

3-20-2017

International Math Wiz

University of Dayton

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news_rls

Recommended Citation

University of Dayton. "International Math Wiz" (2017). http://wayback.archive-it.org/4727/20170410182107/https://www.udayton.edu/news/articles/2017/03/richard_schoen_international_math_awards.php

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Marketing and Communications at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in News Releases by an authorized administrator of eCommons. For more information, please contact frice1@udayton.edu, mschlengen1@udayton.edu.

NEWS

Monday March 20, 2017

International Math Wiz

1972 University of Dayton graduate Richard Schoen has won three international prizes for math so far this year, including the Wolf Prize in Mathematics which is mentioned in the same breath as "a Nobel for math."

After Schoen received the Wolf Prize in January, he won the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences' Rolf Schock Prize in Mathematics and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology's Heinz Hopf Prize. The Royal Swedish Academy of Science also awards the Nobel prizes.

Not bad for someone whose mother was concerned he couldn't hold a steady job.

"Most academics move around a lot. I remember when I first graduated, had a post doc and moved somewhere else, my mother was concerned I couldn't hold a steady job," said Schoen, who has held posts at Stanford, California Berkeley, NYU and Princeton, among others.

But what would she have thought about this?

"She was a very underspoken person. She was quite proud of the children, in general when they did good things, but she wouldn't want to make a big fuss because it might be favoring me over the others," said Schoen, the 10th of 13 children who grew up on a farm near Ft. Recovery, Ohio, after winning the Wolf Prize. "But I think she'd be proud of this."

Schoen (pronounced SHANE), currently the Excellence in Teaching Chair at the University of California, Irvine, researches Albert Einstein's equations of general relativity and gravitation plus differential geometry, or the study of curved spaces.

He was interested in math from a young age. He followed two brothers, who also earned doctorates in math, to UD.

"When I was in middle and high school, my brothers would get me books that I worked on," he said. "I sort of intended to do something in math (for a career), but I didn't really quite know what that would mean."

Schoen came to UD as a math major during the "Sputnik era" when there was a big emphasis on math and science education and "UD was sending a lot of students to Ph.D. programs."

"UD prepared me very well for graduate school. I found myself quite prepared, in fact better than a lot of the kids who came from more prestigious schools," Schoen said.

In addition to grad school, Schoen said his time at Dayton prepared him for his career.

"The faculty at Dayton were all Ph.D.s and had published papers, so I got some idea from them about mathematical research," he said. "The nice thing about UD is I knew the faculty very well. I viewed them not only as teachers but as friends. Being at Dayton also gave me a better understanding of how to interact with students."

Established by the Wolf Foundation and administered by the state of Israel, Wolf Prizes go to outstanding international experts in physics, chemistry, mathematics, medicine and the arts. Israeli President Reuven Rivlin will present the awards this summer at the Knesset Building, home to the Israeli parliament.

The Schock prizes in logic and philosophy, mathematics, and the musical arts, for uniting science and art, will be awarded Nov. 14 at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

The Swiss Federal Institute of Technology awards the Heinz Hopf Prize for "outstanding scientific work in the field of pure mathematics every two years on the occasion of the Heinz Hopf Lectures." The date has not been set.

For more information, contact Shawn Robinson, associate director of media relations, at 937-229-3391 or srobinson@udayton.edu. Photo credit: University of California, Irvine.