



# Pitt State Mathematics Department Newsletter

Pittsburg State University, College of Arts and Sciences

Issue 2022-2023

## Special points of interest:

- Alumnus recognized nationally
- Currently there are 29 undergraduate math majors and 10 graduate students.
- Several annual events resumed for the 2021-2022 academic year, including HS Math Honor Day, Math Relays, and the Honor Banquet.

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## News from the Chair

Oh, the difference a year makes! Looking back, it is hard to realize that we started the spring semester with a mask mandate. Out of an abundance of caution, PSU reinstated the mask policy the beginning of the spring semester. The spike expected as students returned to campus did not materialize and after a few weeks the mask mandate was lifted.

It feels as though we may be settling in to the “new normal”. We were able to reinstate many of the activities within the department, many of which you can read about in this newsletter. We were able to host departmental Math Club/KME meetings and provide pizza and drinks for the students. We hosted Math Honor Day in October with 45 students and their teachers from nine area high schools.

Early April was a busy but exciting time for the department. The first weekend of April, Dr. Thuong hosted the North Central Regional Convention of Kappa Mu Epsilon. We had about 40 college students from institutions throughout the north central region on campus including our own contingent of exceptional students.

The following Tuesday we held our annual Math Relays after a two-year hiatus. We had over 700 high school students in attendance. It was great to again be able to experience the excitement this



group brings to campus and to see the teachers whom we had not seen for three years.

The following weekend students and faculty attended the Kansas Section meeting of the Mathematical Association of America at Benedictine College. Our students competed in the Kansas Collegiate Mathematics Competition and students and faculty presented a variety of talks.

All of this in a week and a day!

We were also excited to be able to host our awards banquet again on the last Sunday of April. We had approximately 40 recipients, donors, and guests who were able to attend. It was great to recognize the accomplishment of our outstanding students and to reconnect with our donors and retired faculty.

We are so grateful to all our alumni and benefactors who support the department and allow us to support our students for travel to conferences and fund our awards banquet.

Probably the most exciting news from the department is that we have been ap-

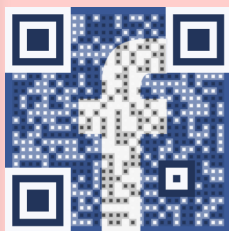
proved to offer a Computer Science degree through the department. Dr. Winters has worked tirelessly to shepherd the program through the approval process. We will begin accepting students into the program this fall; however, we have already enrolled several students for this fall in anticipation of the program. We hope to hire a tenure-track computer science faculty member to support this program in August 2023. Many of the courses in the program are existing courses so we should be able to meet the needs of the students entering this fall. I am sure there will be more information about this program in future newsletters.

As I indicated last year, Dr. Coltharp has entered a phased retirement agreement. She has decided to retire after this fall semester. She will leave a big hole in the department and an incredible legacy of former mathematics education students. In addition, Mrs. Martin has entered a three-year phased retirement agreement. It will be hard to imagine future Math Relays without Mrs. Martin.

As we share the news from within the department, we would love to hear from you as well. If you have any news about happenings in your life, please feel free to let us know so we can pass the word on to others. We would welcome a visit from you if you ever happen to be back in Pittsburg.

## GET INVOLVED

Want to help students attend conferences?  
Contact Dr. Tim Flood  
(tflood@pittstate.edu)  
for information about supporting student travel.



Join us on  
**Facebook:**  
Pitt State  
(Kansas)  
Math Alumni

## Retired Professor Is Recognized

(adapted from the award presentation script, used with permission)

Each year at the Taste of Pittsburg event, the PSU Alumni Association presents a PSU ring to an individual or couple who have made a significant impact on the university. Some past recipients include Jack Overman, Helen Kriesgman, Tom & Koeta Bryant, and Steve & Cathy Scott. In 2021, the PSU Ring was presented to someone who has been at the forefront of mathematics at Pitt State for many decades. Dr. Harold Thomas started his education at PSU in 1952. In 1954, Dr. Thomas was drafted into the United States Army, where he served 18 months overseas in Japan. After serving the country, he then continued his schooling at PSU in 1956 – earning his bachelor's degree in mathematics education in 1958 followed by his master's degree in mathematics in 1959. He served the PSU Mathematics Department as an instructor for one year before attending Oklahoma State University and earning his doctorate degree in statistics. He rejoined the PSU Mathematics Department as an Assistant Professor in 1967 and was promoted to Professor in 1969.

Throughout his career, Dr. Thomas was very active on the campus of Pittsburg State, as well as in the world of mathematics. Among many other roles and professional memberships, Dr. Thomas was very active in Kappa Mu Epsilon, the national mathematics honor society. He served as Historian, President-Elect, and National President. Dr. Thomas received the George Mach Distinguished Service Award from Kappa Mu Epsilon, which is the most prestigious award from the organization. It is awarded to recognize an individual who served the society with distinction. He was inducted in this honor society as a student in 1954.



In addition, Dr. Thomas served PSU as President of the Alumni Association Board of Directors and President of the Faculty Association. He also supported PSU as a Phonathon caller helping to raise funds for the University, as well as donating personal funds. Dr. Thomas and his wife Alice support two scholarships for students at PSU – one in mathematics and one in nursing. Alice is also a two-time graduate of PSU.

