LITTLE *by* little

The essence of mathematics resides in its freedom. —Georg Cantor

REPORT FROM THE **CHAIR**

by Krishnaswami Alladi

In 2007–2008 the Department launched a Program in Algebra, Number Theory and Combinatorics (ANTC) to succeed the highly successful Special Years Program that ran for six consecutive years since 2001–2002. The Program in ANTC received support from the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Number Theory Foundation (NTF), and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The organizers of the Program in ANTC were Professors **Krishnaswami Alladi**, **Alexander Berkovich**, **David Drake**, **Frank Garvan**, **Peter Sin**, **Pham Tiep**, **Hua Wang** and **Neil White**. The Program was highlighted by three international conferences and several featured talks by eminent visiting mathematicians. The ANTC Program was augmented by the Program in Ordered Algebraic Structures, put together by Professor **Jorge Martinez** with support from Vanderbilt University. The events of the year reached a crescendo in March 2008. It was during this period of intense international activity in the Department, that we received the news on March 27, that Graduate Research Professor **John Thompson** will be awarded the 2008 Abel Prize (equivalent to the Nobel Prize) in mathematics! This news brought unparalleled academic recognition to the Department and the University and was a glorious culmination to a year packed with outstanding events.

The conferences in ANTC during the year were: 1) *Conference on Group Representations and Combinatorics*, September 10–14, 2007; 2) *Conference on Combinatorics and Groups*, February 21–24, 2008, in memory of our late colleague Professor **Chat Ho;** 3) *Student Workshop and Conference on Partitions, q-Series and Modular Forms*, March 8–16, 2008; and 4) *Conference on the Con-* *rad Legacy*, May 5-8, 2008.

There were several featured talks by eminent mathematicians during the year as part of the ANTC Program. Professor Michel Broue (Director, l'Institut Henri Poincare in Paris) gave a History Lecture entitled "Local group theory from Frobenius to Ricard" on September 12, during the Conference on Group Representations and Combinatorics. 1994 Fields Medalist Efim

Zelmanov (UCSD) delivered the Tenth Erdös Colloquium entitled "Asymptotic properties of infinite families of finite groups" on January 25. Associate Dean of Research David Richardson gave the Opening Remarks for this lecture. On February 4, President Elect of the American Mathematical Society George Andrews (Penn State) gave a History Lecture on the theme "Euler's contributions to Partitio Numerorum." This was the topic of his survey article that appeared in the Special Issue of the Bulletin of the AMS dedicated to Euler's 300th birthday. Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies Daniel Wubah made the Opening Remarks for this talk. The Tenth Ulam Colloquium was delivered on February 18 by the renowned combinatorialist Dominique Foata (University of Strasbourg, France) on the topic "Eulerian polynomials—from Euler's time to the present." In addition to this, Professor Foata gave a one-month course of lectures in Spring 2008 on the theme "q-Series and Permutation Statistics."

The Department maintains close connections with the Institute of Fundamental Theory (IFT). On March 17, the eminent mathematician Bert Kostant (MIT) delivered the Joint Math-IFT Colloquium on "Some of the mathematics in Garrett Lisi's E_8 theory of everything." Director of the IFT Pierre Ramond made the Opening Remarks for this talk. Nearly a decade ago, Professor Kostant visited UF as IFT Distinguished Visitor and gave talks both in the physics and mathematics departments at that time. Since he works on problems at the interface of mathematics and physics, his lecture this year was arranged as a joint Math-IFT Colloquium. The featured lectures of the ANTC Program concluded on a high note with the Second Ramanujan Colloquium (March 19) and talks (March 20-21) by world renowned mathematician Peter Sarnak (Princeton University and Institute for Advanced Study). Professor Sarnak's lectures were on "Sieves, the Generalized Ramanujan Conjectures, and Expander Graphs." Ambassador Dennis Jett (Retired), Director of the UF International Center, made the Opening Remarks. The Ramanujan Colloquium is sponsored by Evan Pugh Professor George Andrews of Penn State University.

Continuing the spirit of collaboration, we had a Joint Math-English Colloquium on November 13, 2007 when Professor of English David Leavitt spoke about his very popular recent novel *The Indian Clerk* that describes the remarkable life story of the Indian mathematical genius Srinivasa Ramanujan and his association with Professor G. H. Hardy of Cambridge University. Associate Provost Angel Kwollek-Folland made the Opening Remarks for this lecture.

Yet another featured talk during the year was the Center for Applied Mathematics (CAM) Colloquium

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FROM THE INCOMING CHAIR

by Jed Keesling

I love mathematics. Being able to devote my full time to this academic pursuit has been fulfilling and a great joy. However, it seems that my time has come to do my duty as an elder statesman and take over the administration of our department. It is a delight to do this knowing that it will allow my younger colleagues to concentrate their efforts on their academic pursuits and research just as I did over these past few decades.

I appreciate those who made the sacrifice before me. It gave me the freedom to pursue my mathematical interests with only modest attention to administrative matters. In particular, the department and I owe Krishna Alladi a great debt of gratitude for his taking on this duty these past ten years.

Let me highlight one of Krishna's administrative successes. During his term as Chair, Krishna created the custom of celebrating Special Years. Each Special Year was focused on an area of strength in the department. Our Topology and Dynamics Group led the way with the first of these years. The Special Years brought attention to the department and enhanced our international reputation in a way that no other activity could have done. Krishna has had the unique vision to create this tradition and it will have a lasting legacy.

Krishna began his term as Chair with John Thompson being awarded the Presidential Medal of Science and he ends his term with John Thompson winning the Abel Prize. These are remarkable bookends to a sterling term of service.

As I reflect on my past years in the Department of Mathematics, it is remarkable how far we have come. At the beginning of my career, we were on the margins. There was only one senior researcher of international reputation and he was in his declining years. Now we are a major center of mathematical activity and can boast of many areas of strength with many researchers of international stature. We can now also boast of several new areas of applied mathematics. I am confident that the future will bring greater growth and more recognition.

You may wonder at my confidence in the face of the economic downturn that Florida is experiencing. Along with the rest of the nation and the world, the mortgage crisis and the spike in the price of petroleum have affected us. The effects are being felt in budget reductions in the State University System. Deep cuts have affected the University of Florida and our department. With these events in mind, it seems almost ludicrous to be optimistic. However, from my perspective of several decades, these economic difficulties are just a hiccup along the path. I have seen these cycles in the past. Fair winds will blow again soon and we will be prepared to resume our journey.

My confidence is not solely based on the likelihood of favorable change. What gives me greater certainty is my strong confidence in the faculty of our department and the alumni of our program. They are the true guarantors of our future. Together we will continue our traditions of excellence. I look forward to reporting on the successes of both faculty and alumni in future columns.

