who had been the past chairs of the Mathematics Department, the years that they served as chair, the number of years that they were at the school, and other information pertaining to prizes, and special honors. The catalogs also allowed me to find information about what fields of studies a professor taught in, and if they were a member of school boards or outside organizations.

- [5] Hood College Computer Science Department[Online image]. Retrieved April 3, 2013 from <http://cs.hood.edu>

The Hood College Computer Science Department website proved useful while researching Dr. Elizabeth Chang and Dr. Paul Gowen. This website

aided me in verifying and finding new information.

- [6] Hood College Departments [Biographical Information]. Retrieved April 6, 2013 from <http://www.hood.edu/academics/departments/departments.html>

This section of the Hood College website gave me a pathway to multiple other sections of the College website that helped to connect information that was unattainable through the Hood College Catalogs.

- [7] Jan Samet O'Leary (Library Archives, April 1, 2013). Personal Interview.

Jan Samet O'Leary helped to explain information found in the College catalogs and yearbooks. She also aided me in my search by finding information in the library research directory and in the back reference room.

- [8] Krista Schaffert (Advancement Services, April 1, 2013). Personal Interview.

Krista Schaffert in the Hood College Advancement Services department found information in the school's directory about the different honors that were received by the past chairs of the Mathematics Department.

- [9] Mathematical Association of America [Online image]. Retrieved April 3, 2013 from <http://sections.maa.org>

An image of Dr. Betty Mayfield was retrieved from the MAA website to be used on the poster and in this paper.

- [10] Phyllis Townsend (Library Archives, May 28,2013). Personal Interview.

Phyllis Townsend helped to explain information found in the College catalogs and yearbooks. She also aided me in my search by finding information in the library research directory and in the back reference room.

- [11] Weaver, Barbara. "1954 Yearbook". *Touchstone*. 1954. (pages 4,5,17)

The Hood College yearbook that was published in year 1954 was dedicated to Lillian Olive Brown. Within it a brief appreciation statement was written for Professor Brown along with a picture of her. This yearbook also help the picture of Prfessor Trytten, Professor Willis, and Professor Ware.

- [12] Mathematical Association of America Section Meeting Overviews [PDF files]. Retrieved April 6, 2013 from <http://sections.maa.org>

This pdf file was a document that gave a brief overview of a Mathematical Association of America Section Meeting. The website this file

was retrieved from also holds multiple section overview files that proves which professors were and are member of this association.

- [13] Weaver, Barbara. "1972 Yearbook". *Touchstone*. 1972. ("Physical Science" 80)

The Hood College yearbook that was published in year 1972 was used to find information about Professor Trytten.

- [14] Price, Roseanne R., ed. "ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS REPORT ACTIVE YEAR." *The Key Reporter*. PHI BETA KAPPA, Summer 1983. Web. 6 Apr. 2013. <http://www.pbk.org/userfiles/file/KeyReporter>

This document verifies that Professor Phyllida Willis was the Maryland Chapter Chair for the Phi Beta Kappa Society.