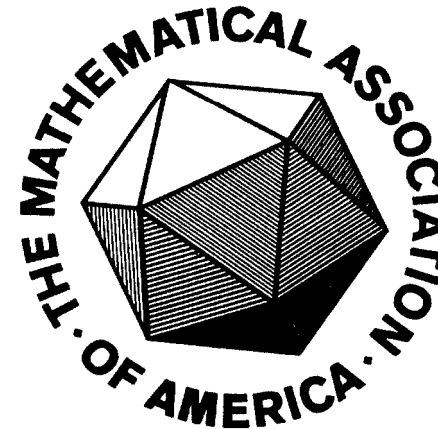


**RECIPIENTS OF MAA-NJ DISTINGUISHED  
TEACHING AWARD**

Sr. M. Stephanie Sloyan, Georgian Court College	1992
Eileen Polani, St. Peter's College	1993
Richard Bronson, Fairleigh Dickinson University	1994
Siegfred Haenisch, The College of New Jersey	1995
Andrew Demetropoulos, Montclair State University	1996
Roger Pinkham, Stevens Institute of Technology	1997
Virginia Lee, Brookdale Community College	1998
Amy Cohen, Rutgers University-New Brunswick	1999
Janet H. Caldwell, Rowan University	2000
Evan Maletsky, Montclair State University	2002
Stephen J. Greenfield, Rutgers University-New Brunswick	2003
Arthur Schwartz, Mercer County Community College	2004
Bonnie Gold, Monmouth University	2006
Bruce G. Bukiet, New Jersey Institute of Technology	2008
Thomas Osler, Rowan University	2009
Robert L. Wilson, Rutgers University	2010
Brian P. Hopkins, St. Peter's College	2011
Diana M. Thomas, Montclair State University	2012
Sarita Nemani, Georgian Court University	2013

**MATHEMATICAL ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA  
NEW JERSEY SECTION**



**Award for Distinguished College or  
University Teaching of Mathematics**

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**MEMBERS OF THE SELECTION COMMITTEE**

Carol Avelsgaard, Middlesex County College  
Bruce G. Bukiet, New Jersey Institute of Technology  
Tom Osler, Rowan University  
Diana Thomas, Montclair State University  
Robert Wilson, Rutgers University

**Spring Meeting**

**Saturday, April 5, 2014  
Rowan University  
Glassboro, New Jersey**

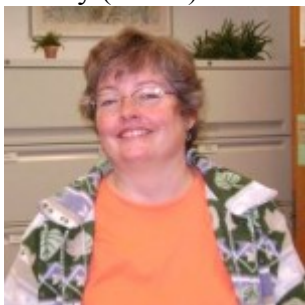
In 1991 the Mathematical Association of America instituted Awards for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics in order to honor college or university teachers who have been widely recognized as extraordinarily successful, and whose teaching effectiveness has been shown to have had influence beyond their own institutions.

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## Citation

### Dr. Karen Clark

The New Jersey Section of the Mathematical Association of America is pleased to present its 2014 sectional award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics to Dr. Karen Clark of The College of New Jersey (TCNJ).



Dr. Karen Clark is an extraordinary mathematics teacher and mentor of students. She combines great classroom teaching with a commitment to investing significant time in students outside the classroom. With both high standards and a kind heart, she inspires students in the mathematics classroom and influences their lives outside the classroom. Past students have written the following about her dedication:

- “I would not have the passion and the skills for applied math research ... nor would I be in the position to apply for this program without Dr. Clark’s mentorship.”
- “She always has inspired me to set my goals high and to reach for what I want in my career.”

- “After witnessing her influence on others, I realized that I wanted to have that same influence on a student someday. “

In the classroom, Dr. Clark is a skilled lecturer. Students write that she has a flair for “communicating sophisticated [mathematical] ideas” and “guides her classes deftly through the thorniest of theorems.” They write that her classes are “impeccably planned,” “eloquently executed,” and “characteristically brilliant.” Dr. Clark not only sets high standards (“tough as nails” according to one student), but achieves them by being an “an amazing teacher who can distill complicated concepts clearly without leaving anybody behind in class”.