A NOTE OF THANKS

by Krishnaswami Alladi

It is again a pleasure to warmly thank all those who contributed to the support of our educational activities in the department during the past academic year. Donations received at the UF Foundation for the fiscal year through June 30, 2008 totaled over $5,000 (not including the funding of the Thompson-Chandler Research Assistant Professorship). Non-anonymous alumni and friends donations during the time period July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008 included contributions from **Marian A. Anderson, William** and **Cynthia Chandler**, **Virginia Chow**, **Donald Cook**, **Michael J. Crofford**, **John Devine**, **Jeffrey S. Doker**, **David Drake**, **Talia Elkin**, **Charles M. Ennis**, **Laura E. Ennis**, **Karen Fagin**, **Evelyn C. Farfante**, **Gary P. Gordon**, **Thomas F. Hagan**, **William Hare**, **Dorothy Hemond**, **Being-Jane Her**, **Edward K. Hinson**, **Thomas C. Hoi**, **Philip B. Kane**, **John Kenelly**, **Ruth K. Langebrake**, **Carlos F. Perez**, **Albert J. Rodger**, **Robert W. Shuford**, **Irvin L. Smith**, **Nevins C. Smith**, **Dongxing Wang**, and **Veronica Yates-Riley**.

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The Academic Year 2007-2008 in Pictures
www.math.ufl.edu/photos/ay2007-08.html

The Program in Algebra, Number Theory and Combinatorics 2007-2008
www.math.ufl.edu/specialprogram/2007-8

THANKS TO FACULTY, STAFF, & STUDENTS

by Krishnaswami Alladi

I was pleased to serve as Chair of the Mathematics Department for ten years because it gave me an opportunity to work towards the growth and development of the Department in various ways. I have enjoyed the role as Chair because I received total cooperation and support from faculty, staff, and students. I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all of you for your support. In particular, I would like to thank the following individuals who helped me in administration:

Professors Neil White (Associate Chair, 1998–2000), Louis Block (Associate Chair, 2000–2002), James Brooks (Associate Chair, 2002–2008), Scott McCullough (Acting Chair 2005–2006 while I was on leave), Bruce Edwards (Undergraduate Coordinator, 1998–2001), David Groisser (Undergraduate Coordinator, 2001–2008), Rick Smith (Undergraduate Coordinator during the summers), and Paul Robinson (Graduate Coordinator, 1998–2008).

Staff members Sharon Easter (Administrative Assistant), Sandra Gagnon (Office Manager), Lou Hernandez (Chair's Secretary, 1998–2000), Pam Harrelson (Chair's Secretary, 2001–2004), Krystal Glover (Chair's Secretary, 2005–2006), Sonja Pealer (Fiscal Assistant, 1998–2000), Vickie Vallance (Fiscal Assistant, 2001–2004), Margaret Somers (Grants Assistant, 2005–2008), Julia Porchiazzo (Undergraduate Secretary, until 2007), Gretchen Garrett (Graduate Secretary), Marie Hahn (Technical Typist), Mary Harris (Senior Fiscal Assistant, 2007–2008) and Constance Doby (Receptionist).

Computer Systems Administrators Urvashi Shah (until 2001), Bruce Klein (until 2001), and Brian Roberts (2001–2008). I could not have managed the Department without this help.

Chair, *continued from page 1*

delivered by 2007 Abel Laureate Srinivasa Varadhan (Courant Institute) on "Random walks and diffusions in a random medium." Professor Varadhan was honored with the Abel Prize for his path breaking contributions to the theory of probability. Quite appropriately, we had CLAS Interim Dean **Joseph Glover** (himself a probabilist) give the Opening Remarks for this lecture.

The contact with the steady stream of eminent visitors to the Department has brought international visibility of our research and helped in the placement of our graduate students. We are very proud that graduate student **Hung Ngoc Nguyen** who finished under the direction of Professor **Pham Huu Tiep** has accepted a post-doctoral position at Michigan State University. **Adnan Sabuwala** (a PhD student of Professor **Shari Moskow**) will be a tenure-track Assistant Professor at California State University. **Paul Brodhead** who finished his PhD degree under the supervision of Professor **Doug Cenzer** will be an Assistant Professor at the University of Hawaii in 2008–2009. And **Micah Coleman** who finished his PhD under the direction of Professor **Miklos Bona** (after serving a year in Iraq!!) will be employed at the Georgia Tech Research Institute. I have highlighted here just the academic positions that our PhD students received this year.

Our faculty continue to do extremely well in research. In fact, the total external funding received by our faculty has nearly tripled in ten years! This success in research funding has been recognized by the award of the University of Florida Research Foundation (UFRF) Professorship to Professor **William Hager** for the three year period 2008–2011. Professor Hager was chosen for this award for his outstanding research in the area of optimization and the mathematical study of lightning, and for his successes in graduate education. This is the third UFRF Professorship for the Department during my ten-year term as chair.

The Department is as much committed to teaching as it is to research. Professor **Miklos Bona** (a very successful researcher in combinatorics, indeed a world authority in the study of permutations) received the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) Mentoring Award. A pleasant development in a year plagued by budget cuts was the authorization from the administration of the Thompson-Chandler Research Assistant Professorship. **Mr. William and Mrs. Cynthia Chandler** gave a handsome donation for this three-year position starting in Fall 2008 and this was matched by the administration. Dr. **Necibe Turner** will be joining as the Thompson Chandler Research Assistant Professor (in applied mathematics) in Fall 2008 and we welcome her to our department.

Four of our colleagues retired during the year, three of them the DROP Program—Professors **David Wilson** and **Theral Moore** in December 2007, and Professor **Neil White** in May 2008**.** Senior Lecturer **Ronnie Khuri** did basic retirement in May 2008. They have all rendered exemplary service to the Department over the years and were presented plaques during the December Christmas Party and the Spring Appreciation Tea respectively. All four have been awarded Emeritus status and we look forward to many more years of association with them.

This is the tenth and final year of my term as Chair of the Mathematics Department. I complete my term with the satisfaction that I have accomplished all the goals I set out in my vision statement of 1998. During the last ten years, the international visibility and reputation of the Department has risen significantly owing to our accomplishments and the introduction of several programs of high quality such as the Distinguished Colloquia, the Special Years and the Thompson Assistant Professorship. It has been a pleasure working with the faculty, staff, and students in launching and conducting these programs. Also during this period, the outstanding work done by the Department was recognized with awards to the faculty, graduate students and staff. Towards the final weeks of my term as Chair came the sensational news of the award of the 2008 Abel Prize to Graduate Research Professor **John Thompson**. This is, without exaggeration, the highest-ever academic recognition in the history of the University of Florida. We had a Reception at the Keene Faculty Center on March 27, the very day of the announcement of the prize. The news had spread like wildfire across campus, and despite the short notice, there was an excellent turnout at the reception. UF President Bernard Machen who was in the midst of budgetary discussions with the Florida Legislature, flew from Tallahassee to be present at the reception. In congratulating Professor Thompson, he stressed the paramount importance of this award to UF and pointed out that the Mathematics Department has to be given the credit for providing a conducive environment for Professor Thompson. My wife Mathura and I were invited to attend the Abel Prize Ceremony and all related events in Oslo in May 2008. It was a pleasure and privilege for us to take part in the 2008 Abel Prize Program and witness the award of the prizes to Professors John Thompson and Jacques Tits by King Harald V of Norway. I am glad to finish my term as Chair with news and events of such exalted level. I pass the baton to my experienced colleague Professor **James Keesling** who will take over as Chair from July 1, 2008. I am confident that in his able hands the Department will continue on its path to progress and I wish him the best in his efforts.

