

President-Elect Candidate

Georgia Benkart
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I was just beginning graduate studies when AWM was founded. Then and now I marvel at the tenacity, wisdom, and foresight of its founders. But most especially, I have a deep appreciation for the generous outpouring of energy and hard work that gave birth to the organization and that have sustained it in the ensuing 36 years.

Only about 7% of the mathematics Ph.D.'s in the United States were awarded to women the year I graduated; today that number is roughly 30%. Has AWM had a profound influence on the mathematical community and culture? Unequivocally, the answer is yes.

With dwindling numbers of mathematics majors, the necessity for inconclusiveness and encouragement is even more critical. When one talented individual drops by the wayside, the loss is not just of that one, but also of the many individuals whose careers might have been impacted by that person. In 1972, AWM's first president, Mary Gray, outlined goals for the fledgling organization: equal admission to graduate study and support, equal pay for equal work, and equal consideration for faculty appointments and government grants, in assignment of duties, in administrative appointments, and in positions on review and advisory panels. Truly much has been achieved toward those goals, and AWM must continue its leadership role as an advocate for equity and for articulating new directions in the years ahead.

There are many gifted women mathematicians making significant contributions to research, teaching, and education. I look forward to the joys and challenges of working with such an impressive group and with the entire mathematical community in the capacity of President of AWM. The deciding factor in my acceptance of this nomination was the enthusiastic offer of help from everyone I contacted at AWM. I hope for continued generosity of energy and support in this endeavor.

Biographical Information: Georgia Benkart's training began in the Mathematics Honors Program at Ohio State University. This program, which flourished under the late Arnold Ross, offered small classes and a very nurturing environment. Everyone in her group ultimately received a Ph.D. in mathematics or some related field such as computer science. After earning M.Phil. and Ph.D. degrees from Yale, she was awarded a two-year (terminal) C.C. MacDuffee Instructorship at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she has spent her entire career and where she has been E.B. Van Vleck Professor of Mathematics. She has held visiting positions at the Aspen Center for Physics, the Institute for Advanced Study, and the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute at Berkeley. Her research focuses on algebra, more specifically on Lie theory, combinatorics, and representation theory, and she has supervised 21 Ph.D. students who have worked on various aspects of these topics. Her professional activities include chairing the AMS Cole Prize and Monographs & Surveys Committees and serving on the

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AMS Council, the editorial boards of *Journal of Algebra* and *Algebra and Number Theory* and on many grant panels for the NSF, AMS, AWM, and NSERC, including the NSF's Panel on Minority Research Initiatives and Research Opportunities for Women. During 2000–02, she was the Polya Lecturer for the MAA and continues active involvement with the MAA while serving on its Short Course and MathFest Committees.