In May of 1998, Dr. Thomas retired from Pittsburg State as Professor Emeritus. Today he continues his service as a member of the PSU Foundation Board of Trustees. Dr. Thomas is a die-hard Gorilla fan and can often be found cheering on Gorilla Football and Basketball, but don't try talking to him while the game is in play – he will no doubt have his headphones on!



## Alumnus Is Recognized for National Teaching Award and Selected as NASA Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellow



Alumnus Luke Henke recently traveled to Washington, DC to be recognized as a 2019 recipient of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. (See the 2021-2022 Mathematics Department newsletter for more information. [https://www.pittstate.edu/math\\_files/documents/newsletter/mathdeptnewsletter21ver2.pdf](https://www.pittstate.edu/math_files/documents/newsletter/mathdeptnewsletter21ver2.pdf) )

Luke was also selected as a 2022-2023 Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellow. "The fellows will spend eleven months serving in a federal agency or U.S. Congressional office in Washington, DC, engaged in the national STEM education arena." Mr. Henke will be serving with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

## Alumnus Presents to Students

On March 31, 2022, Gorilla Andrew Buchholz returned to campus. Mr. Buchholz and some of his colleagues spoke to students about opportunities for jobs and internships at the US Army TRADOC Analysis Center in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.



## Student Presents at Local KME Meeting

During a Kansas Alpha KME mathematics honor society meeting on March 9, graduate student Ty Covey presented on *The Ever Confusing Twisted Box*. During this presentation, Mr. Covey went through several models trying to prove that intuition can sometimes be trusted. The presentation included 3-dimensional graphs, vector arithmetic, and cardboard models, such as the one Ty is holding in the picture to the left. As usual at PSU KME meetings, pizza and beverages were provided to the attendees.

## Upcoming Events

**MAA MathFest,**  
Philadelphia, PA,  
Aug 3-6, 2022

**PSU High School Math**  
Honor Day,  
Oct 6, 2022

**PSU Homecoming,**  
Oct 22, 2022

**PSU Fall Break,**  
Nov 21-25, 2022

**Joint Mathematics**  
Meetings, Boston, MA  
Jan 4-7, 2023

**2022 Spring Semester**  
Starts Jan 17, 2023

**KSMAA, Bethany**  
College, Lindsborg, KS,  
April 14-15, 2023

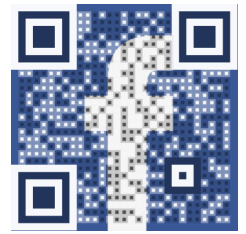
**PSU Math Relays,**  
April 4, 2023

**KME National**  
Convention, TBA

**PSU Math Banquet,**  
April 23, 2023

## PSU Mathematics on Facebook

If you are a Facebook user, there are two ways that you can stay connected with the PSU Mathematics Department. One way is via a group with a focus on teaching called *Gorilla Math Teachers*. It is a great source of information including teaching ideas and job openings. It also provides a community for asking advice and questions related to teaching. The other way to stay connected is with the *Pitt State (Kansas) Math Alumni* group. Information related to the department and alumni is posted along with interesting mathematical tidbits as well as opportunities and job openings. Both of these groups are closed, so that anything posted is only available to be seen by others in the group. (Can you guess why the Kansas part was added to the name of the alumni group?) We would love to have you join either or both groups if you are interested. Just search for the name of the group within Facebook and put in a request to be added to the group.



## Mathematics Education Student Recognized

Congratulations to mathematics education major Joshua Jaynes for being selected one of the Pittsburgh State University College of Education Fall 2021 Teachers of Promise. He was honored at the Student Teacher Recognition Ceremony on December 9th, 2021.

Joshua has plans to teach middle school mathematics. When reflecting on his mathematics educational experiences, Joshua wrote, "as I got older, I started asking myself what I really wanted to do with my life. I enjoy helping and teaching people things and have always been good with math and numbers so I started looking into becoming a math teacher. After being out of school for 10 plus years, I decided to go back and try to make this dream of mine come true. After taking some classes, I discovered that my fondest memories of math stem from when I was in middle school. The basics of algebra and geometry, I understood enough to help my fellow students with. I really enjoyed this period of time in my life and I believe that teaching at a math level I completely understand will allow me to really focus on helping my students and meet different needs if needed."



## Kansas Alpha Hosts KME Regional Convention

The North Central Region of Kappa Mu Epsilon, national mathematics honor society, held a Regional Convention on April 1 - 2, 2022, on the campus of Pittsburg State University. The tradition of PSU's KME Chapter Kansas Alpha being represented at KME conventions continued with many faculty and students attending. Two PSU students gave presentations: Rylee Dennis, *Philosophical Problems with Real Numbers*, and Xiaodi Xun, *The Magic Zero*.



The PSU chapter of KME, which is called Kansas Alpha, has a long history going back to 1934 when we were the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter in the country installed into KME. More than 2000 Pitt State students have been initiated into KME since then.