JOHN THOMPSON & JACQUES TITS
WIN 2008 ABEL PRIZE

by Krishnaswami Alladi

Graduate Research Professor **John Griggs Thompson** of the Department of Mathematics was co-recipient of the 2008 Abel Prize for Mathematics. He shares the 6 million NOK (more than $1 million) prize with the renowned Belgian mathematician Jacques Tits of the College de France. The President of the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters announced the news on March 27. Thompson and Tits will receive the prize on May 20, 2008 in Oslo from His Majesty King Harald V of Norway. The news release from the Norwegian Academy and the citations of the 2008 Nobel Laureates can be found at www.abelprisen.no/en/.

There is no Nobel Prize for mathematics, and the Abel Prize is its equivalent in prestige and prize money. The prize is named after the great Norwegian mathematician Neils Henrik Abel and was launched in connection with his bicentenary in 2003. The prize recognizes outstanding scientific work in the field of mathematics. Excluding the Abel Prize, the most prestigious prize in mathematics is the Fields Medal, which Thompson won at the International Congress of Mathematicians in Nice in 1970. The Fields Medal, however, is awarded only to mathematicians under the age of forty. The Abel Prize, in contrast, recognizes the achievements of mathematicians of any age. This year's award brings up to eight the total number of Abel Laureates. Three Fields Medalists including Professor Thompson are also Abel Laureates.

Professor Thompson is one of the most eminent mathematicians in the world. For more than half a century he has been a leading authority in the field of group theory, which is a mathematical study of symmetry. The subject had its origins in the work of the nineteenth century French mathematician Evariste Galois, who in his teens discovered fundamental symmetry properties related to the solutions of polynomial equations. Group theory today has found applications to many fields within and outside mathematics, including chemistry, computer science, and physics.

As a graduate student in the fifties at the University of Chicago, Thompson solved a famous sixty-year-old problem in group theory. It was clear that the ideas in his thesis would lead to a new era in group theory. Soon after his PhD, Thompson collaborated with Walter Feit (at Yale for many years) and the two stunned the world by solving one of the great problems of group theory, namely, the solvability of all groups of odd order. The Feit-Thompson proof of this result was 253 pages long and filled an entire issue of the Pacific Journal of Mathematics. For this revolutionary work, Feit and Thompson were awarded the 1966 Cole Prize of the American Mathematical Society. Thompson continued to produce results of great importance that shaped the development of group theory in the following decades. In particular, his work was crucial in the solution of one of the monumental problems of mathematics, namely, the classification of finite simple groups. This sustained effort by hundreds of mathematicians around the world for over four decades was in large part launched and guided by him. This classification was completed just a few years ago. For his outstanding contributions to algebra in general and group theory in particular, Thompson has received numerous awards and recognitions in addition to the Cole Prize and the Fields Medal. These include the Senior Berwick Prize of the London Mathematical Society (1982), the Sylvester Medal of the Royal Society (1987), the Wolf Prize of Israel (1992), the Poincare Medal of France (1992), and the National Medal of Science (2000). He has been awarded honorary doctorates by the University of Illinois, Yale University (where he was an undergraduate), Oxford University, and the Ohio State University.

Thompson received his PhD at the University of Chicago in 1959 under the direction of Saunders MacLane. After serving as Professor at the University of Chicago, he was appointed in 1970 as Rouse Ball Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge University, England, where he was until his retirement in 1993, after which he joined the University of Florida as Graduate Research Professor of Mathematics. Professor Thompson has been an inspiring presence in the department and has helped us build a world-class group in algebra. For his 70th birthday, the department held a Special Year in Algebra 2002–2003, when the most active researchers in the world in group theory assembled at the University of Florida. It was also in 2002–2003 that the Department, with the support of the Administration, launched the John G. Thompson Research Assistant Professorships in his honor. The international reputation of the Department has risen significantly in the last few years owing to the introduction of several programs of high quality. In launching and developing these programs, I have relied on Professor Thompson's guidance and benefited from his wisdom and experience. And now with the Abel Prize, the highest-ever academic recognition to the University of Florida is again due to Mathematics Graduate Research Professor John Thompson!

A celebration of the announcement of Professor Thompson's receiving the Abel Prize was held in the Keene Faculty Center on March 27. In attendance from the adminstration were UF President **Bernard Machen**, Provost **Janie Fouke**, Vice President for Research **Win Phillips**, and CLAS Interim Dean **Joseph Glover**. Among the remarks of these administrators, what stood out was the President's comment that Thompson's receipt of the Abel Prize while on the UF faculty was nicer than the national football championship of a few years ago. Three members of the National Academy, who were visiting the department the prior week (Professors George Andrews of Penn State, Bert Kostant of MIT, and Peter Sarnak of Princeton), had taped congratulations for Thompson, which were shown. Also, while attending a conference in Chicago, Professors **Alex Turull** and **Peter Sin** sent a taped video congratulating Thompson, with some humorous aspects. Dr. Berit Johne, Counselor for Science, Royal Norwegian Embassy, Washington, DC paid the compliments of the Norwegian ambassador to the US to Professor Thompson and presented him with a video on the Abel prize and Abel himself as well as a handsome book detailing Norse exploration of North America.

On Thursday, April 3, a

UFRF PROFESSORSHIP
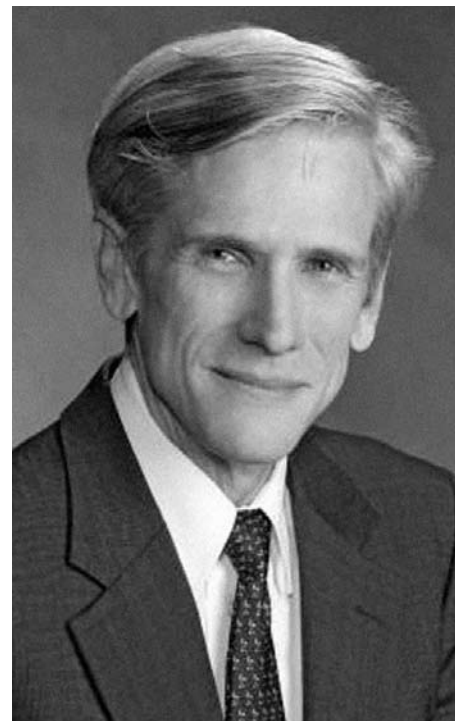# FOR WILLIAM HAGER

by Krishnaswami Alladi

Professor William Hager, the senior most member of our Applied Mathematics group, has been awarded a University of Florida Research Foundation (UFRF) Professorship for the three-year period 2008–2011.

Professor Hager is a world authority in the area of Optimization. The National Science Foundation has continuously funded his fundamental research. He is currently involved in the mathematical analysis of lightning, and in the study of sparse matrix algorithms.

In addition to being an outstanding researcher, he is a very successful graduate mentor, having supervised half a dozen PhD dissertations at UF. One of his PhD students, Hongchao Zhang, won the Society of Industrial and Applied Mathematics (SIAM) Prize for Best Student Paper (coauthored with Hager) in 2006. A graduate student in engineering, whom Hager mentored in connection with an algorithm on sparse matrices, has been applying their techniques at the technology company Nextwave Wireless.

Professor Hager is the Editor-in-Chief of the journal Computational Optimization and Applications, published by Springer, and is one of the Directors for the Center for Applied Optimization. He has been recognized with the UFRF Professorship for his outstanding contributions to research and graduate education. This is the third UFRF Professorship for the Mathematics Department in eight years, and it testifies to the high quality of research by our faculty.

