



photo: Bachrach

Professor Mary P. Dolciani Halloran

**March 3, 1923–
August 5, 1985**

Mary P. Dolciani Halloran received her BA from Hunter College and joined the Hunter faculty in 1955. She served as chairperson of the mathematics department and as provost at Hunter, and in 1974 became dean for academic development at The City University of New York. In 1980 she returned to teach at Hunter, continuing until illness forced her to stop.

Mary P. Dolciani (as she was known professionally) published a series of mathematics textbooks that have been translated into French and Spanish and have sold more than 50 million copies around the world. Most mathematics students in this country, and many in dozens of other countries, recognize the name Dolciani immediately.

At a memorial service held at Hunter last May, Eileen L. Poiani, professor of mathematics at Saint Peter's College in Jersey City, presented a tribute to Professor Dolciani. Here are some excerpts from that tribute:

If I were limited to just one word to describe Dr. Mary Patricia Dolciani, that word would be "enthusiastic." [She had] enthusiasm for her discipline of mathematics, for teaching, for writing, for research, and for life—an enthusiasm that was evident when she spoke and that jumped off every page of her textbooks. . . .

Having received her PhD from Cornell University, where she was an Erastus Brooks fellow and an Olmsted fellow, she pursued further study at Oxford University in England and at the Institute for Advanced

Studies at Princeton. She also worked for the U.S. Government on classified projects at Fort Monmouth during World War II.

But Mary was probably most at home in the classroom, where she was a "Master Teacher." In her forty-two years of teaching, two at Vassar College and forty at her *alma mater*, Hunter College, Professor Dolciani was both a teacher of undergraduate students and a teacher of teachers. She developed the first multimedia mathematics learning laboratory in the City University system, a laboratory which is still thriving today. She directed many National Science Foundation institutes and New York State Education Department institutes for mathematics teachers. A very active member of the School Mathematics Study Group, Professor Dolciani took the lead in developing new curricula for secondary school mathematics.

Although teaching was her first love, she also wore the administrative hats of Department Chairman and Provost [at Hunter] and Dean for Academic Development at The City University of New York. She served on the U.S. Commission on Mathematical Instruction, a Commission of the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences. She served the Mathematical Association of America (MAA) with distinction as a member of the Board of Governors and as a member of the Committee on Publications.

Mary was special—not only in her singular mathematical accomplishments, but in the fact that she belonged to a small, select group of women in mathe-

matics. Mary's mother, to whom she was devoted, and her father were committed to encouraging their daughter to advance and achieve. This was not common at the time, as reflected in the low numbers of women that traditionally have entered the field of mathematics.

To encourage more young women to study mathematics in high school in order to keep their career doors open, the Mathematical Association of America in 1975 initiated a secondary school lectureship program. I became the founding director and soon after called Mary to ask her if she would be willing to be a speaker for the "Women and Mathematics" program. . . . She did a number of lectures, addressing students as well as orientation programs for our speakers, and she never accepted an honorarium. She was the perfect role model. . . .

Through Mary's kindness and generosity, we shall continue to remember her tremendous impact on millions of students across the country and on the professional mathematical community. . . through the Dolciani Mathematical Expositions, a series of the Mathematical Association of America. Professor Dolciani had been contemplating ways of furthering the ideal of excellence in mathematical exposition. At about the same time, the MAA received a collection of expository essays which did not fit precisely into any existing series. Professor Dolciani elected to implement her goal by establishing a revolving fund to initiate [a new series], which was then named in her honor. The series is comprehensible to the talented high school student yet also challenging to the more advanced mathematician. . . .

Mary shall also be remembered by future generations in another special way. On your next visit to Washington, D.C., you may wish to visit the Dolciani Mathematical Center, the headquarters of the MAA. On the occasion of the 1979 formal dedication of this building, Mary remarked that she wanted the build-

ing [to be] a living tribute to her father, an immigrant to this country who died at a young age and had struggled to provide for her education.

Dr. Dolciani's books often started with a set of axioms or self-evident truths. As an axiom for us, I would say that whether you knew her as Dr. Dolciani, Professor Dolciani, Mrs. Halloran, or simply Mary, your life, like mine, has no doubt been enriched by touching hers.

The Mathematics Learning Center created by Professor Dolciani at Hunter College in the early seventies was among the first of its kind in the United States. It is designed primarily to help underprepared students master basic mathematical skills so they can enter mathematics courses at Hunter, but college-level courses are also taught at the Center and its facilities are available to all Hunter students. Now directed by Sandra Clarkson, associate professor of mathematical sciences, the Center serves over two thousand students a year and is one of Hunter's most creative and ambitious academic ventures.

In 1982 Professor Dolciani established the Mary P. Dolciani Halloran Foundation. In her memory her husband, James J. Halloran, and the other trustees of the foundation voted an unconditional gift of \$50,000 to Hunter College this spring; the funds are going toward bringing state-of-the-art computer equipment to the Mathematics Learning Center. The foundation will make another gift of \$50,000 if Hunter can raise an equal sum in matching funds by the end of 1986.

All fellow alumni, students, colleagues and other friends of Mary P. Dolciani Halloran are invited to help match this gift. Checks, made out to Hunter College/Dolciani Fund, should be sent to:

**Hunter College Office of Development
Box 373/ 695 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10021**

The Department of Romance Languages invites you to attend two free events

Monday, November 17, 1986
Hunter Playhouse
8:00 p.m.

(under the patronage of the
Consulate General of Spain)

The Chamber Chorus of Pamplona, Spain

in a concert of medieval, Renaissance, and
traditional Spanish songs

Friday, November 21, 1986
West Building, Room 415
4:00 p.m.

The distinguished French poet and critic
and Continuing Visiting Professor at
Hunter College and the Graduate Center

Yves Bonnefoy

lecturing in English