



Photo: Theodore Shifrin: His "immaculate board technique" helps students to understand complex mathematical concepts. Photo by Paul Efland.

Theodore Shifrin **Professor of mathematics**

Great teaching is grounded in scholarship that transcends mere classroom performance. The truly outstanding teacher constantly reshapes and reinterprets the content of a course. That combination of scholarship with teaching makes Theodore Shifrin one of UGA's outstanding teachers.

A native of Berkeley, Ca., Shifrin received the bachelor's degree at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the master's and doctoral degrees at the University of California at Berkeley, finishing in 1979. After serving as an instructor at MIT for two years, he came to UGA as an assistant professor in 1981. Shifrin was promoted to associate professor in

1986 and to professor in 1995.

Kevin Clancey, head of the mathematics department, says Shifrin has "an infinite supply of energy, spectacular day-to-day dedication, and genuine enthusiasm toward our students and the science of mathematics."

One former student, James Anderson, who now teaches mathematics at the University of Southampton in England, says that Shifrin is "an excellent, inspired lecturer. His courses were always lively, interesting and well-thought-out. His lecturing style is vibrant, with well-organized lectures which flow smoothly, and with immaculate board technique that makes following the lectures easy."

Shifrin has written numerous research papers and is the recipient of several major research grants from the National Science Foundation. When his book *Abstract Algebra: A Geometric Approach* was published last year, one reviewer said: "This is lovely mathematics, and showing students at this level how algebra sheds light on geometry (and vice versa) is a beautiful idea."

Shifrin is a five-time winner of the Outstanding Honors Professor Award and a recipient of the Sandy Beaver Excellence in Teaching Award as well. He is currently a Sandy Beaver Professor.

In a special section on education this past fall, *U.S. News & World Report* described Shifrin's class: "In Prof. Ted Shifrin's honors multivariable calculus class, the atmosphere is anything but impersonal. As the half-dozen students arrive for class, they exchange pleasantries--and even some good-natured barbs--with Shifrin."

Student comments have been consistently complimentary to Shifrin and the courses he teaches.

One writes, "I believe that Dr. Shifrin's most important quality is his focus on teaching students how to learn."

Another says: "Driven by his enthusiasm, Ted Shifrin pushes students to their limits and occasionally a bit past those limits. He nudges us along as he strives to move us toward our greatest potential and our deepest dreams."

Students appreciate the tone in Shifrin's classes. "On the first day of class," one former student writes, "Dr. Shifrin said, 'You can call me whatever you want, but I'm going to address you all by your first names

because I think it's friendly.' Indeed, Dr. Shifrin's friendly, outgoing personality endeared him to all of us."

--Phil Williams