Thompson, *continued from page 4*

dinner was held to honor Professor Thompson at the Hilton, especially for those who were unable to attend the earlier ceremony in the Keene Faculty Center, to pay tribute to Thompson also. Among the attendees was **Virginia Chow** who reported that her late husband Professor **Chat Ho**, one of Thompson's PhD students, had always spoken often and admiringly to her of Thompson. Virginia told us that Thompson had visited Brazil when Ho was a professor at the University of Brasilia and during Thompson's association at UF, he seemed like part of their family. In replying himself at the end of these tributes before dinner was served, Professor Thompson said that he is sometimes pessimistic about mathematics in America, but hopes that young people will find their way into that field in the 21st century, even though the study of group theory may seem very daunting now with all the advances which have been made.

For photos covering the Reception in the Keene Faculty Center for Professor Thompson, visit our website: www.math.ufl.edu/photos/abel-reception.html.

Professor John Thompson and Dr. (Mrs.) Diane Thompson (center) are greeted by Krishna Alladi (left) and Berit Johne (right).

PROGRAM IN ALGEBRA, **NUMBER THEORY** AND COMBINATORICS 2007–2008

by Krishnaswami Alladi

Motivated by the great success of the Special Years Program, which ran from 2001–2002 to 2006–2007, the Department decided to begin a Program in Algebra, Number Theory and Combinatorics (ANTC), three areas in which the Department has great strength and tradition. The ANTC Program is modeled along the lines of the Special Years Program, but enhanced by an educational component. The ANTC Program was highlighted by four conferences:

1. Conference on Group Representations and Combinatorics, September 10–14, 2007, organized by **Peter Sin** and **Pham Tiep**

2. Chat Ho Memorial Conference on Combinatorics and Groups, February 21–24, 2008, organized by **Neil White**, **David Drake**, and **Hua Wang**

3. Student Workshop and Conference on Partitions, q-Series and Modular Forms, March 8–16, 2008, organized by **Krishnaswami Alladi**, **George Andrews**, **Alexander Berkovich**, and **Frank Garvan**

4. Conference on the Conrad Legacy, May 5–8, 2008, organized by **Jorge Martinez**

Details about each of these conferences is provided below by the organizers.
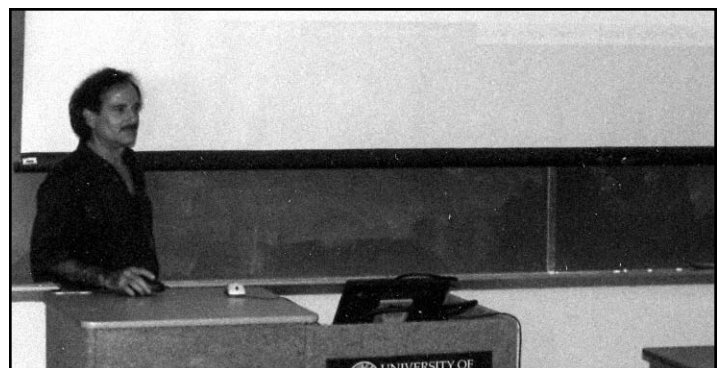
The ANTC Program was supported by the National Science Foundation, the Number Theory Foundation, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Mathematics Department. The instructional component to the ANTC Program alluded to above was provided in several ways. I gave a graduate level topics course on the theory of partitions in spring 2008 to prepare our graduate students for the March 2008 conference. Professor Dominique Foata, a world-renowned combinatorialist, gave a one-month course of lectures in February 2008, on "q-series and Permutation Statistics" which also prepared the students for the March conference. Finally, the March conference was immediately preceded by a preparatory Student Workshop, which was attended by about a dozen talented undergraduates from around the nation, as well as a few students from overseas. In addition, there were several featured survey lectures of wide appeal by eminent visiting mathematicians (see my opening column for details on these). Thus the first year of the ANTC Program was a great success and we are excited to develop this in the future as a successor to the Special Years Program.

Conference on Group Representations and Combinatorics
September 10–14, 2007
by Peter Sin

The Special Program in Algebra, Combinatorics and Number Theory kicked off in September with an international conference on Group Representations and Combinatorics, organized by Pham Huu Tiep and Peter Sin. As well as a large number of research talks, this conference incorporated a short instructional series of lectures by Alexander Kleshchev of University of Oregon on "Representations of finite groups and categorification" and our own **Alexander Turull** on "Bijections of characters and rationality." In addition to his opening lecture surveying the latest developments of block theory, Michel Broue of the Institute Henri Poincare delivered an inspiring History of Mathematics lecture on the theme "Local Group Theory: from Frobenius to Rickard." The conference had good participation by graduate students from UF and outside, which contributed directly to its success. Our Alumni Fellow **Hung Ngoc Nguyen** presented his research on irreducible restrictions for representations. The connections between representations and combinatorics were elegantly illustrated in Jorn Olsson's colloquium lecture. There

Professor Michel Broue (Directeur, Institut Henri Poincare) delivering a History Lecture during the Conference on "Group representations and combinatorics" on Sept. 12, 2007.

was an interesting variety of research talks by visitors Berenstein, Cliff, Fong, Guest, Kassabov, Lin, Li, Pillen, Srinivasan, Wocjan, and Xiang as well as talks by local participants Graduate Research Professor **John Thompson**, who spoke about his fascinating work on the divisor matrix, and organizers Sin and Tiep who, true to the spirit of "The show must go on" filled in for a speaker who had been forced to cancel at the last minute. The NSF and the UF Mathematics Department supported the conference. Thanks go also to the departmental staff for their tireless efficiency and expert catering, both of which drew praise from our visitors.

Chat Yin Ho Memorial Conference
February 21–24, 2008
by David Drake

Graduate Research Professor John Thompson spoke at the Chat Ho Memorial Conference on Combinatorics and Groups, February 22, 2008.

The Chat Yin Ho Memorial Conference on Groups and Combinatorics was attended by approximately 65 participants. From Thursday, February 21 through Sunday, February 24, there were a total of 32 talks given by speakers from 11 different countries, many by eminent mathematicians. The international attendees included among the world's foremost authorities on generalized quadrangles, Jef Thas of the University of Ghent (speaking on "Generalized hexagons and Singer geometries") and Stanley Payne of the University of Colorado, Denver, (lecturing on "Is there a non-classical GQ of odd order?").
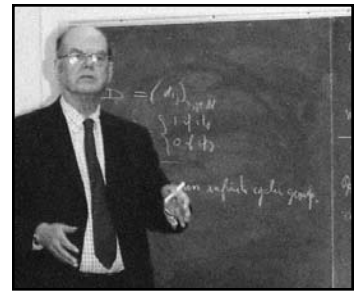
In view of Chat Ho's efforts on behalf of the University of Florida graduate program, the organizers made a special effort to honor Chat by including graduate students in the conference program. Thus, the roster of speakers included nine advanced graduate students from six universities, and the total number of graduate students who attended was more than 20.

