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AWM Honors Dewey Taylor with the Humphreys Award for Mentoring

The Association for Women in Mathematics (AWM) is pleased to announce that the 2025 M. Gweneth Humphreys Award will be presented to **Dewey Taylor**, Professor of Mathematics, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), at the Joint Mathematics Meetings in January.

Citation

As indicated in one of her nomination letters, "Dr. Taylor's mentorship activities have world-wide reach." During her career, Dr. Taylor has served as a master advisor, lead for teacher training workshops, been co-organizer of conferences, authored many papers, been a regional director for the Center for Undergraduate Research in Mathematics, and co-founded an international math symposium. She has served as a mentor of over 200 undergraduate women, including many who have gone on to graduate studies in mathematics, biostatistics, medicine, engineering, and other fields or who have become math educators.

Dr. Taylor is a recipient of several awards, including the 2024 John M. Smith Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching for the MD-DC-VA section of the MAA and the 2023 Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) Mathematical, Computing and Statistical Sciences Division Mentor Award: Advanced Career. She has also been recognized at VCU with the 2022 University Distinguished Teaching Award and the 2017 Outstanding Undergraduate Research Faculty Mentor Award.

Dr. Taylor is the co-founder and co-organizer of the International Mathematics and Statistics Student Research Symposium which has created the opportunity for students in underserved countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Guam and Sri Lanka as well as others to attend, present, and network. According to Professor Nouzha El Yacoubi, past President of the African Mathematical Union, the conference "plays a critical role in mentoring women from around the world and specifically from Africa," and Dr. Taylor continues to be instrumental in the success of this conference.
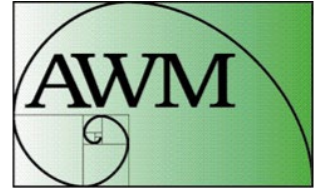
Many of Dr. Taylor's students have participated in REUs funded by the over $6 million in grants on which Dr. Taylor has been either a PI or Co-PI. These grants have funded research and research conferences, K-12 education programs, REUs and more. Dr. Taylor and her students have produced many peer reviewed papers, and her students also regularly present their work at conferences. Their projects often focus on the mathematical modeling of disease spread, particularly for neglected tropical diseases. According to one student, "Dr. Taylor's mentorship style strikes a great balance between encouragement and constructive criticism. During our meetings, I felt reassured that our research was progressing and was also pushed to find other solutions and criteria in order to produce the best results possible." Bringing her experience to bear, Dr. Taylor co-edited the MAA book, *Expanding undergraduate research in mathematics: Making UR more inclusive*. This volume aims to show how all students interested in undergraduate research can be served, and includes discussion on mentoring underrepresented students and mentoring remotely.

As one of her former students put it, "[Dr. Taylor] is an inspiring educator, brilliant mathematician, and most importantly, someone I look up to and will model my teaching style after for my entire career."

The AWM is very pleased to honor Dr. Taylor for her contributions in mentoring and impact on mathematics and its future.

Response from Dewey Taylor

I am incredibly honored and grateful to be the 2025 recipient of the M. Gweneth Humphreys award. Thank you to all the wonderful students who have let me be a part of their journey through school and life. I have learned so much from them and consider this award to be their accomplishment. I would like to thank all the faculty and students who nominated me for this award and wrote letters of support, and I would like to thank the award selection committee for all their hard work.

Throughout my academic career, I have made it my personal mission to encourage and support students, especially the women students. I struggled with my confidence in mathematics as a student and have tried my best to make sure my students don't ever feel the way I did. It is amazing to see what believing in someone can do. With a little praise and encouragement, I have seen my students move mountains. It is truly humbling to have had the opportunity to watch them grow and succeed.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this award to all of my current and former students who have made my career so rewarding, my family whose love and support has been unwavering, my late mother who taught me how to handle life and its challenges with grace and humor, and Reuben Farley who has been my long-time academic mentor and dear friend.

This award is named for M. Gweneth Humphreys (1911–2006). Professor Humphreys earned her master's degree from Smith College and her PhD at age 23 from the University of Chicago in 1935. She taught mathematics to women for her entire career, at Mount St. Scholastica College, Sophie Newcomb College, and finally for over thirty years at Randolph-Macon Woman's College. This award, funded by contributions from her former students and colleagues at Randolph-Macon Woman's College, recognizes her commitment to and her profound influence on undergraduate students of mathematics. It will be presented at the Joint Mathematics Meetings, scheduled for January 8–11, 2025 in Seattle, WA.