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UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA PROFESSOR WINS AWARD FROM MATHEMATICAL ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

ATHENS, Ga. -- Theodore Shifrin, a professor of mathematics at the University of Georgia, has won the award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics from the Southeastern Section of the Mathematical Association of America.

"It is a great honor and pleasure for my work as a teacher to be recognized at this level," said Shifrin. "When I first started teaching as a college student, I knew I had a passion for the enterprise, but I never dreamed I would attain this notoriety. In these days of growing large lectures and distance learning, I hope that my students will continue to benefit from and enjoy the attention and stiff challenges they get from me."

A native of Berkeley, Ca., Shifrin took his bachelor's degree at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology then returned for his 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. He was promoted first to associate professor in 1986 and then to the rank of 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."

Shifrin has written numerous research papers and is the author of *Abstract Algebra: A Geometric Approach*. Of that book, 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 at UGA and won the Sandy Beaver Excellence in Teaching

Award as well. He was also a Sandy Beaver Professor, has consistently earned major research grants from the National Science Foundation and won a Josiah Meigs Award for teaching excellence at UGA in 1997. He has done considerable volunteer work in high schools and has helped organize mathematics competitions for them.

"Indeed, through early contact with high school students and freshmen, Ted has probably created more mathematics majors than any other individual in Georgia," said Clancy. "His algebra text is having widespread impact. At UGA, all secondary school teachers of mathematics study from this text, and the wonderful lessons they learn trickle down to all corners of the state of Georgia. Ted Shifrin is having fundamental influence on the study of mathematics in the Southeast."

A special section in the magazine U.S. News and World Report focused on education and mentioned 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 . . . Most appear to genuinely enjoy the class."

Many students have commented about the tone he sets for his interaction with students. "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, Shifrin's friendly, outgoing personality endeared us all to him."

This is the ninth annual such award given by the MAA, and Shifrin is the second winner from UGA. Professor Carl Pomerance won the honor in 1996. Nominees for the award must be widely recognized as extraordinarily successful in teaching and have influence in their teaching beyond their own institution.

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