The Mathematical Association of America
New Jersey Section

2002 Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics

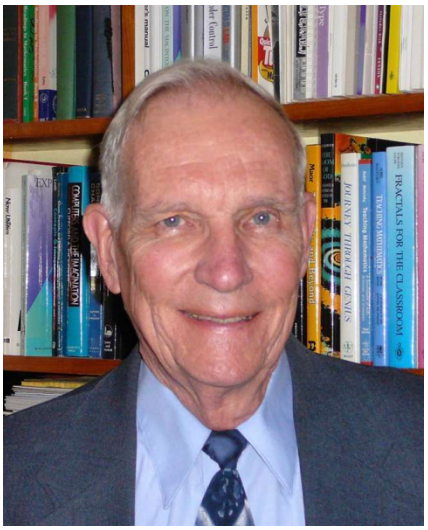
Saturday, April 13, 2002
Monmouth University

West Long Branch, New Jersey

In 1991 the Mathematical Association of America instituted Awards for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics in order to honor college or university teachers who have been widely recognized as extraordinarily successful and whose teaching effectiveness has been shown to have had influence beyond their own institutions.

Citation

Dr. Evan M. Maletsky



The New Jersey Section of the Mathematical Association of America is pleased to present its 2002 sectional award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics to Dr. Evan M. Maletsky of Montclair State University.

Dr. Maletsky is a gifted and master teacher of mathematics who continues to have profound positive influence on his students, many of whom have become mathematics educators themselves. Through his many books and invited presentations and workshops at national and international conferences, he continues to inspire mathematics educators throughout the United States and the international community. A prolific writer and very productive as a researcher, he is the lead author or co-author of at least 30 books and has authored over 18 articles.

Dr. Maletsky received his B.A. and M.A. in mathematics from Montclair State University in 1953 and 1954 respectively, and his Ph.D. in mathematics education from New York University in 1961. He began teaching in 1956 at Pascack Valley Regional High School in Hillsdale, New Jersey. In 1957 he joined the faculty of Montclair State University's Mathematics Department and has been there since that date.

Dr. Maletsky is a frequent speaker at national, regional, state and local meetings, and international conferences for mathematics teachers. He is a leader in in-service workshops for teachers at the elementary, junior, and senior high school levels. He has been invited to speak at many of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) conferences, the Northwest Mathematics Conferences, state mathematics conferences in 28 states, and international conferences for science and mathematics in American Samoa, Austria, British Columbia, England, Germany, and Lebanon. He has been a principal instructor at various NSF Summer Institute held at MSU, Femi National Accelerator Laboratory, and Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory.

Dr. Maletsky is the co-author of the popular book *Teaching Mathematics–A Sourcebook of Aids, Activities and Strategies*, co-author of the Springer-Verlag books *Fractals for the Classroom–Strategic Activities (Volumes 1,2,3*), and senior author of the leading series *Harcourt Math (Grades 3,4,5,6),* and *Math Advantage (Middle School I, II, III*). He has served as the editor of *New Jersey Mathematics Teacher* (of the Association of Mathematics Teachers of NJ), the Activities Edition of the *Mathematics Teacher* (NCTM), *Student Math Notes* (NCTM), *Activities from the Mathematics Teacher* (NCTM), and *Teaching with Student Math Notes Volume 1 and 2* (NCTM).

Dr. Maletsky's outstanding teaching has been recognized over the years. He received the Outstanding Faculty Award from the MSU Alumni Association (1984), the First Margaret and Herman Sokol Faculty Fellow Award at MSU (1991) for excellence as a teacher and researcher, the Outstanding Mathematics Educator Award from the Association of Mathematics Teacher of New Jersey (1991), the Distinguished Teacher Award from MSU (1993), and the Teachers in Excellence Award, given by the Student Government Association of MSU (1998).

Dr. Maletsky is truly a gifted, talented, and dedicated educator. Over the years, he has ignited excitement for mathematics in his students and a desire in many teachers-in-training to emulate the master teacher who taught them, to share with their students the "magic" that Dr. Maletsky creates. His students at every level, and participants of his workshops, attest to the motivation and enthusiasm he brings to his classes and presentations. One of his students wrote: "He infected our minds with a desire to learn, to see and to understand, not only the subject matter, but also the world around us. … He is the rare kind of teacher that only comes along every so often and changes the way you learn forever."

Response from Professor Maletsky

It is certainly both an honor and a privilege to receive this distinguished teaching award. Little did I know when I began college teaching as an instructor many years ago at Montclair State University that I would someday be its senior faculty member and full professor in the very same department that I entered more than fifty years ago as an undergraduate major in mathematics. Nor would I have expected then that teaching could have remained so vibrant and exciting, so challenging and rewarding, and so satisfying and enjoyable throughout all those years. But it has.

Having given so much of your life to college teaching, you would expect to master some of the necessary skills, yet there always seem to be new things to learn, new methods to try, new ideas to pursue, new material to write. They are what fed and still feed my interest and enthusiasm for the profession, and what a wonderful profession it is. For me, the thrill of teaching still remains, whether it be undergraduate majors or general education courses, middle school students or their teachers, doctoral candidates or third graders. I have taught them all this semester, loved every moment, and learned from each one.

For all our collected years of teaching experience, there remains much to be learned. Many great challenges still exist in the teaching of mathematics. We must become even more visual and dynamic in our teaching, more animated and appealing, and provoke not only more student interest but more student curiosity as well. We must get our students to see, reach, and stretch beyond the obvious. Oliver Wendell Holmes expressed it so well when he said, “A mind stretched by a new idea never goes back to its original dimension.” As for me, I’ve always believed that mathematics must tickle the senses as well as stretch the mind. It is through handling, seeing, and thinking experiences that one can sense the excitement, appreciate the beauty, and share in the creativity of the subject.