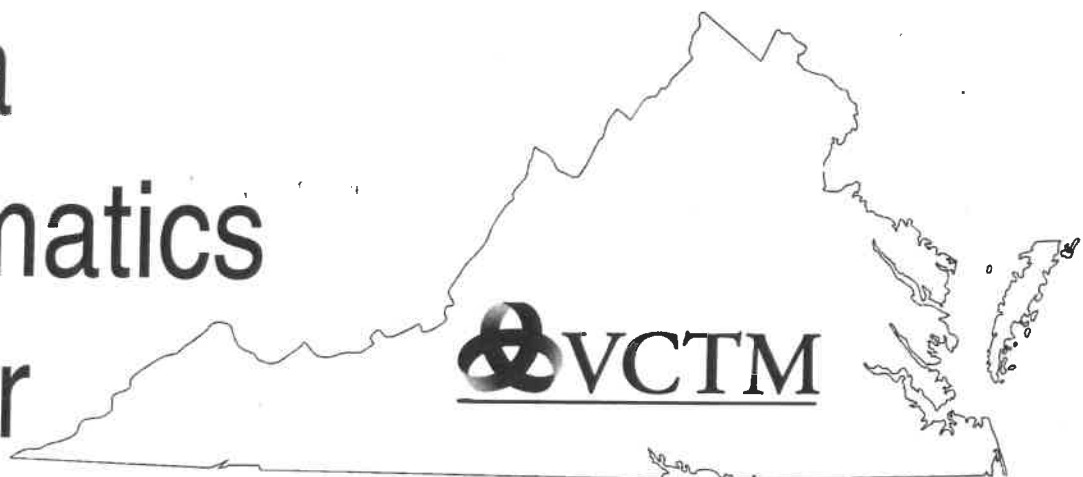


Virginia Mathematics Teacher



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William Carl Lowry



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William Carl Lowry

reprint of the dedication article from the Virginia Mathematics Teacher

Who is William Carl Lowry? He goes by William C. Lowry. To most, he is Dr. Lowry, to some he is Bill, and to his wife he is Carl. To all he is known as a person who is polite, calm, firm, gentlemanly, compassionate, professional, intelligent, helpful, efficient, ethical, honorable, reassuring, responsible, responsive, and influential. He is known for his integrity and dignity. He is known as a leader, a mathematics educator, a teacher, and an adviser. Most people probably do not know that he once was a glider pilot.

Dr. Lowry and his wife Rita celebrated their golden wedding anniversary on October 18, 1991. The Lowry's have one son, Bill, who has earned his doctorate and is teaching at Utah State.

Mrs. Lowry, a cordial and witty lady, is also well known by most of Dr. Lowry's students. Students over the years enjoyed socials in the Lowry's home on Greenway Road. Candidates for the doctorate always received a homemade cake from Mrs. Lowry when they had completed all their requirements. Complimentary comments from former students of Dr. Lowry, such as "we are thankful for our association with him and Rita," frequently refer to Mrs. Lowry. One former graduate student said, "I believe that I looked forward to receiving Mrs. Lowry's cake more than I did to receiving my degree." When Dr. Lowry was invited after his retirement to teach for a trimester at Woodberry Forest School, those who know Mrs. Lowry can just see her smile and detect her wit when she said, "I'll tell him no he can't, and then he will do it." Love and respect for Mrs. Lowry is summed up by one who said, "He and Mrs. Lowry gave so much for so little in return. I am one of many who is grateful for being part of their life."

Dr. Lowry received his B.S. in Education with honors from Ohio University. His major was mathematics. He received his M.Ed. and Ph.D. degrees from Ohio State University with emphases in Education, Mathematics, Mathematics Education, Teacher Education, and Philosophy of Education.

After serving in the armed forces of the United States as a glider pilot, teaching at a couple of high schools, and serving as instructor at St. Helena Branch of the College of William and Mary, Kent State University, and Ohio State University, Dr. Lowry came to the University of Virginia in 1955 as an Assistant Professor of Education. He was promoted to Associate Professor of Education in 1966. Upon his retirement, Dr. Lowry was appointed Professor Emeritus. James M. Cooper, Dean of the Curry School of Education, says of Dr. Lowry:

There is no question in my mind that Bill Lowry had a greater impact promoting mathematics education in Virginia than any other living person. The many awards accorded him are testimony to the high esteem and affection in which Bill Lowry is held. Colleagues in the mathematics department at the University of Virginia have commented to me on Bill's lasting contribution to mathematics education in the Commonwealth. Dedication of an issue of the Virginia Mathematics Teacher to Dr. William C. Lowry is a fitting tribute to one whose life work has been devoted to promoting the learning of mathematics.

Another colleague, Ertle Thompson, says:

For more than 30 years as a colleague and personal friend Bill Lowry, to me, was the conscience of the School of Education at the University of Virginia. By personal action and deed he represented the highest academic, professional, and ethical standards of which the University of Virginia is so proud. No student, undergraduate or graduate, faculty member or professional colleague could ever want for a better friend.

