HARSHBARGER, Frances. August 16, 1902–February 11, 1987.
GRINNELL COLLEGE (BA 1923), WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY (MA 1925), UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS (PhD 1930).

Frances Harshbarger was born in Quimby, Iowa, the middle child of Annie W. (b. 1870) and Charles C. Harshbarger (b. 1871), both natives of Iowa. Two years separated her from her older brother, Henry, and from her younger sister, Emily. Her father was a bank cashier.

After graduating from Grinnell College in Iowa in 1923, Harshbarger was at West Virginia University for the next two years, where she taught half time and did graduate work in mathematics. She received her master's degree in 1925 and spent the next two years in Keyser, West Virginia, as head of the mathematics department of Potomac State School, a junior college that was established as a preparatory school for West Virginia University in 1901. It was also known as Potomac State College, which later became its official name; it is now a division of the university.

In 1927 Harshbarger went to the University of Illinois, where she was an assistant until 1929 and then a fellow for the year 1929–30. Her dissertation in algebraic geometry was written under the direction of A. B. Coble; she minored in physics.

After receiving her PhD in 1930, Harshbarger went to Istanbul, Turkey, where she was a professor in the American College for Girls (also known as Constantinople Woman's College) 1930–34. After she left the school, she was replaced by Henrietta Terry (Nee), who had just received her PhD from Illinois. Upon Harshbarger's return to the United States, she taught at the high school associated with the University of Chicago.

In the fall of 1935, Harshbarger was appointed instructor at Kent State University in Ohio. She was assistant professor 1936–42, associate professor 1942–46, and professor 1946–72. She was designated emeritus professor upon her retirement in 1972.

After her death at age eighty-four in 1987 in the Cuyahoga Falls General Hospital in Ohio, Frances Harshbarger was buried in Woodbine, Iowa. Donations in her memory were directed to the United Methodist Church in Kent.

Organizational affiliations: AMS, MAA, AAUP, Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Xi.

Dissertation:
1930 The geometric configuration defined by a special algebraic relation of genus four. PhD dissertation, University of Illinois, directed by Arthur Byron Coble. Printed version, 1931, reprinted from *Trans. Amer. Math. Soc.* 33:557–78.

Publication:
1931 The geometric configuration defined by a special algebraic relation of genus four. *Trans. Amer. Math. Soc.* 33:557–78. Published version of PhD dissertation. Reviews: *JFM* 57.0837.01 (R. Weitzenböck; *Zbl* 001.40203 (E. A. Weiss). Presented by title to the AMS, New York City, 28 Feb 1931; abstract: *Bull. Amer. Math. Soc.* 37:170 #134.

References to: AmMSc 6–8, 9P–11P; AmMWSc 12P–13P.

Other sources: PhD dissertation vita 1931; communication with Kent State University Archives; US Census 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930 IA.

Last modified: December 11, 2008.