There was active participation both by UF faculty and by UF graduate students, and the department can be proud of their contributions. UF graduate student **Micah Coleman** chaired the opening session of the conference and gave polished introductions of the eminent combinatorialist Dominique Foata from the University of Strasburg (who opened the conference with a lecture on "A quantum version of the MacMahon Master Theorem") as well as his advisor UF Professor **Miklos Bona** who spoke on "Generalized descents and normality." UF graduate students **Ogul Arslan** (holder of the Chat Yin Ho Scholarship during 2007–2008), **Tim Bonner**, and **Yong Yang** all gave very smooth talks on their

research. Others and I were much impressed with the stage presence of all four. Arslan spoke on "Dimensions of LU(3,q)," Bonner spoke on "Elements of the derived subgroups as products of commutators," and Yang spoke on "Orbits of the action of finite solvable groups." Also former UF graduate student **Michael Schroeder** returned from the University of Wisconsin and spoke on "Row and Column Orthogonal (0,1)- Matrices." UF Graduate Research Professor **John Thompson** and Professor **Peter Sin** both spoke on their joint research on "The Divisor Matrix, Dirichlet Series, and SL(2,Z)." Professor **Alexander Turull** lectured in "Strengthened McKay conjecture for p-solvable groups."

Wednesday, February 20th, David and Donna Drake held a welcoming reception at their home, before the conference began

the following morning. Thursday evening, a walk to Lake Alice to watch the nightly exodus of bats from the "most successful bat house in North America" took place. Friday, Neil and Mary White held a pizza party at their home. Saturday noon included a drive to the home of Chat Ho and Virginia Chow where the participants could enjoy the rose gardens, which were such a delight to Chat. Monday morning, a trip to Payne's Prairie to view egrets, ibises, and alligators was scheduled, which was greatly enjoyed by those who participated.

Student Workshop and Conference on Partitions, q-Series and Modular Forms
March 8–16, 2008
by Krishnaswami Alladi

The Department has one of the strongest programs in the world in the theory of partitions and in areas related to the work of the Indian mathematical genius Srinivasa Ramanujan. In the last decade, the Department has conducted several conferences on partitions and related areas, and indeed had become internationally known for this type of activity. Thus the March 2008 conference is in continuation of this fine tradition, except that this time we decided to have a preparatory Student Workshop immediately preceding it. The idea was to ask one of the main speakers of the conference to actually give a series of three one-hour lectures focus-

ing on major advances in a specific topic. We chose Professor Ken Ono to deliver these three lectures since he and his co-workers have obtained far-reaching results on several topics stemming directly from Ramanujan's works—partition congruencies, and mock-theta functions, to name just two. The Workshop was a preparation for the students to understand the conference talks in general, and mini-course of lectures by Ono in particular. The Student Workshop was attended by about a dozen talented undergraduates from all over the USA and a few from overseas. About half the students came from the NSF funded Fall 2007 MASS (Mathematics Advanced Study

Semesters) Program at Penn State University. Sharon Garthwaite (Bucknell University), a former student of Ono, was the main instructor for the Workshop. She gave four preparatory lectures, one each morning. These were augmented by lectures in the afternoon for the Workshop (one each) by me and my colleagues **Alexander Berkovich**, **Frank Garvan**, and **Li Shen**.

The conference attracted 75 participants from around the world. There were eight plenary speakers who gave one-hour talks—Professors George Andrews (Penn State), Bruce Berndt (Urbana, Illinois), Frank Garvan (UF), Ken Ono (Wisconsin), Peter Paule (RISC, Austria), Ole

As the main instructor of the Student Workshop on "Partitions, q-series and modular forms," Sharon Garthwaite (Bucknell University) gave four lectures during March 8–11, 2008.

Warnaar (Melbourne), Herb Wilf (U-Penn), and Sander Zwegers (Dublin, Ireland) - and several 20-minute presentations. The refereed proceedings of the conference will be published as a Special Issue of The Ramanujan Journal, and will also be made available in book form in the series Developments in Mathematics—both published by Springer.

Conference on the Conrad Legacy
May 5–8, 2008
by Jorge Martinez

The Consortium for Order in Algebra and Logic (OAL), in collaboration with Vanderbilt University, and both the Department of Mathematics and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Florida, sponsored a conference on

the UF campus entitled, "On the Conrad legacy." This conference was dedicated to the memory of Paul Conrad, first at Tulane then later at the University of Kansas, and to an examination of the development of mathematics to which he

contributed so much.

The conference dealt with a broad range of topics in Ordered Algebraic Structures, from lattice ordered groups to rings of continuous functions. There were 26 speakers, from North America as well

as Europe and North Africa. PhD graduate **Warren McGovern**, now an Associate Professor at Bowling Green spoke on "Bazzoni's Conjecture on Prufer domains" and Professor **Jorge Martinez** lectured on "Free meets in algebraic frames."

RETIREES
RONNIE KHURI, THERAL MOORE, & NEIL WHITE HONORED

by Paul Ehrlich

During the 2007–2008 academic year, Professor **Theral Moore** was honored at a ceremony on December 7, 2007 and Senior Lecturer **Ronnie Khuri** and Professor **Neil White** were honored at a ceremony on April 24, 2008. Professor **David Wilson** also received emeritus status in December 2007 and celebrated with a trip to Australia in Spring 2008 to collaborate with a well known expert in fractals, Michael Barnsley. Wilson told us that he has enjoyed 35 years of service at UF and especially teaching smaller classes, and he received a plaque recognizing his service.

Professor Theral Moore came to UF in 1955 and thus personally experienced not only the turmoil over the administration's selection of the relatively youthful John Maxfield as new outside chair in place of the expected internal chair who would have been decades older, but also the last half of Franklin Kokomoor's chairmanship. Beginning the December ceremony, Chair Krishna Alladi remarked that Moore has been a teacher par excellence over many years, winning not only two TIP awards, but also a CLAS teaching award. First Rick Smith spoke about Theral and his service of over 52 years at the University of Florida. Drawing partly upon an article he had written for the CLAS newsletter in 1993 when Theral was only 66, Rick related how when Theral was an undergraduate at the University of Arkansas, a professor had told him about using a jewelers loop to read, and Theral had been able to read a few letters at a time from 1948 until 1972. During that time, he worked in topology, writing a noted text on that subject and directing a series of masters dissertations during the 1960s. (At the end of the ceremony, current faculty member Professor **Jorge Martinez** made the surprising revelation that he had taken Moore's topology course while in his undergraduate studies here at UF. Martinez recalled Moore suggesting to the students that they should use the phraseology "Suppose X is a topological space" in place of "Let X be a topological space" as sounding less presumptuous.) After 1972, Theral changed his attention to number theory and co-authored several publications with Professor **Edwin Hadlock**, his late father-in-law, then on the faculty. Also in the late 1980s, Theral's wife **Nancy Moore** mastered

Latex and thus as a joint project growing out of earlier discussions between Hadlock and Moore, Moore produced a complex variable text T. Hadlock, T. Moore, *Complex Analysis, World Scientific Series in Pure Mathematics*, volume 9, 1991.

