PENCE, Sallie E. September 5, 1893–July 26, 1989.

University of Kentucky (BA 1914, MA 1928), University of Illinois (PhD 1937).

Sallie Elizabeth Pence was born in Lexington, Kentucky, a daughter of Belle (Kelly) (1862–1954) and Merry Lewis Pence (1854–1938), natives of Kentucky who married in 1882. She was the seventh of eight children, with older siblings Alice (b. 1883), Merry Lewis (1884–1966), Kate (b. 1886), Christina (b. 1887), Mary (b. 1889), and Edgar (b. 1891), and younger brother, Robert (1898–1954). Her father, Merry Lewis Pence, graduated in 1881 from what was then the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Kentucky, and earned a master's degree in 1885. He joined the New York Mathematical Society in 1891 and remained a member through at least 1894 when it became the American Mathematical Society. He taught for over fifty years and for nearly forty years served at what eventually became the University of Kentucky, first as professor of civil engineering and physics and then as head of the physics department that he established. Pence Hall on the campus is named for him. The university gives the Merry Lewis Pence Award for the outstanding senior physics major annually. Four of his five daughters graduated from the University of Kentucky.

Sallie Pence attended public schools in Lexington, Kentucky, for ten years and the academy of the State University of Kentucky for one year before graduating in 1910 and entering the State University, renamed the University of Kentucky in 1916. She received her bachelor's degree in 1914, having majored in modern languages. While at the university she was a member of the women's basketball team; a campus drama production company; Mortar Board; and Alpha Gamma Delta, a social sorority.

From 1914 until 1927 Pence taught in high schools in Owensboro, Bellevue, Hazard, and Morganfield, Kentucky, and she attended George Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville, Tennessee, during the summer of 1921. She began work in mathematics at the University of Kentucky in the summer of 1922. After spending the summers of 1926 and 1927 as a graduate student and the following year as a fellow, she completed the work for her master's degree. Upon receiving that degree in 1928 Pence became an instructor at Murray Normal School and Teachers College (now Murray State University) in Kentucky. The following year she was hired as an instructor at the University of Kentucky, where, except for leaves, she spent the remainder of her career.

While teaching at Kentucky, Pence continued taking mathematics courses there before attending Cornell University during the summers of 1932 and 1933. Virgil Snyder, from whom she took courses both summers, described her as "a very good student" at the end of the first and "an excellent student" at the end of the second (Cornell University Graduate School Files). Pence took a leave of absence from Kentucky to attend the University of Illinois 1934–35. She was an assistant in mathematics at Illinois in 1935–36, remained for the summer, and returned for the second semester of 1936–37 to complete the work for her PhD. Her major field was geometry with a minor in astronomy.

In 1938, a year after receiving her doctorate, Pence was promoted to assistant professor at Kentucky. She was promoted to associate professor in 1947, served as chairman of the division of physical science 1954–55, and was promoted to professor in 1956, seven years before her retirement in 1963. While at Kentucky, Pence was

active in professional organizations, particularly the MAA. She was secretary of the Kentucky Section 1947–49 and chairman of the section 1953–54; she was official MAA lecturer to Kentucky high schools in 1958–59 and was executive director of the MAA high school lecture program under the sponsorship of the National Science Foundation 1962–63. In 1957 Pence directed a summer seminar for in-service high school mathematics teachers. Pence was also executive director of the University of Kentucky high school honors examinations in mathematics 1959–63.

Immediately after her retirement in 1963 Pence headed for Europe with a friend for a four-month trip to Britain, France, Switzerland, Greece, and finally Turkey, where she was to be entertained by the parents of one of her students. Pence did some part-time teaching at the University of Kentucky after her retirement, and from 1964 until 1966 she was professor at East Carolina College (now East Carolina University) in Greenville, North Carolina. She was a visiting distinguished professor there 1966–67.

Pence had a number of interests and appeared to excel in each. These included golf, philately, photography, and travel. She belonged to the Winchester, Kentucky, Country Club and the Henry Clay Philatelic Society, the latter of which awarded her first place for having the best stamp collection among its members in 1939. She was a member of the Lexington Camera Club, was described as an expert photographer, and was frequently invited to give slide presentations and talks to various clubs and professional groups about her travels. She was a member of the Lexington Business and Professional Women's Club, the Woman's Club of Central Kentucky, the Kentucky Archaeological Society, the Order of the Eastern Star, and the Daughters of the American Revolution, among others. She was also active in the Calvary Baptist Church, was a member of the Business Women's Missionary Circle, and described herself as a Democrat.

Sallie Pence died at the age of ninety-five at the Sayre Christian Village Nursing Home in Lexington. She was survived by several nieces and nephews. The Sallie E. Pence Award was established by the University of Kentucky board of trustees and is given annually to outstanding mathematics and mathematics education majors at the University of Kentucky who plan to pursue a career in teaching.

Organizational affiliations: AMS, MAA, Sigma Delta Epsilon, AAUW, AAUP, Pi Mu Epsilon.

Thesis and dissertation:
1928 Cryptology. MA thesis, University of Kentucky.
1937 The configuration of the double points of cubics of a pencil. PhD dissertation, University of Illinois, directed by Arnold Emch. Typescript. Abstract of dissertation, 1937, Urbana, IL.

Publication:
1963 with members of Committee on College Algebra, J. C. Eaves, ed. *College Algebra and Basic Set Theory*. Second ed. New York: Pitman Publishing Co.

Abstracts:
1938 Configuration of double points of cubics of a pencil. *Amer. Math. Monthly* 45:648–49 #4. Presented to the MAA, Morehead, KY, 14 May 1938. Based on PhD dissertation.
1944 Code writing. *Amer. Math. Monthly* 51:492 #5. Presented to the MAA, Lexington, KY, 29 Apr 1944.

Presentations not listed above:
Problems involving linkages. Presented to the MAA, Lexington, KY, 14 May 1932.

Report on the visiting lecture program. Presented to the MAA, Danville, KY, 25 Apr 1959.

References to: AmMSc7–8, 9P–11P; AmWom 1935–40; WhoAmW 1.
"Dr. Pence Retires from U.K. Faculty." *Louisville Courier–Journal*, 20 Jun 1963.
"Sallie Elizabeth Pence, Retired UK Professor." (Obituary) *Lexington Herald-Leader*, 27 Jul 1989.

Other sources: PhD dissertation vita 1937; Cornell University Archives; communication with University of Kentucky Archives; US Census 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930 KY.

Last modified: July 20, 2009.