

In Memoriam:

Mara Dicle Neusel

Marie Vitulli, Professor Emerita, University of Oregon



Mara Dicle Neusel
May 14, 1964 – September 5, 2014

Dr. Mara Dicle Neusel, mathematician, author, teacher, and mentor, passed away at her home in Lubbock, Texas on September 5, 2014. Mara was born in Stuttgart, Germany and received all of her degrees from the University of Göttingen. In 2001 she became the fourth woman to earn a *venia legendi* (Habilitation) in mathematics from the University of Göttingen and thus became a Privatdozentin. Emmy Noether was the first woman to earn this degree in 1919.

Mara authored two research monographs that were published by the AMS. Her Habilitationsschrift, *Inverse Invariant Theory and Steenrod Algebras*, appeared in the Memoirs of the AMS series. The encyclopedic work *Invariant Theory of Finite Groups* (with Larry Smith) appeared in the Mathematical Survey and Monographs Series. She also wrote *Invariant Theory* for the AMS Student Mathematical Library, which gives a “from scratch” account of the subject accessible by advanced undergraduates and beginning

graduate students. Zentralblatt declared “the exposition of the book under review stands out by its masterly clarity, comprehensiveness, profundity, and didactical disposition.” Mara also published numerous articles on the topic of invariant theory of finite groups and commutative algebra over the Steenrod algebra.

Mara came to Texas Tech University as an associate professor in 2002 and was promoted to full professor in 2009. She held visiting positions in Kassel, Göttingen, and Magdeburg in Germany as well as at the University of Minnesota, the University of Notre Dame, and Yale University in the United States.

She also served on the Editorial Boards of *Advances in Pure Mathematics* and the *International Journal of Mathematics and Applied Statistics* until her death. She was a referee for well over 30 mathematics journals and publishing groups.

Mara was a passionate and tireless advocate for women in mathematics. In 2001 she started the Texas Tech Emmy Noether Day for high school girls, which celebrated its 12th anniversary in 2014. She also co-founded the Young Women in Mathematics group at Texas Tech and received a Texas Tech diversity grant to support the organization. She was a friend to AWM and served in various capacities. She co-organized a special session on Algebraic Geometry and Commutative Algebra at the 40th Anniversary Celebration of the AWM at Brown University in 2011.

She was a dedicated practitioner and teacher of yoga. She frequently visited the Sivananda Ashram Yoga Retreat in the Bahamas to hone her proficiency and revitalize herself. Mara was also a skilled marksman and kept sharp by visiting the shooting ranges in Lubbock. She enjoyed opera and ballet. Mara was devoted to her two cats, Sugar Ray and Ali.

Mara and I met in the fall of 1997 when we shared an office at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario, CA. We shared many interests and soon became good friends. My partner and I visited Mara in Göttingen in the summer of 1999 when she arranged for me to give a series of lectures on weak normality and seminormality for rings and varieties. That summer Mara introduced us to fine Alsatian Riesling wines. During our stay in Kingston we also frequented Pizza Hut and I have fond memories of our evenings there. Mara and I usually got together at the Joint Meetings and whenever else we could. We intended to meet in Santa Fe to see opera, but I regret to say that never came to pass.

As an original and productive mathematician, as a skilled expositor, and as a friend to students and peers alike, she will be fondly remembered and dearly missed.