

## **The Hans Freudenthal Medal for 2015 goes to Jill ADLER, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa**

*It is with great pleasure that the ICMI Awards Committee hereby announces that the Hans Freudenthal Medal for 2015 is given to Professor Jill Adler, FRF Chair of Mathematics Education, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, in recognition of her outstanding research program dedicated to improving the teaching and learning of mathematics in South Africa – from her 1990s ground-breaking, sociocultural research on the inherent dilemmas of teaching mathematics in multilingual classrooms through to her subsequent focus on problems related to mathematical knowledge for teaching and mathematics teacher professional development. Jill's research of multilingual classrooms during a period of change in South Africa puts into stark relief the tensions involved in teaching and learning mathematics in classrooms where the language of instruction is different from the language of teachers' and students' everyday lives. In her 2001 book, Teaching Mathematics in Multilingual Classrooms, she displays the strong theoretical grounding that has served to advance the field's understanding of the relationship between language and mathematics in the classroom. During the years from 1996 onward, Jill spearheaded several large-scale teacher development projects. The most recent one, begun in 2009, called the Wits Maths Connect Secondary project, aims to further develop mathematics teaching practice at the secondary level so as to enable more learners from disadvantaged communities to qualify for the study of mathematics-related courses at university. This ongoing research and development project is a further testament to Jill's unstinting efforts to face head-on the challenges of improving mathematics teaching in post-apartheid South Africa – efforts that have been recognized by several awards over the years, including the University of the Witwatersrand Vice Chancellor's Research Award for 2003, the FRF Chair of Mathematics Education in 2009, the Gold Medal for Science in the Service of Society from the Academy of Science of South Africa in 2012, and the Svend Pedersen Lecture Award in Mathematics Education from Stockholm University in 2015. For the inspiring, persistent, and scholarly leadership that Jill Adler has provided to the field of mathematics education research and practice in South Africa and beyond, she is truly deserving of the Hans Freudenthal medal for 2015.*

Jill Adler, who was born in Johannesburg, graduated from the University of the Witwatersrand with a B.Sc. in mathematics and psychology in 1972. She taught secondary school mathematics for three years in a so-called 'coloured' school in Cape Town – an experience that she credits for strengthening her concerns about educational inequality and leading her to work in that direction. This was followed by ten years spent on developing materials for adults and alienated youth excluded from school mathematics learning in apartheid South Africa. In 1985, she obtained an M.Ed. from the University of the Witwatersrand for her dissertation titled, *Mathematics by newspaper in South Africa: junior secondary mathematics for adults through the medium of a newspaper*. Four years later, Jill began teaching as Lecturer in the Education Department of the same university. Soon afterward she began her doctoral research, which culminated in a Ph.D. in 1996 from the University of the Witwatersrand for her dissertation titled, *Secondary teachers' knowledge of the dynamics of teaching and learning mathematics in multilingual classrooms*. In July 1997, she was appointed to the Sentrachem Chair of Mathematics Education, and in 2002, named Professor of Mathematics Education. In 2009 was awarded the prestigious FRF Chair of Mathematics Education. From 2007 to 2014, Jill Adler also held a part-time joint appointment as Chair of Mathematics Education at Kings College in London.

Jill Adler was the first and is now one of two South African educational researchers to be awarded an 'A' rating from the National Research Foundation of South Africa indicating "researchers who are unequivocally recognized by their peers as leading international scholars in their field for the high quality and impact of their research outputs". Her work epitomizes what Wits University has called the "engaged scholar", that is, doing rigorous and theoretically rich research at the cutting edge of international work in the field which at the same time contributes to critical areas of local and regional need in education. In addition to this international research excellence, she has played an outstanding leadership role in growing mathematics education research in South Africa, Africa, and beyond. Her development of research teams involving graduate students and post-doctoral fellows, along with the mentoring of numerous Ph.D. and Master's students, have all added to the human research capacity she has been instrumental in creating in Southern Africa.

Jill Adler's contributions to the development of research and practice have earned her leadership positions in renowned international and national professional associations. For example, between 2003 and 2009 she was Vice President of the International Commission for Mathematical Instruction, and during this period launched the first African ICMI regional congress, contributing significantly to participation from African countries in ICMI, and enabling development of mathematics education research in the region. Between 1994 and 1998, she was a member of the International Committee for the Psychology of Mathematics Education and served as Program Chair for the 1998 PME conference in Stellenbosch. In addition to having played key leadership roles in several national committees, she is a member of the prestigious Academy of Science of South Africa. An indication of her exceptional standing in the international community is the number of invitations she has received to deliver keynote lectures on her research, as for example, at the International Congress of Mathematicians in 2010 in India. For the 2004 ICME conference, she was invited to serve as Team Chair for the International Survey Panel of research on mathematics teacher education. Since entering academia in 1989, Jill Adler has produced more than 125 publications, all of which attest to the high quality and dedicated focus of her research activity.

In summary, Jill Adler is an eminently worthy recipient of the Hans Freudenthal Medal for 2015.