Dr. Clark gives students a sense of what mathematics is really about and leads them to make mathematical connections. One past student writes that Dr. Clark’s course was the first mathematics class that ever engaged him. Dr. Clark was not merely teaching him how to solve mathematics problems, he writes, but was teaching him “MATHEMATICS.” Another student writes that Dr. Clark “did not just teach me theorems and proofs; she showed me how to love math, in its rigor and in its applications.”

Outside of the classroom, students write, Dr. Clark gives freely of her time. “Her office door is always open,” and Dr. Clark “always had the time to make sure that we understood the material.”

Dr. Clark has demonstrated outstanding and effective student advisement and mentorship and is a faculty leader in these areas at The College of New Jersey. Students note that:

- Dr. Clark “inspired me to set my goals high and to reach for what I want in my career.”
- “She taught me to pursue my goals and passions confidently.”
- Dr. Clark “has always pushed me to realize my potential in mathematics.”

Dr. Clark’s extensive involvement in curriculum development at TCNJ, includes leading the development of the new Applied Mathematics Specialization. She has also created or significantly overhauled the senior Capstone course, Partial Differential Equations, Linear Algebra, and Numerical Methods. For a decade, Dr. Clark has contributed to the open-source WeBWorK software homework system as a problem developer.

Karen Clark is an Associate Professor of Mathematics at The College of New Jersey. She received her B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. in Mathematics, all from New York University, in 1987, 1989, and 1992, respectively. Dr. Clark has taught at The University of Michigan, Stevens Institute of Technology, and, since 1994, at The College of New Jersey. She has been a co-PI on two NSF-DUE grants on integrating technology into mathematics instruction, and a co-PI on a NSF-ADVANCE grant to increase professional development opportunities for female mathematicians and scientists. In 1999, Dr. Clark received the “Teacher of the Year” award from the Mathematics and Statistics club at TCNJ. Since 2002, Dr. Clark has also served as Treasurer of the MAA New Jersey section and as a member of the section’s Executive Board.

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Professor Thomas R. Hagedorn of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, The College of New Jersey, nominated Dr. Karen Clark for this Distinguished Teaching Award.

### **Response from Professor Clark**

I am incredibly honored, and humbled, to receive this award. Most of us do not receive any formal training to teach college math classes. So, I am especially appreciative of those who have shared their wisdom with me over the years, and those who have served as examples of exceptional teachers. I have learned so much about teaching through talks at national and sectional MAA meetings, which always inspire me to reevaluate the way I structure my classes, and help me improve my teaching. I am grateful to the MAA for providing these professional development opportunities.

I feel so fortunate to have a job where I am never bored, I get to be creative, and constantly learn new things. I owe a debt of gratitude to many people, first and foremost to my students at The College of New Jersey. I could not ask for a more wonderful group of students to spend my career with. They challenge me, make me think, are gracious when I make mistakes, and are incredibly good-natured guinea pigs when I try new things. I have learned so much from these fine young adults.

I would be remiss if I did not thank the teachers who influenced me when I was a student. I am fortunate to have had a fantastic group of

enthusiastic and concerned teachers at Hunter College High School (not just in math!) who were exceptional role models for me when I was first thinking about what I wanted to do with my life. I also benefitted from my interactions with teaching assistants, and professors, during my undergraduate and graduate work at NYU. In particular I would like to thank Dr. Mel Hausner, who exemplified what wonderful teaching was while I was an undergraduate student in his class and when I was his TA during graduate school. I would also like to thank Dr. Martin Burrow at NYU for encouraging me to apply to graduate school. From this I learned what a profound influence a professor can have on a student’s life.

I am lucky to work in a department where I have the freedom to create courses, experiment with pedagogy, and teach a wide variety of classes. At TCNJ, I can take risks and discover new ways to do things. I would like to thank my colleagues, and in particular I would like to thank Dr. Cathy Liebars and Dr. Carlos Alves for patiently serving as sounding boards over the years, and to thank Dr. Tom Hagedorn for encouraging me to collaborate on several WeBWoRK projects that advanced my development as a teacher.

Finally, I would like to thank my family – my husband Juan and children Pablo, Santiago, Emilio and Rafael. This job is not a nine to five experience, and my family is very accommodating to my often having to work during non-traditional hours. I could not do what I do without their support.