Andrew Wiles Receives Faisal Prize

الأستاذ الدكتور أندرو جون وايلز
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Andrew Wiles

For his proof of Fermat's Last Theorem, Andrew Wiles has received the 1998 King Faisal International Prize for Science. Wiles, the Eugene Higgins Professor of Mathematics at Princeton University, received the prize at a special ceremony in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on January 6, 1998. The prize consists of a $200,000 cash award and a commemorative gold medal. The prize citation noted that Wiles's contribution not only was a major addition to mathematical knowledge but also has had a positive influence on public perceptions of mathematics.

The King Faisal International Prize is presented by the King Faisal Foundation. The prize is divided into five general areas of expertise: service to Islam, Islamic studies, Arabic literature, science, and medicine. Science topics rotate among chemistry, biology, mathematics, and physics, with mathematics being the chosen topic for 1998. Previous recipients of the Faisal Prize in mathematics are Sir Michael Atiyah (1987) and Dennis Sullivan (1994).

In a set of lectures at the Isaac Newton Institute in Cambridge, England, in 1993, Andrew Wiles outlined the results of several years of solitary work that concluded in a proof of Fermat's Last Theorem. He also provided a proof of the Taniyama-Shimura Conjecture for semistable elliptic curves, which had been thought by many mathematicians to be totally inaccessible. This work was published in two papers, "Modular elliptic curves and Fermat's last theorem", by Wiles (Ann. of Math. (2) 141 (1995), no. 3, 443–551), and "Ring-theoretic properties of certain Hecke algebras", by Wiles and Richard Taylor (Ann. of Math. (2) 141 (1995), no. 3, 553–572).

Andrew John Wiles was born in Cambridge, England, on April 11, 1953. He attended Merton College, Oxford University, starting in 1971, and he received his B.A. there in 1974. That same year he went to Clare College, Cambridge University, earning his Ph.D. there in 1980.

From 1977 until 1980 Wiles was a Junior Research Fellow at Clare College and a Benjamin Peirce Assistant Professor at Harvard University. In 1981 he was a visiting professor at the Sonderforschungsbereich Theoretische Mathematik in Bonn, and later that year he was a member of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. In 1982 he became a professor at Princeton University and in the spring of that year was a visiting professor at the Université de Paris, Orsay. On a Guggenheim Fellowship he was a visiting professor at the Institut des Hautes Études Scientifiques and at the École Normale Supérieure (1985–86). From 1988 to 1990 he was a Royal Society Research Professor at Oxford University. In 1994 he assumed his present position at Princeton.

Wiles was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, London, in 1989. In 1995 he received the Schock Prize in Mathematics from the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. That same year he was awarded the Prix Fermat, presented by the Université Paul Sabatier and Matra Marconi Space. In 1996 Wiles received the Wolf Prize in mathematics and the Royal Medal of the Royal Society, London. Wiles was elected as a foreign member to the U.S. National Academy of Sciences in 1996 and also received the 1996 NAS Award in Mathematics (for an account of Wiles's research, see the announcement of the NAS Award, *Notices*, July 1996, page 760). In 1997 he received the historic Wolfskehl Prize, which was established in 1908 and which inspired thousands of people to attempt to prove Fermat's Last Theorem.

—Allyn Jackson