Several PSU faculty members have served national offices with KME, starting with J.A.G. Shirk, who was the second National President of KME and also served as Secretary. Dr. Ron G. Smith served as Vice-President (1957-1961) and Dr. Helen Kriegsmann was Editor of the *Pentagon* journal (1965-71). Dr. J.D. Haggard was Historian (1963-1967). Dr. Harold Thomas served as Historian, President-Elect, and President. He received the most prestigious award granted by KME, the George R. Mach Distinguished Service Award, in 1997. Also, Dr. Thomas and Dr. Cynthia Huffman each served as Regional Directors for 8 years, and Dr. Huffman served as Treasurer (2007-2015) and Historian (2017-2021) and started the national KME Facebook page. PSU currently has 1 faculty member on the KME Executive Council: Dr. Scott Thuong was elected President-Elect at the 2021 national convention. In addition, Gorilla alumna Vanessa Williams (Truman State University) serves as KME Social Media Director.

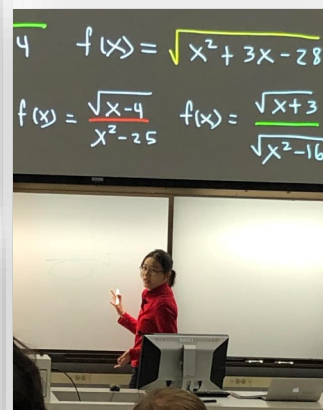
Dr. Huffman recently published a 60-page 90th Anniversary KME History booklet. One copy of the booklet was mailed to each KME Chapter across the country. The booklet is also available as a pdf on the KME website at <https://www.kappamuepsilon.org/documents/History.pdf>.

The KS Alpha Chapter of KME is very grateful to Dr. Thomas for his generous support for student travel to conventions.

**Top Row:** Alumna Vanessa Williams (Truman State) and PSU students Xiaodi Xun, Rylee Dennis, and Andrew Day. Xiaodi Xun presenting.



**Second Row:** Host Dr. Thuong and students Anthony Easom, Andrew Day, and Rylee Dennis preparing the registration table. Rylee Dennis presenting



**Bottom Row:** KME Regional Convention participants.



## Thanks for the Support!

A big thanks for donations made to PSU in support of the Math Department and its programs. These generous gifts have been used to support travel by students and faculty to conferences, as well as student scholarships. For summer 2021 and the 2021-22 academic year, we awarded \$66,240 in undergraduate and graduate scholarships.

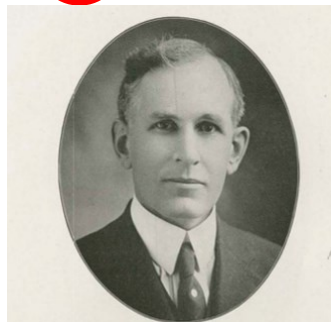
### Pre-Images

The next two pages contain a collection of pictures from the “archives”. How many can you name and date? (Answers at bottom of next page.)

1



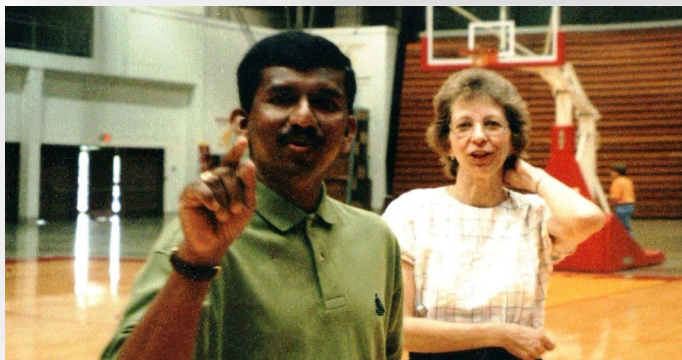
2



3



4



5



Picture 1: Front Row: Dr. Tadek Dobrowolski, Dr. Cynthia Huffman, Mrs. Terry Martin, Dr. Hazel Coltharp, Dr. Tim Flood Second Row: Dr. Ananda Jayawardhana, Dr. Yaping Liu, Dr. Bobby Winters, Mr. George Kaemmerling, Dr. Elwyn Davis, from the 2006 Kanza.

Picture 2: J.A.G Shirk, chair of the Department of Mathematics and Applied Mechanics from the 1922 Kanza.

Picture 3: Students Andrew Day, Rylee Dennis, and Ty Covey at the 2022 Math Honor Banquet.

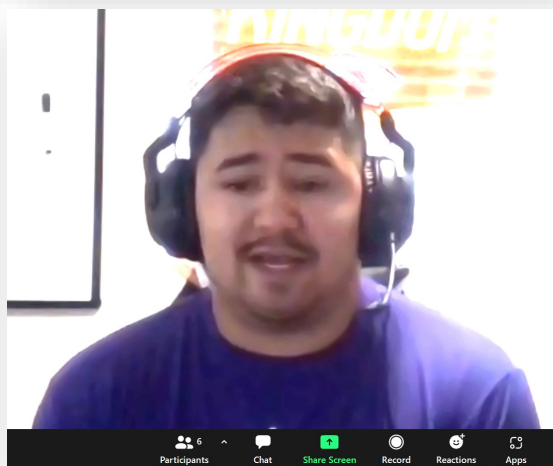
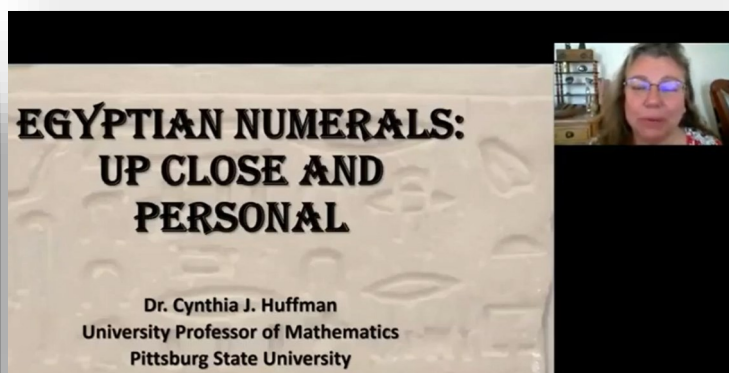
Picture 4: Dr. Ananda Jayawardhana and Mrs. Terry Martin at the 1999 Pitt State Math Relays.