It should be noted that Dr. Lowry was not only respected by colleagues in the Curry School of Education, but he was also highly respected by faculty members in the Mathematics Department of the School of Arts and Sciences. Upon his retirement, these mathematics professors made a sizeable donation in honor of Dr. Lowry to the Lowry Scholarship Fund.

Dr. Lowry was a teacher. His strength was based in the fact that every article he asked students to read was worth reading and students knew that Dr. Lowry had read it thoroughly himself. His questions were delivered softly, but they were inciting and they either went to the core of an issue or they forced you to go deal with the essential elements of the issue. As a teacher he gave clear explanations. He was patient and un-threatening.

Professional organizations to which Dr. Lowry belonged include the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), the Mathematical Association of America, School Science and Mathematics Association, American Association of University Professors, Virginia Council of Teachers of Mathematics (VCTM), and two other NCTM affiliates in Virginia.

More than twenty articles have been published by Dr. Lowry. Some of these are reports of research, some are

journal articles, and some are book reviews. Dr. Lowry co-edited "Tips for Beginners," a regular section of *The Mathematics Teacher*. He chaired the editorial committee for *The Slow Learner in Mathematics*, the thirty-fifth yearbook of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. He has served as a referee for many articles submitted to *The Mathematics Teacher* and *The Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*. According to Dr. James D. Gates, Executive Director of NCTM:

Bill Lowry has made significant contributions to the efforts of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. His work in the area of publication, particularly yearbooks, has been widely acclaimed. Many teachers throughout our nation have benefited professional from the publications of Bill Lowry.

How to Evaluate Mathematics Textbooks was originally written by Virginians and published in Virginia. Dr. Lowry was the Virginian who served on the editorial panel when this book was slightly revised and became an NCTM publication. Dr. Lowry also served on the editorial committee for *Practical Ways to Teach the Basic Mathematical Skills*, published by the Virginia Council of Teachers of Mathematics in 1978. This Virginia publication, which was sold world wide, met with great success, in the words of one Virginian, because of "Dr. Lowry's efficient and untiring editorial contributions" made to this book.

Dr. Lowry authored several course manuals for independent study courses in mathematics for elementary school teachers at the University of Virginia. He co-authored with Herb Kaufman, one of his former students, *The Many Facets of Mathematics*. Kaufman authored a college algebra text and dedicated it to Dr. Lowry by saying, "With great respect and admiration I want to say thanks to you for all that you have done for me and many others as an adviser and true friend!" Today Kaufman says, "To be called adviser and true friend is something special. I have never heard of any other adviser in mathematics or mathematics education who is held in such high esteem by so many former students. Dr. Lowry is one of a kind and many of us can truly be thankful for our association with him and Rita."

Doctoral students can never say thanks enough to Dr. Lowry for the patient and efficient way he proofread dissertations. Oh, how great it would be to have Dr. Lowry proofread this article before it is sent to the *Virginia Mathematics Teacher* for publication.

In addition to prior elections to the honorary societies Kappa Delta Pi, Phi Delta Kappa, and Pi Mu Epsilon, Dr. Lowry was honored in 1971 by being presented the Distinguished Service Award by the University of Virginia Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa. In 1981, the Virginia Council of Teachers of Mathematics honored Dr. Lowry by naming its

teacher of the year award the "William C. Lowry Outstanding Mathematics Teacher Award." This award is presented yearly to outstanding teachers of mathematics on the elementary school, middle school, secondary school, and college levels.

Upon Dr. Lowry's retirement in 1987, the Virginia Council for Mathematics Supervision appointed a committee to see that Dr. Lowry was appropriately honored. The result was that Friends of William C. Lowry raised approximately \$25,000 to endow the William C. Lowry Scholarship at the University of Virginia Curry School of Education. The scholarship was announced on Sunday, August 30, 1987, in Charlottesville, at which time Dr. Lowry was presented with a beautifully bound book of letters from his friends. This scholarship supports a student enrolled in the Teacher Education Program preparing to teach mathematics. The fund has grown to over \$30,000 and provides a \$1500 scholarship annually.

Among Dr. Lowry's professional activities was his directorship of thirteen annual University of Virginia School of Education Annual Conferences for Teachers of Mathematics. This conference was discontinued when the Virginia State Department of Education began its annual mathematics conferences. Other professional activities included speaking at more than 100 national, state, and local meetings of mathematics educators; serving on the NCTM Nominating Committee twice; serving as local chairman of an NCTM sponsored meeting at the University of Virginia; working with the geometry materials of the School Mathematics Study Group (SMSG); judging for the Virginia Junior Academy of Science Exhibits; and serving as a member of the Study Staff for The Commission on Public Education of the Virginia General Assembly.

Not only did Dr. Lowry speak at professional meetings, he produced participants. Someone did an analysis of the program of an NCTM meeting held in Atlanta in the 1970's and concluded that more than fifty percent of the speakers and presiders were either students or students of students of Dr. Lowry.

