

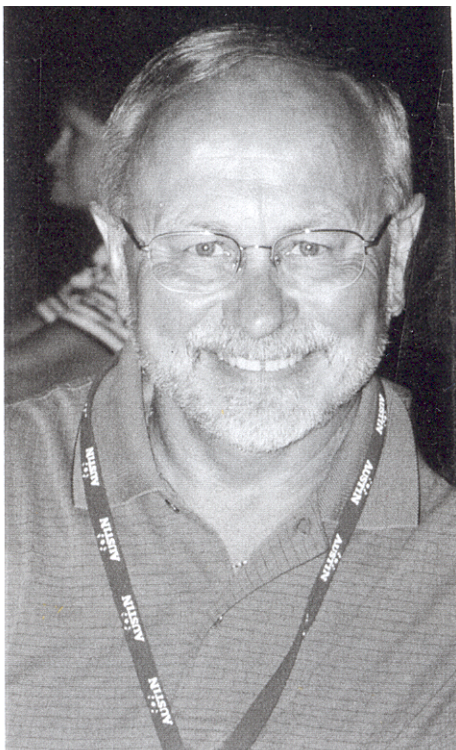
In 1991 the Mathematical Association of America instituted Awards for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics in order to honor college or university teachers who have been widely recognized as extraordinarily successful, and whose teaching effectiveness has been shown to have had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

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Citation

Prof. Arthur Schwartz

The New Jersey Section of the Mathematical Association of America is pleased to present its 2004 sectional award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics to Prof. Arthur Schwartz.



Professor Schwartz, in his thirty-four years of teaching at Mercer County Community College, has had a tremendous impact on the lives of his students and on the life of the College. Throughout his tenure at the College, he has given selflessly of his time and energy to the Mathematics Department, to the College, to other faculty members and, most importantly, to his students. He has served as chair of the Mathematics Department several times and has moved the department forward carefully and thoughtfully with course

reviews and innovations. He has been the key component in the development of the College's current mathematics curriculum ranging from basic mathematics to differential equations. Professor Schwartz has served on every College committee that exists on campus and on numerous search committees. His biggest service to the community is the donation of his time. Most faculty members seek him out as the person to talk to for advice, suggestions or help in any matter. That he is so widely recognized speaks volumes of his reputation and collegiality.

At a community college, students vary widely across the spectrum of skills they bring to class. Having had some experience teaching at Hopewell High School, Professor Schwartz brings to his class the rare ability to relate to students from one end of the spectrum to the other, with equal effectiveness. His unique teaching style involves creating a comfortable atmosphere in the classroom and in his office, a wonderful sense of humor and a belief that he can affect every student. All of his students may not excel at mathematics, but there have been few to none who have not thoroughly enjoyed his class. Students in remedial algebra have described his class as "the best I have ever had" and the "class that made me really understand algebra", while students in differential equations have remarked that "the fact that he is interested in what he is teaching makes it interesting to the class" and "this professor is awesome". He had similar reviews after teaching a class at Rider University. Over the years, there have been more than a few students who have credited Professor Schwartz with opening their eyes to the beauty and utility of mathematics. His passion for teaching and for mathematics is obvious to all who come in contact with him, whether student or colleague.

In 1991, Professor Schwartz received the most prestigious award a faculty member can receive at Mercer County Community College, the Distinguished Teaching Award. Nominations for this award come from students and colleagues and speak of the high esteem in which he is regarded by all members of the College community. In conferring the award, the President of the College

stated that “he guides over three hundred students each year...toward better patterns of thinking, problem-solving and analysis which serve them well in their careers and in all of life”. Professor Schwartz has also received an award for thirty-four years of dedicated service to the Faculty Association, including his service as President. In 1992, he was presented to the Board of Trustees as the faculty member recognized by his peers for excellence.