Picture 5: KME from the 1974 Kanza. Row 1: Gary Stice, Jim Wylie, Jay Sperry, Doris Hartman, Dr. Elwyn Davis, Dr. Forrest Coltharp, Mr. Bryan Sperry; Row 2: Margie Davis, Beth Gray, Linda Funk, Donna Geisler, Terry Martin, Mrs. Annabelle Loy, Dr. Harold Thomas, Dr. Felix Dreher; Row 3: Allen White, Cathy Baird, Judy Wilson, Gail Schindler, Walter Parrish, Albert Alexy, Laura Spain, Gary Morella, Gary Wilson; Row 4: Dr. Don Hight, Mike Short, Mark McReynolds, Marcus Canipe, Roy Bryant, Dale Goodrich, Jim Smith, Dr. Ron Smith, Steven Hight, Dr. Helen Kriegsmann.

## PSU Mathematics Colloquium Series

The Math Department has had a regular Colloquium Series since at least 1994. These lectures give the speakers an opportunity to share their research and the attendees a chance to gain new knowledge. To schedule a colloquium or for more information, contact Dr. Liu at [yliu@pittstate.edu](mailto:yliu@pittstate.edu). The colloquia for the 2021-2022 academic year are listed below.

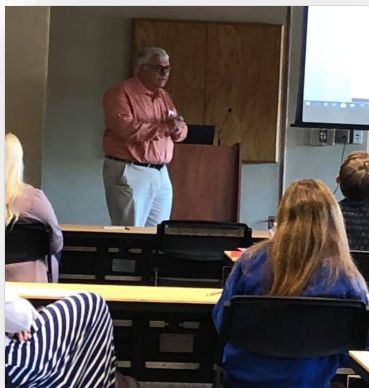
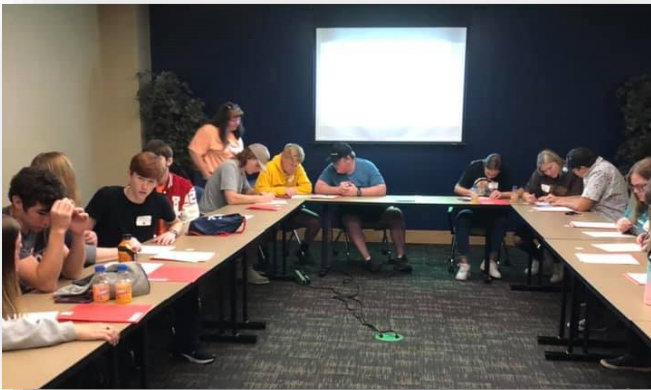
- ♦ Mr. Eric Holmes, PSU and Chanute High School, *Introducing High School Students to Gröbner Bases through Sudoku Puzzles*, July 8, 2021, virtual
- ♦ Dr. Cynthia Huffman, PSU, *Egyptian Numerals: Up Close and Personal*, August 24, 2021, virtual and available at <https://youtu.be/WKMSspU8DM>
- ♦ Cole D. Hurley, Actuarial Consultant, AFA Pricing, Aetna, *So You Want to be an Actuary*, September 21, 2021, virtual
- ♦ Dr. Cynthia Huffman, PSU, *Pythagoras, a US President, and Origami*, March 24, 2022



## PSU Math Honor Day

The 2021 annual PSU Math Honor Day was held on October 7. Students and teachers from area high schools were treated to presentations by PSU faculty, a planetarium show, and a luncheon. The featured lunch speaker was Ms. Stephanie Lowry, (PSU Math MS & BSE) Learning & Development Manager at Provisur Technologies. Faculty presentations included Calendar Math (Dr. Bobby Winters), CGI & Matrix Multiplication (Dr. Cynthia Huffman), Let's Play Set (Dr. Tim Flood), and Mathmagic (Dr. Scott Thuong).

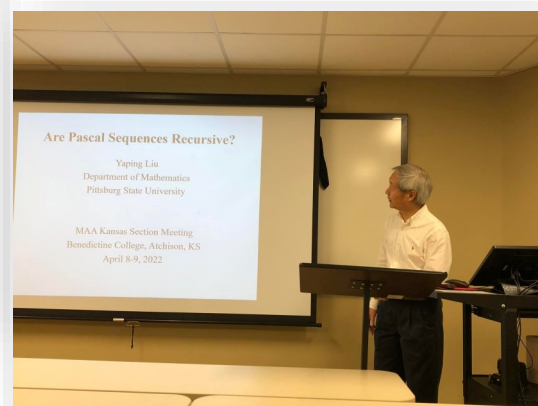
Erica Hafey and Clare Frantz were recognized as the 2021 Outstanding Novice Secondary Math Teachers while Sarah Gegen received the Outstanding Veteran Teacher award.