Past lecturer **Tina Carter** had returned to UF from Buffalo to participate in Theral's retirement ceremony. As a personal project, she had asked former students to write letters on having had Theral as a teacher. What stood out among the comments were Theral's caring and compassionate attitude, his willingness to spend lots of time with students during office hours, his transmitting a love for calculus and the beauty of mathematics, and also serving as an example of how obstacles can be overcome (hence even the fear of mathematics.) Tina herself told us that despite having an undergraduate degree in Sociology, she had become involved in teaching college algebra as a lecturer. When it was suggested that she move to teaching Calculus II and III, she found this forbidding. Hence she decided to sit in on Theral's section during summer school without telling him to ease the transition. Observing Theral's teaching for herself, she fell in love with mathematics all over again.

At Theral's request, Professor **Paul Ehrlich** spoke about some aspects of how the evolution of the Department here at UF fit into certain national trends in the historical development of the mathematical research community after 1900, especially focusing on Theral's advisor, Professor Leonard M. Blumenthal of the University of Missouri-Columbia, himself a student of the second senior mathematics faculty member, Frank Morley, at the new research university Johns Hopkins. Among the 18 PhD students Blumenthal produced at Missouri, 3 of them served on the UF faculty during the Simpson/Kokomoor years. David Ellis, with a PhD in 1948 on *Distance Geometry of Algebraic Structures*; Jerry Gaddum, with a PhD in 1951 on *A Metric Study of*

Retirees Neil White and Ronnie Khuri cut their retirement cake as Ronnie's husband, Statistics Professor Andrawus Khuri looks on.

Arcs; and Theral Moore, with a PhD in 1955 on *A Metric Foundation of Elliptic 2-Space*. (Later Moore revealed that an aspect of Missouri during the time in which only Blumenthal was taking PhD students is that Blumenthal would only take one at a time, so one had to wait in a queue for others to finish. In Theral's year, with Blumenthal finally sending one of the graduate students to work with Professor Roy Utz, which left 3 for Blumenthal to deal with.) At the Annual Christmas party, Theral was presented with a plaque commemorating his years of service. In reply, Theral said that he had appreciated all the friendly "Hellos" in the halls he had heard over the years.

Before the Annual Appreciation Day Tea on April 24, 2008, a ceremony was held beginning at noon to honor retirees Senior Lecturer Ronnie Khuri and Professor Neil White. Faculty **Rick Smith** and **Jane Smith** shared a presentation honoring Khuri. Since Ronnie took her graduate studies in Statistics, Rick prepared a quite illuminating series of transparencies on *Ronnie by the Numbers*. Ronnie had received the BA degree at Eckert College in 1969 in mathematics, then came to UF to do graduate work in statistics. During that time, she met her husband, Andre Khuri, who was doing graduate work in mathematics. [They both still vividly remember how hot the third floor of Walker Hall was in August in the old days.] Joining Andre in the Middle East, Ronnie took her degree at the American University of Beirut in 1973. By the 1980s, the Khuris had returned to UF where Andre was a professor in the Statistics Department. After an academic year 1981–1982 teaching in Statistics here, Ronnie moved over to the mathematics department and has been teaching with us up until her retirement, recently

obtaining promotion to the rank of Senior Lecturer once that rank had been established on campus around 2000. Rick Smith estimated that she had taught over 33,237 students in her 27 years at UF, coordinated 43,300 students, supervised 443 TAs, written around 267 letters of recommendation, and answered around 18,000 e-mail messages over the last 5 years (not including spam) on issues arising from course coordination. An important aspect of the role of the coordinator involves visiting the TAs' classrooms and advising them in improving their teaching. Past graduate student Adnan Sabuwala wrote a testimony for the occasion on how effectively Khuri had helped him improve in the classroom. Jane Smith then spoke about her years at UF with Ronnie. All the lecturers had first shared the same room on the 3rd floor of Walker Hall, then the same basement room of Walker Hall, and finally had close offices in Little Hall, so they had spent much time together over the years. Especially, they both recalled having to make special accommodations for a student, Danny Wuerffel, when he was taking mathematics classes. Jane shared how helpful being able to consult with Ronnie had been to her, and explained how they always would both be in the room when dealing with cases of student cheating and sometimes they had to try to get the student to confess. After the Smith's concluded, Chair Alladi, Neil White, David Groisser and Sherry Tornwall also paid tributes to Ronnie. Especially, Alladi revealed he had encouraged his older daughter, who wished to study law, to take calculus while at UF. His daughter concurred with his wishes and had Khuri as instructor. At the end of the semester, the daughter told Alladi that thanks to Ronnie's instruction, she finally enjoyed calculus. At the end of the Recognition Tea, Khuri herself said a few words after she accepted a plaque from Chair Alladi commemorating her years of service. She said that working with the incoming graduate students on their teaching, then later seeing them move on to other jobs was most rewarding. She remarked that one interesting aspect of giving large lecture classes is that when one is out and about in Gainesville, one is always being recognized by students, but of course, you do not know them yourself. She also thanked Jane in exchange for having been a real support over the years.

Next, Professor **Andrew Vince** gave an illuminating presentation of aspects of Professor Neil White's research in combinatorics, which has been at the intersection of algebra, geometry and combinatorics. Two broad topics White has pursued are matroid theory and the geometric aspects of the Grassmann-Cayley algebra (including rigidity of frameworks, robotics, and computer aided reasoning in geometry as applications.) At the outset, Vince mentioned that in addition to White's research publications, he is the editor of three books

(Theory of Matroids, Combinatorial Geometries, Matroid Applications) and the co-author of a fourth book on matroid theory published with the Cambridge University Press in the Encyclopedia of Mathematics Series. More recently, White is the co-author with A. Borovik and the celebrated Russian mathematician I. M. Gelfand of a book on Coxeter Matroids published by Birkhauser. Vince explained that matroids go back to the work of Hassler Whitney in 1935 on abstracting properties of linear independence (thus a matroid is defined to be a finite nonempty subset E and a collection of subsets where the members of the collection satisfy properties like that of linear independence in linear algebra.) Given a matroid, a topological realization has been constructed, which was conjectured to always be topologically connected. But White provided an example of an oriented matroid whose realization was topologically disconnected, however. Vince also explained that a famous collapse of a large roof framework in Hartford under the weight of snow could be fitted into White's work on infinitesimal rigidity and rigidity of frameworks. (While the given framework was infinitesimally rigid and rigid, it was close to a configuration which was NOT infinitesimally rigid, and under the weight of the snow, the roof was deformed into this later framework.) Part of White's research on the Grassmann-Cayley algebra also turned out to be useful in his work in the laboratory of UF Graduate Research Professor of Mechanical Engineering James Duffy who specialized in robotic motion.

After Vince's presentation, Chair Alladi and Professors David Drake, Miklos Bona, Paul Ehrlich, Louis Block, and Jed Keesling paid tribute to Neil. Alladi especially recalled that he first heard of Neil White after Alladi had accepted his position here and the noted number theorist Carl Pomerance told Alladi that he knew White as both a fine mathematician and a fine individual. Alladi especially praised White for his ability to co-author a book with Gelfand, who is known to be a difficult personality to work with. Drake seconded Alladi's recollection of Pomerance's comments and relayed that Graduate Research Professor John Thompson had expressed similar sentiments. Also Drake recalled that White had won teaching awards while teaching the large lecture

Theral and Nancy Moore cutting the cake presented to them on the occasion of the retirement of Professor Moore.

calculus sections and also praised White for his professional work in organizing conferences over the years. In a counter tale to Martinez's revealing in December 2007 that he had been a student of Moore while an undergraduate at UF, Ehrlich revealed that in 1969, he had taken a junior tutorial section in Combinatorics from White while in college. Vince further recalled that White was remembered among the students for asking trivia questions about baseball and geography when he was teaching the large lecture calculus. Mary White also addressed the faculty, and she encouraged us in our present difficult times to cherish our opportunities to work together, telling us that for 35 years, Neil has always enjoyed coming to work and felt blessed to be in such a nice department.

