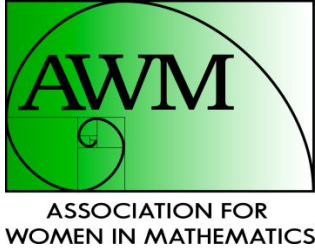


February 7, 2020



## Association for Women in Mathematics' 2020 Service Award



**Raegan Higgins**



**Omayra Ortega**



**Denise Rangel Tracy**

The AWM Service Award, established by the AWM Executive Committee in November 2012, recognizes individuals for helping to promote and support women in mathematics through exceptional voluntary service to the Association for Women in Mathematics. The award is given annually to a select group of AWM volunteers in recognition of their extensive time and effort devoted to AWM activities.

The 2020 Service Awardee group has been selected as Raegan Higgins, Omayra Ortega and Denise Rangel Tracy, for their significant service to AWM in outreach, new initiatives, collaboration, and inclusion.

**Dr. Higgins** (right) received her undergraduate degree from Xavier University of Louisiana, then obtaining her masters and PhD from the University

of Nebraska - Lincoln. She now pursues research in time scales at Texas Tech University as an Associate Professor. Involved in service, outreach, and inclusion in the mathematics community beyond AWM, Higgins serves as co-director of the EDGE (Enhancing Diversity in Graduate Education) Program as well as leading a LS-AMP (Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation) Pre-alliance team at her university.

Acknowledging her extraordinary efforts in promoting women in mathematics through her role on the organizing committees of 2017 and 2019 AWM Research Symposia, Higgins' leadership had fostered synergistic connections between the AWM and local community by identifying organizations and individuals making a difference, broadening AWM's reach and advanced the mission of creating a more inclusive community.

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**A response from Higgins:** “I am so surprised and happy to receive the 2020 AWM Service Award, and I thank AWM for this recognition. I worked to help AWM show its more inclusive side, to show it’s not just for mathematicians in academia, government and industry. It is important to *reach and recognize* the community that has shaped and continues to shape female mathematicians. I hope what I have started continues and I look forward to helping AWM continue the work of empowering, supporting, and promoting women in math.

**Dr. Ortega** (center) received her undergraduate degree from Pomona College, two masters at the University of Iowa in both Mathematics and Public Health, then her PhD in Mathematics from the University of Iowa. She is currently working as an Assistant Professor at Sonoma State University researching epidemiology, previously working within academia in research and public health industry. At Sonoma State University, Ortega is also involved in the EDGE program, furthering her impact through implementation of Sonia Kovalevsky Day(s) across multiple locations to promote women in math by reaching out in the name of one of the first women to receive a PhD in Mathematics.

Using her skills in program organization and communication, Ortega represented AWM while working with the international math community to bring the Maryam Mirzakhani exhibit to the 2019 AWM Research Symposium. She took the lead in negotiating for the installation and display space, coordination with Rice University, planning for long term care of the display, and acting as an honorable steward to this collection. Ortega’s efforts and commitment served to invite AWM’s community to see the very personal side of a very public mathematician.

**Response from Ortega:** “It has been my great pleasure to serve the Association for Women in Mathematics over the years in many different roles, but bringing the Committee for Women in Mathematics’ *Remembering Miryam Mirzakhani* Exhibit to the 2019 Research Symposium was one of my

favorites. These efforts were a labor of love and were more than redeemed as I watched the reactions of attendees as they took in images of tender moments and insightful thoughts of this pioneering contemporary mathematician whose life was cut short during the peak of her career. Since the Research Symposium, this important exhibit has continued to inspire and be displayed at other locations including the Institute for Advanced Studies, Pomona College, and the Joint Mathematics Meetings in Denver, Colorado. I am humbled to have been nominated by my peers and selected by the Executive Committee for this 2020 AWM Service Award. Thank you for this honor.”

**Dr. Tracy** (right) received her undergraduate degree from the University of North Carolina - Greensboro following with her masters degree, her PhD from the University of Texas at Arlington, and receiving a Postdoc at Syracuse University. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Mathematics at Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey.

The Association for Women in Mathematics would like to recognize Dr. Tracy for her deep commitment working in the Media Committee. She has led Wikipedia Edit-a-thons at both the Joint Math Meetings and the AWM Research Symposium. To further her stride in promoting AWM and Women in Mathematics through the media she has begun a new initiative, the AWM Playing Cards Project, creating the preliminary lists and data, tracking down over a thousand women for the initiative.

In response to the award announcement, Dr. Tracy reflected on her time working with AWM and how she would like to see the impact develop. “Thank you for this award. I am happy to be able to better highlight the accomplishments of women in mathematics, both past and present. I appreciate the support AWM has given to start working on the Women in Math Playing Cards and thank you to all the other volunteers now involved in making this project a reality. It’ll be a great way to showcase some of the amazing mathematicians who also

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happen to be women. I especially hope this makes it to the non-math world.”

Hoping to reach audiences beyond the mathematical community, Dr. Tracy has promoted heavy efforts in utilizing Wikipedia and increasing awareness of the history of Women in Math; “Although stereotypes are changing, women are still thought of as a rarity in the mathematical sciences. I think Wikipedia can be a gateway to learning about these women. Our history, our achievements, our struggles, all summarized a few mouse-clicks away from each other on a website many people already visit. I hope by working to improve and create new articles on women mathematicians I am helping people better know them and the work that they do.”

These women have all had a tremendous impact in AWM, affecting the many emerging, present, and previous mathematicians that strive for the same goals. We hope this recognition shows their efforts and highlights this impact. Working with AWM has allowed these women to broaden their reach, utilizing the ability and potential of our great community.