## KSMAA Meeting

Pitt State mathematics faculty continue to be very active in the Kansas Section of the Mathematical Association of America (KSMAA). Dr. Tim Flood is Historian, Dr. Cynthia Huffman is Public Information Coordinator, Webmaster, and Newsletter Editor, and Dr. Scott Thuong is co-coordinator of the Kansas Collegiate Math Competition.

The 2022 KSMAA meeting was held at Benedictine College in Atchison, KS on April 8-9. Two teams of PSU students competed in the Kansas Collegiate Math Competition, held in conjunction with the KSMAA meeting. Students participating were Andrew Day, Anthony Easom, Nate Parish, Monica Reid, Amy Scott, and Xiaodi Xun. Presentations were given by graduate student Rylee Dennis (*Philosophical Problems with Real Numbers*) and Dr. Yaping Liu (*Are Pascal Sequences Recursive?*) and Dr. Cynthia Huffman (*An Ancient Egyptian Mathematical Photo Album - Hieroglyph Numerals and More*). Also in attendance at the meeting were graduate student Ty Covey and Dr. Tim Flood.



**Top Row:** Dr. Cynthia Huffman, students waiting to leave, Xiaodi Xun

**Bottom Row:** Rylee Dennis, students playing Connect Four at the hotel, Dr. Yaping Liu

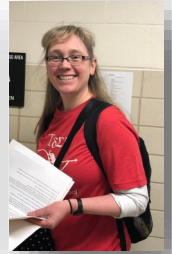
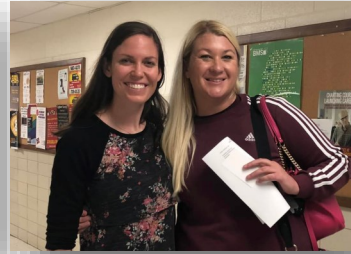
## Pictures from the 2022 Math Honor Banquet

Courtesy Dr. Hazel Coltharp



## PSU Math Relays Returns

Around 700 students from 39 schools visited the PSU campus on April 5 to participate in the PSU High School Math Relays. The competition started in 1968 when math faculty, including Don Hight, Jerry Stein, and Bryan Sperry, came up with the idea of a math competition modeled after a track meet. The event, which for many years has been organized by Mrs. Terry Martin, gets Pitt State faculty, retired faculty, faculty spouses, alumni, and graduate and undergraduate students involved in welcoming the high school students to campus for a day filled with short individual events and some team relay events. It is also exciting that many of the high school teachers are also Gorillas and can share with their students where they went to college. Due to the pandemic, the event was not held in 2020 or 2021.



### Clockwise from top left:

PSU alumni attending with their students (Jordan Epler, Tim McVey, Kristin Holland, Rachael Sachs, Christen Jackson, and Morgan Felt), graders Morgan Singletary, Kevin Spencer, Dr. Elwyn Davis, Ryan Kellenberger, recording winners Carol Newcomb, Chris Flood, Karen Davis, high school students taking a test, and teachers and students checking out the winner boards.



# Faculty Updates



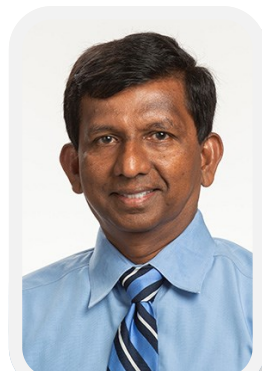
## Dr. Karla Childs

This year it was good to see our PSU campus adapt to a new normal. We were able to have more face-to-face classes, meetings, and activities. In the Mathematics Department we held our 20th PSU Math Honor Day and Stephanie Lowry, PSU Math alum, was our keynote speaker. She shared her several career opportunities that all started with a teaching degree in mathematics! Stephanie honored her well-deserving mentor, Dr. Hazel Coltharp, for her wisdom and guidance during her studies at PSU. Save the date for our next Math Honor Day – Thursday, October 6, 2022!

I continued my work as part of the competitive MODULE(S2) project and piloted Geometry materials during Fall 2021. The MODULE(S2) project (<https://modules2.com/>) is funded by an NSF grant to create a gold standard for the preparation of secondary mathematics teachers. Additionally, the project investigates the impact of instruction on prospective teachers' knowledge—thereby informing nationwide efforts in teacher education. In the end, our well-prepared PSU Math graduates who go on to teach will go on to positively impact the lives of thousands of K-12 students!

I saved the best for last! My son, Andrew, got married on New Year's Eve in Los Angeles. After having to put their wedding on pause several times, it was wonderful to get together with family and friends to celebrate Emily and Andrew!

I'm looking forward to an awesome 2022-2023 academic year.