For Professor Schwartz, learning is an ongoing process not only for his students, but for himself. He was chosen to participate in the Mid-Career Fellowship at Princeton University where he studied differential equations, his special area of interest. He holds a second master’s degree in nuclear physics. He has written about math anxiety and his publications include “Overcoming Fear and Succeeding in Math”, originally published in *Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education* and reprinted in *Educational Digest* and “Improving Test-Taking Skills in Mathematics”, also published in *Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education*. His workshop on test-taking skills is open to all students. Professor Schwartz has worked with the Educational Testing Service in grading Advanced Placement exams and in the standards setting process. He regularly attends the Master Faculty seminars on campus and contributes much to the discussions of academics and pedagogy. He is an example for both students and faculty. As one of his colleagues has remarked, “his passion for mathematics rubs off on everyone”.

Prof. Edith Silver of the Mathematics Department, Mercer County Community College, nominated Prof. Arthur Schwartz for this Distinguished Teaching Award.

Response from Professor Schwartz

It is a great honor to be recognized by the New Jersey Section of the Mathematical Association of America as a distinguished teacher of mathematics. Looking at the previous winners, I am both proud and

humbled to be associated with such outstanding faculty. The 1995 recipient, Dr. Siegfried Haenisch, was my Trigonometry teacher at Trenton Central High School. In fact, he is one of the reasons I decided to become a mathematics teacher. Both he and my older brother, Frank, had a passion for mathematics that was an inspiration to me and still is, even after all these years.

I have been very fortunate to have had excellent mathematics professors, both as teachers and as colleagues throughout my life. Their dedication to helping students progress from fearing mathematics to understanding, applying and in many cases, embracing the beauty of our subject, has reinforced my love of teaching. During my career at Mercer, I have had the pleasure of teaching a wide range of courses, from Basic Algebra to Multivariable Calculus through Differential Equations. I have been asked “What is your favorite mathematics course to teach?” I used to think it was Calculus II or Differential Equations, but I have come to realize that I love all levels.

Thomas Jefferson once wrote about the influence of his mathematics professor at William & Mary: “It was my great good fortune and what probably fixed the destinies of my life...that Dr. William Small of Scotland was (my) professor of Mathematics.” Jefferson’s quote reflects my belief that we really do have the ability to change our students’ lives, particularly how they perceive mathematics and its importance to their success. We not only teach subject matter that is essential and useful, but we also teach critical thinking that will enrich many of our students’ endeavors. This possibility continues to fuel my excitement and passion for starting each semester.

RECIPIENTS OF MAA-NJ DISTINGUISHED TEACHING AWARD

Sr. M. Stephanie Sloyan, Georgian Court College	1992
Eileen Polani, St. Peter's College	1993
Richard Bronson, Fairleigh Dickinson University	1994
Siegfred Haenisch, The College of New Jersey	1995
Andrew Demetropoulos, Montclair State University	1996
Roger Pinkham, Stevens Institute of Technology	1997
Virginia Lee, Brookdale Community College	1998
Amy Cohen, Rutgers University-New Brunswick	1999
Janet H. Caldwell, Rowan University	2000
Evan Maletsky, Montclair State University	2002
Stephen J. Greenfield, Rutgers University-New Brunswick	2003
Arthur Schwartz, Mercer County Community College	2004

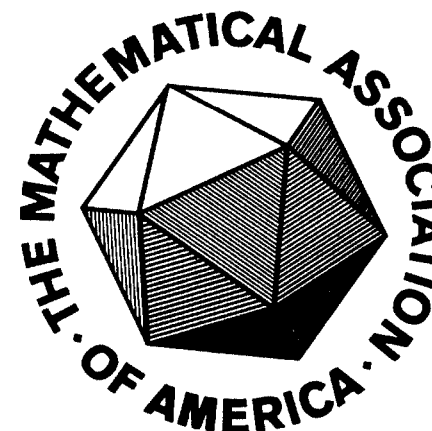
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MEMBERS OF THE AWARD SELECTION COMMITTEE

Amy Cohen (Chairperson), Rutgers University
 Janet H. Caldwell, Rowan University
 Janet Delaney, Passaic County Community College
 Virginia Lee, Brookdale Community College
 Evan Maletsky, Montclair State University

MATHEMATICAL ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

NEW JERSEY SECTION



**Award for Distinguished College or
University Teaching of Mathematics**

Spring Meeting

**Saturday, March 27, 2004
 Rutgers University-New Brunswick
 Piscataway, New Jersey**