In presenting a commemorative plaque later to White at the Recognition Tea, Chair Alladi said especially when he began his term as chair in 1998, he needed someone dependable who would be a good Associate Chair, and he turned to Neil White to take on this role during 1998—2000. In accepting his plaque, Neil thanked the department for being the most congenial and collegial department that he has ever known among mathematics departments.

FACULTY & STAFF NOTES

by Paul Ehrlich

Early at 6am on the morning of March 27, 2008, Graduate Research Professor **John Thompson** received a phone call from the President of the Norwegian Academy Ole Laerum informing him that he was a co-recipient (with Professor Jacques Tits) of the 2008 Abel Prize in mathematics. This prize, first awarded at the bicentenary of the Norwegian mathematician Abel, is the equivalent in mathematics of the Nobel Prizes in other scholarly areas. A celebration of the announcement was held in the Keene Faculty Center on this same Thursday, including tributes from UF President Machen, UF Provost Janie Fouke, and Interim CLAS Dean Joseph Glover. Also a dinner was held at the Hilton on April 3 to celebrate Thompson's receipt of the Abel Prize. He will accept the prize in Oslo, Norway on May 20 from King Harald V of Norway.

Professor **Alexandre Turull** served on the Organizing Committee for the Glauberman Conference on the Local and Global Analysis of Groups and Related Objects held during March 24–March 28, 2008 at the University of Chicago marking Professor Glauberman's 67th Birthday. Among the principal lecturers were Professors **Peter Sin** as well as Turull, past Thompson Research Assistant Professor **Larry Wilson**, now at the Center for Communications Research in San Diego, and recent graduate Dr. **Adriana Nenciu** at a postdoctoral position at the University of Wisconsin. Nenciu spoke on "Brauer l-tuples," Sin on "The Divisor Matrix, Dirichelt Series and SL(2,Z)," Turull on "Above the Glauberman Correspondence," and Wilson on "Groups with Fixed Point Free Automorphisms of Prime Order." Also, two current UF graduate students **Tim Bonner** and **Yang Yong** gave Short Talks as Junior Presenters. Bonner spoke on "Elements of the derived subgroup as products of commutators" and Yong on "Orbits of the actions of finite solvable groups."

Mathematics Chair **Krishna Alladi** had an active international schedule of lectures on his research as in previous years. He presented his work "A multidimensional extension of Sylverster's identity" as a talk at the Illinois Number Theory Conference on May 16, 2007, as a Plenary Lecture at the Combinatorics and Additive Number Theory Conference at the City University of New York, and as a colloquium at the Madras Institute of Technology, India on August 1, 2007. Another theme on which he spoke was "Partitions into non-repeating odd parts and q-hypergeometric identities" at the Number Theory Seminar at Penn State University on November 1, 2007, and as an Hour Address on December 20, 2007 at the International Conference on Number Theory and Special Functions at SASTRA University in Kumbakonam, India, the hometown of genius Srinivasa Ramanujan. For a third straight year, Alladi served as Chair of the SASTRA Ramanujan Prize Committee. This international prize of $10,000 is given to very young mathematicians for outstanding contributions to areas influenced by Ramanujan. In three years the prize has won international acclaim as can be seen from prominent reports in the Notices of the American Mathematical Society.

Professor **Louis Block** gave an invited lecture at the Visegrad Conference on Dynamical Systems, which took place in Strbske Pleso, Slovakia. The title of the talk given on June 29, 2007 was "On Ingram's Conjecture."

On May 2, 2008, UF President Bernie Machen announced Professor **Joseph Glover**'s appointment as the new UF Provost. Machen indicated in a news release that Glover "has the perfect combination of foresight and institutional memory, and that makes him the ideal person for the job."

Emeritus Professor **Nicolae Dinculeanu** was an invited speaker at the First International Workshop on Functional and Operational Statistics, held at the Paul Sabatier University in Toulouse during June 19–21, 2008. He lectured on "Vector Integration and Stochastic Integration in Banach Spaces."

Professor **William Hager** has been awarded a three-year University of Florida Research Foundation Professorship beginning in fall, 2008. This professorship was granted in recognition of his major role in graduate education and his outstanding research accomplishments.

During the spring semester, 2007, Professor **Bernard Mair** was in the CLAS Dean's Office as an Associate Dean with responsibility for CLAS computing and oversight of the CLAS science chairs. Bernard thus joined the administrative team of CLAS Interim Dean Professor **Joseph Glover**, who was named to that post in 2007.

Professor **Jorge Martinez** served as one of the organizers in a Conference *On the Conrad Legacy* sponsored by the Consortium for Order in Algebra and Logic (OAL) between UF and Vanderbilt University. Held during May 5–8, 2008, the conference attracted speakers from around the world including Britain, Canada, Germany, India, Italy, Tunisia, and Slovakia. Martinez himself spoke on *Free meets in algebraic frames* (joint work with his PhD student **Warren McGovern**.)

Professor **Pham Tiep** was a member of the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute in Berkeley during spring, 2008. He gave invited lectures during the summer 2007 at an International Conference on *Permutation Groups* in Oberwolfach, Germany and at CIRM in Marseille on a conference on *Around the Broue Conjectures*. He also gave invited lectures at the University of Arizona and the University of California at San Diego during spring 2008. During the fall semester, he organized with Professor **Peter Sin** the International Conference on *Group Representations and Combinatorics* held in Gainesville during September 2007. In July 2007, Tiep was a coordinator for the 48th International Mathematical Olympiad, which was held in Hanoi, Vietnam during July 19–31, 2007. This event was attended by 520 high school students from 95 countries around the world. Pham's PhD student **H. N. Nyugen** also attended the August, 2007 conference at Oberwolfach, lectured in the September 2007 conference in Gainesville, and participated (with support) in two workshops in the spring 2008 program at the MSRI Berkeley.

Emeritus Professor **David Wilson** traveled to Australia during spring, 2008, in part to work with the renowned fractal expert David Barnsley in Canberra.