## Dr. Ananda Jayawardhana

I am the chair of the Committee on ASA Archives and Historical Materials for 2022. I completed the Rotary Leadership Academy, and I will serve another year as an Assistant Governor for the Rotary District 6110. I also serve on a Diversity Team and Human Trafficking Awareness Committee for the Rotary District 6110. I will continue to serve as a PSU representative for the statewide planning committee of the Tilford Conference for the 16th year. I served as the departmental representative to the Graduate Council last year and will serve as a at-large senator for the Faculty Senate next year.

Karen Johnson and I presented a poster *Nursing Student's Attituded Towards COVID-19 Immunizations* at Innovations in Design, Analysis, and Dissemination: Frontiers in Biostatistics and Data Science conference.

I teach statistics and actuarial science courses as usual.



## Dr. Hazel Coltharp

My last newsletter . . .

Wow, that really stops me in my tracks. I have completed my first year of my three-year-phased retirement, and decided to end it early, with the conclusion of this WF22 semester, so I'm down to one more semester! I began, at PSU, as a naïve Freshman in the summer of 1979, right after high school graduation; I can still remember the trek up to the third floor of Russ Hall for a History class from, then History Department chair, Bob Ratzlaff – it was worth it, even when it drugged into July with all that heat rising (at least it was an 8:00 class!). If you count the year and a half as a GA, I've taught in the Department for 30.5 years. I had the pleasure of having had Drs. Kriegsman, Davis, McGrath,

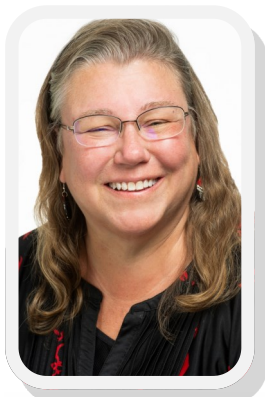
Self, Hight, Thomas, and Mr. Sperry and Mrs. Loy – all beginning with Calc I with Mrs. Loy. My father-in-law was my advisor, but I didn't have any classes from him, but I enjoyed returning to teach alongside him. I felt honored to return to lead the BSEd program from 1994 until this December, and I was inspired and rejuvenated, each semester, by the quality and enthusiasm of the young-math-teachers-to-be.

I will miss my current colleagues, but I promised Mrs. Martin that I would write Math Relays tests for the 53rd annual Math Relays on April 4, 2023, and I would even run the grading room again for her if she needs me. I love social media the most for the ability to stay in touch with a subset of the few hundreds of Gorilla Math Teachers who are still providing quality math education in the Midwest (and a few farther than that and a few who have gone into other careers). I always appreciated the fact, talking to colleagues at other institutions, that our major was housed in the Math Department as I felt that we had content-strong graduates who could do whatever they wanted with their Math degree.

I began working in December, 2019, part-time, on-line with Eureka Math a math curriculum company, for which Dr. Childers went to work a year earlier – she went from colleague to boss! It was fortuitous as I learned how to Zoom full-time before we transitioned to fully on-line teaching the next semester in Spring, 2020. It has been a fantastic opportunity, and I was able to see how well our Math for elementary content courses prepare our elementary teachers for the curriculum that is out there! This January, since I was part-time with PSU, I transitioned to full-time with EM and will continue with them until 1) I grow weary of it and really want to retire or 2) I turn 65 and qualify for Medicare, or 3) they fire me!

My family continues to be of utmost importance to me . . . Glenn, my husband, just retired from the presidency at Crowder College and was awarded his second doctorate (an honorary one) from Missouri State University in Public Service. I know he won't be able to fully quit, so he'll probably be working at least part-time somewhere! Our daughter, Jean, is a tenured associate professor in the Math Department at Missouri Southern and survived some of their recent financial pruning of faculty. She and her husband, Luke, enjoy working on their new home and helping out the old folks; Jean took up cross stitch over the lockdown, so looking forward to the Harry Potter project featuring all the book covers. Our son, Benjamin, finished his third year of teaching high school math at his (and Jean's and my) alma mater, Carl Junction. Ending his first year with the onset of the pandemic, means he still hasn't had a normal year, whatever that is. His fiancé, and another Gorilla Math Teacher and former advisee, Laura Phillips, is finishing her first year at Joplin High School as a math teacher, and Benjamin will be moving over there to teach and coach girls' tennis in a very nice tennis complex at JHS. They both are finishing up second master's degrees.

I'll sign off with the most heartfelt wishes for health, success, and happiness to all of the Gorillas Math Majors and Minors who are still reading these newsletters – next year, I'll only be reading, and not writing! OAGAAG (math teacher).



## Dr. Cynthia Huffman

This past academic year has just flown by. It was so wonderful to be able to teach face-to-face without masks again!

