

SULLIVAN, Mildred M. November 16, 1907–August 30, 1958.
RADCLIFFE COLLEGE (BA 1929, MA 1930, PhD 1932).

Mildred Marie Sullivan was born in Boston, Massachusetts, the youngest of two surviving children of three born to Alice T. (Sullivan) (b. 1875) and John F. Sullivan (b. 1871), both born in Massachusetts of Irish parents. In 1900 her parents had been married six years, and there was one living child, John F. Jr. (b. 1895), of two that had been born. Her father was a letter carrier for the post office.

Sullivan did her undergraduate and graduate work at Radcliffe College and earned her doctorate at the age of twenty-four. Her dissertation in potential theory was supervised by O. D. Kellogg. In Kellogg's November 1931 application for funds for a book project, he wrote, "the assistant is available in Miss Mildred M. Sullivan, now a graduate student at Radcliffe and a candidate for the doctorate in June of the present year. She has unusual originality and power to carry through, with a minimum of guidance, on assigned programs. Her availability appears to present a rare opportunity for help on the above project" (Papers of William Fogg Osgood, HUG 4659.10, Harvard University Archives). Sullivan planned to work as Kellogg's research assistant the year after she received her doctorate in June. However, Kellogg died suddenly in July 1932. Sullivan was a research assistant in mathematics at Harvard under a Milton Fund grant in 1932–33. During that year she presented their joint work at an AMS meeting and wrote a paper based on that work that was published in 1935 under her name and Kellogg's in the *Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*.

The year following her postdoctoral year at Harvard, Sullivan was a National Research Fellow working at Rice Institute in Houston and at the University of California. She was an instructor at the University of Houston 1934–35, during its first year as a four-year institution. This was during the Great Depression, and there is no indication that Sullivan was able to secure academic employment at the end of that year. In January 1937 Sullivan became an editorial assistant for the AMS in order to succeed [Alta Odums \(Gray\)](#), who had already resigned effective April 1, 1937. In 1938 Sullivan became an instructor at Queens College in Flushing, New York. She was an instructor until 1946, when she was promoted to assistant professor. The year after her promotion Sullivan joined the MAA and from then on regularly attended meetings of the Metropolitan New York Section. Also starting when she became editorial assistant at the AMS in 1937, and continuing through the 1940s, Sullivan attended several meetings a year of the society in the New York City area.

Mildred Sullivan died suddenly in August 1958 of heart failure at age fifty while visiting relatives at her family's home in the Dorchester neighborhood of Boston, Massachusetts. She is buried in Holyhood Cemetery in Brookline.

Organizational affiliations: AMS, MAA, Phi Beta Kappa.

Thesis and dissertation:

1931(?) The theory of quadratic residues. Minor thesis, Radcliffe College.

1932 On the derivatives of Newtonian and logarithmic potentials near the acting masses. PhD dissertation, Radcliffe College, directed by Oliver Dimon Kellogg. Summary: *Radcliffe College. Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Summaries of theses accepted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of doctor of philosophy* 1:62–65. See also **1933**.

Publications:

1933 On the derivatives of Newtonian and logarithmic potentials near the acting masses. *Trans. Amer. Math. Soc.* 35:137–71. Published version of PhD dissertation. Reviews: *JFM* 59.0484.01 (J. Lense); *Zbl* 006.01605 (O. D. Kellogg). Presented with O. D. Kellogg by title as “On the derivatives of potentials on the boundary” to the AMS, New York City, 31 Oct 1931; abstract: *Bull. Amer. Math. Soc.* 37:819–20 #350.

1935 with O. D. Kellogg. The boundary values of potentials and their derivatives – their dependence on the boundary. *Mem. Amer. Acad. Arts Sci.* 18:1–47. Presented by Sullivan as “Newtonian potentials as functions of the masses” to the AMS, Atlantic City, NJ, 27 Dec 1932; abstract: *Bull. Amer. Math. Soc.* 39:23 #3.

Abstract not listed above:

1934 On the partial derivatives of harmonic functions as functionals of the determining boundaries. *Bull. Amer. Math. Soc.* 40 (9, pt. 1): 662 #289. Presented by title to the AMS, Williamstown, MA, 7 Sep 1934.

References to: AmMSc 7–8, 9P.

“Dr. Mildred Sullivan.” *New York Times*, 31 Aug 1958.

Other sources: Owens questionnaires 1937, 1940; US Census 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930 MA; Massachusetts death certificate.

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