Following a ceremony starting at noon in Little 109 for retirees Senior Lecturer **Ronnie Khuri** and Professor **Neil White**, the Annual Appreciation Day was held in the Atrium at 2:00 pm. Chair Krishna Alladi opened the ceremony with the humorous remark that even though the faculty and graduate student size was shrinking with continued budgetary constraints, the staff still optimistically thinks we are expanding and had placed the refreshments outside this year, so that there was lots of room for the audience in the Atrium. This year, Associate Chair **Jim Brooks** explained a bit about the process involved in selecting the Graduate Student Teaching Awards. Based on our departmental size, we are allowed to submit 3 nominees for university wide teaching awards and for the past 3 years, two out of the three nominees have received awards, which is quite an achievement. (The candidates' classrooms are even visited by 2 evaluators from outside the department.) This year **Brian Boucher** and **Remy Friends Ndangali** received the university wide award. In presenting various undergraduate awards, Associate Chair for Undergraduate Studies **David Groisser** noted that for the third year in a row, the Kermit Sigmon Scholarship has gone to a student with last name beginning in F, this year to undergraduate **Ryan Flynn**, who has been invited to participate in a research conference for graduate students at UC Davis to speak on his research in combinatorics. Also Groisser singled out two graduating mathematics majors, Ryan Flynn again and **Anastasia Ford**, both of whom are graduating summa cum laude, the only two such majors this year. Ryan will be attending Penn State graduate school in mathematics and Anastasia will be attending UF graduate school in cognitive neuroscience. Ryan wrote his honors thesis in pure mathematics *On the Endomorphism Conjecture for Join*

Semi-lattices in which he solved an open problem and Anastasia wrote in applied mathematics on *Quantitative comparison of two algorithms for diffusion tensor data analysis: streamline trajectory in Riemannian framework and probabilisitic tractography*.

Graduate Coordinator **Paul Robinson** then presented the awards involving the graduate program and particularly, explained that for the CLAS dissertation fellowships, only 15–17 are awarded for the entire college, so that it is remarkable that in recent years we have been getting two such awards, and during the past academic year, **Ali Dashti** and **Hung Nguyen** received them

for Spring 2008. As usual, Paul asked if anyone had any words of advice for the graduate students, and when no one else responded, Paul again quoted from Ambrose Bierce's The Devil's Dictionary, this time explaining that the modern academy is a school where football is very important (and this quote goes back decades!). Professor **David Drake** again presented the Chat Yin Ho Scholarship award, this year presenting two awards to **Timothy Bonner** and **Yong Yang**. Chair Alladi resumed the podium for the last part of the program, for his final Appreciation Day after 10 years in office, expressing his appreciation to the faculty, staff, and students. **Gretchen Gar-**

rett received recognition for her promotion to Program Assistant for the Graduate Program. Professor **Miklos Bona** was recognized for his receipt of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute Mentoring Award and Professor **William Hager** was recognized for his receiving a University of Florida Research Foundation Professorship for 2008–2011. Finally Alladi presented the retirement plaques to our spring retirees Ronnie Khuri and Neil White, before Sandy Gagnon and Margaret Somers presented the retirement cake for them to ceremonially cut. Khuri told us that it has been a real pleasure for her to work developing the graduate students teaching skills, and seeing

them move on to jobs in academia. She again spoke about how one aspect of teaching large lecture classes is being recognized when one is out and about in Gainesville. Alladi again remarked for this second audience in presenting White with his plaque, that when Alladi became Chair 10 years ago, he absolutely needed somebody who would be a good Associate Chair at the beginning of his term, and he called upon Neil White to accept the task, who was willing to take it on. In reply, Neil commented to us that in his years at UF, he had found it to be the most congenial and collegial department among any he has encountered.

ALUMNI NEWS

by Paul Ehrlich

PhD graduates Drs. **Jung-Ha An**, PhD 2005, California State University at Stanislaus; **Rebecca Smith**, PhD 2005, SUNY at Brockport; **J. Christopher Tweddle**, PhD 2006, University of Evansville; and current graduate student **Hung Ngoc Nguyen** participated in the Joint Winter Meeting of the American Mathematical Society, held in San Diego during early January, 2008. Jung-Ha An spoke in an AMS Session on Analysis and ODE's on *Gamma-convergence Approximation to Piecewise Smooth Medical Image Segmentation*. Smith spoke in the AMS Session on Combinatorics on *Almost avoiding classes of permutations* (also involving work with co-author Daniel Warren, PhD 2005, at Ohio State). Nguyen spoke in the AMS Session on Algebra and Group Theory on *Low dimensional complex representations of odd characteristic symplectic groups* and Tweddle spoke in the AMS Session on History of Mathematics on *Weierstrass's construction of the real numbers*.

Dr. **Hung Ngoc Nguyen**, PhD 2008, has received a postdoctoral appointment at Michigan State University.

Dr. **Adnan Sabuwala**, PhD 2008, has received an appointment to a tenure track assistant professorship at California State

University at Fresno.

Dr. **Justin Smith**, PhD 2007, is with Fannie Mae in Washington, D.C. joining Dr. **Yuri Turygin**, PhD 2007.

Dr. **Hong Chao Zhang**, PhD 2006, has received a tenure track assistant professorship at LSU after his 2-year postdoctoral appointment at the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications.

Dr. **Rustam Sadykov**, PhD 2004, now at the Max Planck Institute in Bonn, has received a postdoctoral appointment at Dartmouth College starting Fall 2008.

Dr. **Tony Shaska**, PhD 2001, reports that he is now filling two academic roles! First, he has just started a new job as Rector (President) of the University of Vlora in Albania. This university has about 15,000 students and is starting a PhD program this year. The math department is quite active, with 200 math majors every year. There are mathematics conferences organized every year at the University of Vlora. The Shaskas (Tony, wife Jennifer and daughters Rachel Isabel, Adrianna Claire, Eva Vlora, and Bessiana Kate) live in Vlora in an apartment just a couple of hundred yards from the coast and thus enjoy spectacular sunsets. Also Tony was promoted last year to Associate Professor with tenure at Oakland University

in Rochester, Michigan where they still have a house and live for most of the year.

Dr. **Rick White**, PhD 2001, has been promoted to Associate Professor in the Department of Mathematics at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania.

Professor **Chawne Kimber**, PhD 1999, is one of the candidates for membership in the Nominating Committee of the American Mathematical Society.

Professor **Warren McGovern**, PhD 1998, spent the 2007–2008 academic year at UF, on a faculty development grant from Bowling Green State University, where he is an Associate Professor. He especially enjoyed participating in the Frames Seminar. McGovern also participated in the conference "On the Conrad Legacy" sponsored by the Consortium for Order in Algebra and Logic of Vanderbilt University and UF, held during May 5–8, 2008 at UF, speaking on *Bazzoni's Conjecture on Prufer Domains*.

Adrian M. Custer, BA 1986, writes from Lake Worth, Florida that he has been practicing personal injury law for the past 15 years in Palm Beach County. He also reports having 3 children.

Dean of Engineering, Professor **Pramod Kargonekar**, MS 1980, had an eventful time during

the 2007–2008 academic year as Chair of the Search Committee for the new CLAS Dean.

Marian Axtmayer Anderson, BA 1976, writes from Port St. Lucie that she retired after teaching mathematics and computer science in high school for 30 years from that vocation and is now working at TaxPro.

Dr. **Terry Mills**, PhD 1974, reports that he retired as Professor Emeritus from La Trobe University in Australia in 2007. He and his wife Frances have lived in Bendigo since 1975. In recent years, Terry has been active in applying mathematics and statistics to problems in health care. Recently, he took up a position as Senior Cancer Data Analysts at Loddon Mallee Integrated Cancer Service (see www.latrobe.edu/au/tmills).

Clemson University has recognized Professor **John Kenelly**, PhD 1961, as their Emeritus Professor of the Year. The award recognizes post retirement accomplishments and encourages retired faculty members to stay active in their profession, their community and the University, Kenelly was recognized in part for being Treasurer of the Mathematical Association of America, having been President of his local Hospice, and continual service on Florida "Sunshine State Scholar" Program.

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