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Olivia Prosper Feldman Named 2025 AWM-MAA Etta Zuber Falconer Lecturer

In recognition of her distinguished contributions to mathematical epidemiology, her innovative approaches to mentoring and broadening participation in mathematics, as well as her skill in delivering expository lectures, the Association for Women in Mathematics and the Mathematical Association of America are pleased to announce the 2025 Etta Z. Falconer Lecturer will be **Dr.**



Olivia (Prosper) Feldman, Associate Professor, University of Tennessee. Feldman earned her B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. in mathematics from the University of Florida. Following a postdoc at Dartmouth College and assistant professor at the University of Kentucky, Feldman moved to the University of Tennessee at Knoxville where she is currently an associate professor in the Department of Mathematics. Feldman's work has been recognized locally at her institution through a Professional Promise in Research and Creative Achievement Award in 2024. Nationally, she has received a CAREER award and Collaborative Research grants from the National Science Foundation as well as an Intercollegiate Biomathematics Alliance Excellence in Research Award.

Citation: Feldman is an extraordinary researcher. She is an expert in mathematical modeling and has considered topics such as parasite-borne infection and population dynamics, with many of her projects being related to interventions and strategies for controlling outbreaks and understanding societal and economic impacts of emerging diseases. Additionally, Feldman develops methods for improved selection of model parameters and model-based design of experimental data collection. In the span of 2020 to 2024, she published 14 peer reviewed articles and wrote three preprints. Several of these works

resulted from the American Institute of Mathematics Structured Quartet research ensemble (AIM SQuaRE). Feldman's ability to collaborate, and in particular her ability to bring people together for research, is notable. In 2021, Feldman was an organizer for an American Mathematical Society Mathematical Research Community which brings advanced graduate students, postdocs, and early career faculty together to work on projects in the research areas of the organizers.

Biosketch

In addition to her impact on research, Feldman is an excellent teacher and mentor. She received the Ann Keith Rea Faculty Teaching Award at Tennessee in 2021, has mentored 4 Ph.D. students, 1 Master's student, and many undergraduates. An example of her impact on the student's trajectories, Feldman has started the Junior Modelers Program (JuMP) at Tennessee where undergraduates are introduced to data driven modeling and coding as early as their first semester of college. Known for her ability to convey complex ideas in a relatable manner, Feldman has been interviewed by the New York Times for her expertise in epidemiology and had served on webinar panels to discuss the impact of Covid-19 on the Black community. Feldman has a stellar track record of excellence in mathematics research, teaching, and outreach and we are pleased to select her as the distinguished 2025 Etta Z. Falconer Lecturer.

Response from Feldman: It is an honor to be recognized by AWM and MAA as the 2025 Falconer lecturer. AWM has played an important role in my career, providing support and opportunities to expand my collaborations and to provide opportunities for my graduate students.

Photo by Ben Walker, University of Tennessee

The Falconer lectures were established in memory of Etta Zuber Falconer (1933–2002). Her many years of service in promoting mathematics at Spelman College and efforts to enhance the movement of minorities and women into scientific careers through many forums in the mathematics and science communities were extraordinary. Falconer lecturers are women who have made distinguished contributions to the mathematical sciences or mathematics education.