As is expected for professors, I split my work time among teaching, scholarly activity, and service. Teaching continues to be my favorite. I try to make learning mathematics fun and relevant for my students. Two teaching highlights this

year were being 1 of the 6 winners in a PSU faculty appreciation contest on Twitter, and being featured on a cap of a mathematics graduate.



pittsburg\_state You voted, here are the winners. Faculty Appreciation Week was filled with admiration for the mentors who make Pitt State worth it ❤️❤️

Charlie Phillips, Cynthia Huffman, Janice Jewett, John Thompson, Tracy Stahl, Doug Whitten

In 2021, I had 5 peer-reviewed publications (1 of which was published in both English and Spanish), 2 Open Educational Resource publications, and 3 more scholarly articles submitted and under peer-review. In addition, I gave 7 scholarly presentations, including an international conference talk (accepted), a national conference talk (accepted), an invited talk for a national audience, a state conference talk, 2 colloquia, and another invited

talk. So far in 2022, there have been 4 presentations (at an international conference, at a state conference, a colloquium, and an invited KME South Central Regional Convention faculty talk). Also, a double-blind peer-reviewed paper, which I worked on for over a decade, was published ("An Ancient Egyptian Mathematical Photo Album - Hieroglyph Numerals and More," *Convergence* (April 2022) - <https://www.maa.org/press/periodicals/convergence/an-ancient-egyptian-mathematical-photo-album-hieroglyph-numerals-and-more>), two book chapters were accepted and minor revisions made, another short paper was published, and work has started on another scholarly article.

Continuing to conduct scholarly activity brings excitement to my teaching to encourage students to have a growth mindset and a desire to be lifelong learners. A very enjoyable project this past year has been to study imagery in original sources related to Émilie du Châtelet, an 18th century French mathematician. Émilie lived during the heart of the infamous Calculus Controversy over whether Newton or Leibniz discovered calculus first and accusations of stealing each other's ideas. She is best known for her French translation and commentary on Newton's *Principia*. Her translation is still in use today. As a woman, she was excluded from the main science academies and was far enough on the outside that she could view the work of each objectively. This summer my 328<sup>th</sup> professional talk was over this research at an international History of Math conference.

A few years ago I had a grant to write some Open Educational Resource (OER) materials. Since then I have continued writing OER materials and publishing them on PSU's Digital Commons. To date, the 20+ activities have had 6,847 downloads in 121 countries. I created 2 new OER activities this past year and hope to produce some more this summer.

Service-wise at the state level, I continue (since 1996) as the public information officer/webmaster/newsletter editor for the Kansas Section of the Mathematical Association of America. I have gone down from holding 4 national offices to 3. I am the Chief Editor of the Board of Editors for the MAA Classroom Resource Materials book series, on the board of editors of a journal called *Euleriana*, and the Secretary/Treasurer/Newsletter Editor for the MAA Special Interest Group on History of Math. Closer to home, I serve as an eLearning Academy online course reviewer, an online teaching College Coach, and the editor of this newsletter, along with being on various other committees.

I sure enjoy hearing what all of our alumni are doing, whether it be through Facebook, LinkedIn, or some other means. It is wonderful to hear how well so many of our alumni are doing in their careers and personal lives. Please continue to keep in touch! Once a Gorilla, Always a Gorilla!



## Dr. Yaping Liu

First I'm very glad we were able to have some normalcy back in our lives last year due to the much reduced number of Covid-19 infections. We got to teach classes face-to-face without wearing any face coverings. I had my normal teaching and service responsibilities, but this spring I offered to teach an extra class on Vector Calculus, one that had not been taught in this department for about 20 years. Regarding research, I had one paper published in a math journal this spring.

Related to the teaching of calculus, I have been doing AP Calculus reading for a number of years. Needless to say, I know very well how AP calculus exams are graded. I recommend AP calculus teachers in high school apply at ETS to become an AP reader. It will be a rewarding experience. For one thing, you will be able to help your students achieve better results on their AP calculus exams. This year I was promoted to a Table Leader position, so I'll be leading over a dozen people this summer in reading AP Calculus exams. One of the main responsibilities as a table leader is quality control. I'll have to back read a lot of exams and communicate with other readers to make sure that the scoring guidelines are consistently applied. I look forward to this new role.

My family life has not seen much change during the year, except that my grandkids are growing fast. Very soon I'll get the chance to teach them math. That's one thing I look forward to in my retirement.



## Mr. David Newcomb

Being a full-time instructor in the Mathematics Department at Pittsburg State University continues to be a challenging and fulfilling experience. Preparing for the variety of courses that I teach (Mathematics for Elementary Education I, Calculus I, and Mathematics Education Seminar) keeps me extremely busy. In addition, in the spring semester I teach the Manipulatives and Technology in Secondary Education classes and the PSU Ready College Algebra class at Colgan High School.

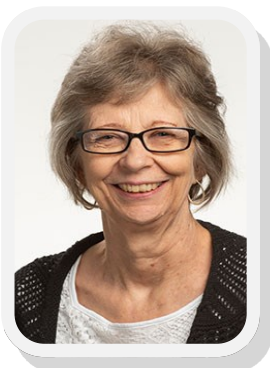
The classroom environment is getting back to what might be referred to as "normal."

No masks, not as much use of Zoom. I still do use the antibacterial wipes on the keyboards, mouse, remote controls and desktop surfaces.

My wife and I have continued some of our usual summer activities. We have already worked on a few lawn mowers for ourselves and for friends. We helped in packing and moving items from our son-in-law's Tailwind Cyclists bicycle shop, as he closed it and has started working as the OSHA Training Officer for the turbine maintenance company in Neodesha. The garden is looking good with green beans, corn, potatoes, tomatoes, squash and strawberries. Also, planted a few new grape plants. We have not been able to go camping this spring, but we are looking forward to the possibility of camping later in the summer or this fall. We have been able to go on several bicycle rides around the area.