Dr. Lowry acted as a consultant to several commercial publishers of textbooks and to the Education Testing Service. He directly served Virginians by acting as a consultant to about 20 Virginia school divisions. He served Virginians through the Virginia Department of Education as a member of the Department's Study Group on the Preparation of Teachers of Mathematics and Science and by serving as a member of the Department's Steering Committee and Writing Committees for producing *Mathematics Curriculum Guide for Grades 7-12* and its several revisions. Dr. Lowry served on the Department's Teachers Certification Study Committee in 1966 and Textbook Selection Committee in 1968. Isabelle Rucker wrote the following in 1987 to Dr. Lowry and says it's still true — and it will be evermore:

While I was engaged in mathematics education with the Virginia Department of Education I knew that if I needed help, advice, or just an ear, I could call you. You were always, in your own modest way, ready to listen and by so doing, you solved and/or alleviated my concerns. It was a comforting feeling — one that too many people cannot enjoy. Your positive influence on mathematics education has been felt all over this country and in some lands abroad through your proteges. Each of us has tried, in his own way, to emulate you in some respect; each of us has, in reality, left your classroom and conference rooms with even a bit of you that has been translated to colleagues and/or to teachers with whom we worked. Even in my dealings with the Governor's School and particularly the participants therein, I found some part of Bill Lowry exhibiting itself. Your impact has been and will continue to be widely felt — with gratitude.

Because of the scholarships and stipends, many of Dr. Lowry's students are thankful that his professional activities included acting as associate director and/or director of National Science Foundation academic year and summer institutes for mathematics teachers held at the University of Virginia. These institutes spread over almost a decade and were beneficial to large numbers of mathematics teachers in Virginia. In addition to directing these institutions, Dr. Lowry traveled over much of the Commonwealth to teach evening classes associated with the institutes. A participant in the academic year institute, Evelyne Graham, affirms, "There is no way to measure the extent that Dr. Lowry's influence and professional leadership affected mathematics education in Virginia — he was the one major force that moved modern mathematics and its related curricula forward. All of us in mathematics education owe him an unpayable debt of gratitude."

A new professional activity for Dr. Lowry began July 1, 1982, when he was appointed the first Executive Secretary for the Virginia Council of Teachers of Mathematics. According to Lucien Hall, who was president of VCTM at the time, "Dr. Lowry was the first and natural choice for this position since he was so highly respected by everyone in Virginia. VCTM could not afford to appoint the wrong person for this newly created position and there was no way we could go wrong with Dr. Lowry."

Many associate Dr. Lowry with graduate students and we forget that he assisted many undergraduates. Chris Tisdale writes:

When I first wandered into Dr. Lowry's office as an undergraduate unsure of pursuing a mathematics teaching

career, little did I know of the tremendous influence that was about to direct my future. Of course the academic preparation was sound, but it was his personal integrity and commitment to his students and profession that provided the model that we all attempt to emulate.

Chuck Straley speaks for many when he says, "...other than my father, he is the most important man in my life. He has had a tremendous effect on me."

Dr. Lowry caused his students/advisees to have great confidence in themselves. Once Johnny Hill said in a speech something to the effect that Dr. Lowry made each advisee feel that he was the most accomplished and important advisee that Dr. Lowry had ever had. Edgar Edwards relates, "During my first term at the University of Virginia I had serious thoughts of dropping the graduate program. Dr. Lowry learned of this and he encouraged me to continue. For this I am grateful."

Stuart Flanagan sums up for all of us our feelings for Dr. Lowry:

As a professional, Dr. Lowry challenged but supported in a kind, gentle, firm, and reassuring way. He was insightful, careful, easy-going — maybe just say wise. He was a master teacher — confidently and quietly instilling the value and belief that we need to consider ALL children as deserving and needing an education.

As a person, he is what he wanted to be — a proud University of Virginia gentleman. He is a man of honor, dignity, and compassion, devoid of greed.

Who would ever think that anyone could soar higher than a glider pilot. Well, Dr. Lowry soared higher. He soared right to the tip-top as Virginia's Gentleman Mathematics Educator. Thus, it is fitting that this issue of the *Virginia Mathematics Teacher* is dedicated to WILLIAM CARL LOWRY.

Dr. and Mrs. Lowry now reside at Our Lady of Peace, 751 Hillsdale Drive, Apt. 331, Charlottesville, Virginia 22901.

The following contributed to the article above: James M. Cooper, University of Virginia; Edgar L. Edwards, Jr., Education Consultant; S. Stuart Flanagan, College of William and Mary; James D. Gates, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics; Evelyne M. Graham, Retired; Lucien T. Hall, Jr., Bridgewater College; Jerome E. Kaufman, Textbook Writer; Isabelle P. Rucker, Retired; H. W. Straley, Woodberry Forest School; Ertle Thompson, University of Virginia; Joseph C. Tisdale, Winthrop College.

Dr. Lowry recently passed away. Please see "From the President."