I hope students and faculty have a wonderful 2022/2023 academic year at Pitt State.

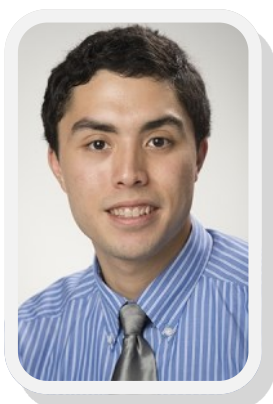
Best wishes to all.



### **Mrs. Terry Martin**

After a 2-year break (due to Covid), we hosted the Pitt State Math Relays on Tuesday April 5. It was a normal, no-mask, wonderful day, except our numbers were down from pre-Covid years. We have scheduled the 53rd Annual Pitt State Math Relays for Tuesday April 4, 2023.

I continue to serve as faculty advisor for Campus Christians and Chi Omicron Rho. I also continue to serve as a board member for Countryside Christian School, which is now a pre-school only.



### **Dr. Scott Thuong**

In April, I was responsible for organizing the 2022 Kappa Mu Epsilon North Central regional convention, held here at PSU. Thankfully, by that time, COVID had cooled down, and the face-to-face meeting was a success with nearly 40 participants!

This spring, the Kansas Collegiate Math Competition resumed in face-to-face format for the first time since the start of the pandemic. While the teams that Pitt State sent didn't place in the top 3, they both placed in the top half of teams, and look forward to next year!

I am also developing a data structures and algorithms course, in support of the new computer science degree. My undergraduate degree was a double major in mathematics and computer science, and I am excited to apply the half of my training that I'd neglected up until now.

I hope the upcoming academic year is a successful one for you!



### **Dr. Bobby Winters**

Bobby, while still Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, is now chairing both the department of Chemistry and the department of Biology. He remains the coordinator of the PSU in Paraguay Program and the director of the Polymer Chemistry Initiative. He and his wife Jean have three daughters who are graduates of Pittsburg State University, and two grandsons who they hope one day will be. In his spare time, he takes walks, does woodworking, and experiments with electronics.

## Alumni Highlight Where we “brag” on one of our former students!

We highlight Dr. Emily Walters in this newsletter. Dr. Walters has returned to Pittsburg after completing residency training in anesthesiology at UCLA. Prior to residency, she completed a combined MD/PhD training program at the University of Rochester in upstate New York. She successfully defended her thesis titled “Non-Mutated Mediator Genes in Diverse Epithelial Cancer Types” in 2015 and was subsequently awarded a PhD in Genetics. She now works at Freeman hospital in Joplin as an anesthesiologist. She also just wrapped up teaching a data science class through the Math Department at PSU.

Emily is from Pittsburg; she graduated from PHS in 1995 and from PSU in 2009, where she was selected as the Outstanding Senior Female and gave the commencement address. During her time at PSU, she was active in Student Government, serving as Legislative Affairs Director. She founded the “Pre-Meds in Peru” program, which continues to this day. She also served as Executive Director of the Little Room, a space for community art.

Prior to attending PSU as a non-traditional student, she worked in corporate America in operations management, business analysis, and finance.

Dr. Walters lives with her husband, Jordan - who is currently attending PSU - and her four children, one of whom is also currently attending PSU (the other three aren't in college yet, so there's still time!).



*(Left)*  
*Dr. Emily Walters*



*(Right)*  
*Dr. Walters and her family*

Dr. Walters writes, “I have done a lot of research throughout my training which involved mathematics! A lot of my thesis work involved developing novel algorithms to differentiate tumor cells from normal cells in various cancer types. I also developed machine learning methods to identify patients at risk for developing post operative sepsis. Last semester, I taught a class on Data Analysis through the math department, which was a ton of fun!”

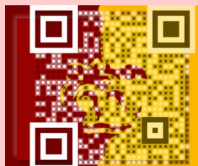
“My time at Pitt State was amazing. Everyone was so helpful and so focused on student success - sometimes at some of the ‘big name’ academic institutions, instructors were so busy trying to carve out their own place in academia, they didn’t have time for students. At Pitt State, the students *were* the point! But I also never felt like the education I received was lacking. I actually received a wonderful compliment from a math professor at the University of Rochester: ‘It’s obvious that you’ve developed the mathematic maturity required to pursue further graduate studies in mathematics.’ I promise you, there’s no better compliment for a graduate student than that!”

“My advice for students is to take the time you need to thoroughly learn the material. Take advantage of office hours. Try to study the material *before* the night before the exam. And above, all, don’t be afraid to say that you don’t understand! It’s okay to not understand. And verbalizing it is the first step in gaining the understanding that you’re here to achieve.”

### Mathematics Department Pittsburg State University, College of Arts and Sciences

224 Yates Hall  
Pittsburg State University  
1701 S. Broadway  
Pittsburg, KS 66762

Phone: 620-235-4400  
Fax: 620-235-4429  
E-mail:  
tflood@pittstate.edu  
[https://  
www.pittstate.edu/  
math/index.html](https://www.pittstate.edu/math/index.html)



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If you have anything to be included in the newsletter, please send it to [cjhuffman@pittstate.edu](mailto:cjhuffman@pittstate.edu)

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