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BABCOCK, Wealthy. November 18, 1895–April 10, 1990.

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS (BA 1919, MA 1922, PhD 1926).

Wealthy Consuelo Babcock was born on a farm in Washington County, Kansas, near the Nebraska border. She was the second child of Ella (Kerr) (b. 1872), a Kansas native, and Cassius Lincoln Babcock (b. 1859), originally from Indiana. Their son, Dale, was born in 1891, four years before Wealthy. In 1900 Cassius Babcock was a farmer; in 1910 the family was living in Hiawatha, in the northeast corner of Kansas, and he was a carpenter. In 1920 Wealthy and her parents were living in Steele City, Nebraska, just across the border from Washington County, Kansas.

Wealthy Babcock graduated in 1913 from Washington County High School and taught for one year at Liberty School followed by a year at Lone Mound, both one-room country schools in Washington County. She then attended the University of Kansas where she was a member of the women's basketball team, an early indication of her interest in sports. After receiving her BA in 1919, she taught for a year at Neodesha High School in southeastern Kansas.

Babcock then returned to the University of Kansas, where she was to spend the rest of her career. She was an instructor starting in 1920, while also earning her graduate degrees: a master's in 1922 and a doctorate with a minor in physics in 1926. She was promoted to assistant professor in 1926 and to associate professor in 1940; she retired at that rank in 1966. During her tenure on the Kansas faculty Babcock regularly attended meetings of the Kansas Section of the MAA.

According to G. Baley Price's 1975 history of the University of Kansas mathematics department, she was known as an outstanding teacher. She was the department's librarian for more than thirty years, and this contribution was acknowledged in 1966 by the naming of the Wealthy Babcock Mathematics Library. She served on many committees on scholarships and awards and was particularly active in the KU Alumni Association's activities, for which she received the Fred Ellsworth Medallion, the highest award for service, in 1977. This honor was noted again in October 2002 in the article "Old Home Town – 25, 40 and 100 Years Ago Today" in the *Lawrence Journal-World*. Scholarships that have been given in her name include the Black-Babcock mathematics scholarship, the Wealthy Babcock scholarship, the Charles H. Ashton-Wealthy Babcock scholarship, and the Wealthy Babcock New Student scholarship. A floor of Templin Hall, a residence hall at the university, is named the Wealthy Babcock House.

Babcock's career paralleled in many ways that of [Florence Black](#), a close friend and colleague at the University of Kansas, with whom she shared many interests. Black, too, received a PhD from Kansas in 1926 and was on the mathematics faculty for her entire career. They were both avid sports fans, faithfully attending university football and basketball games. In 2005 a columnist for the *Lawrence Journal-World* noted that "I go back to the days when the likes of Florence Black, Wealthy Babcock and Elizabeth Lawson knew as much about KU hoops as any living creatures. They were fixtures in Hoch Auditorium and the fieldhouse for eons." Both Babcock and Black were interested in camping and the out-of-doors. Price notes that Babcock owned a stable of horses that she and Black rode. Both were elected to the University of Kansas Women's Hall of Fame in 1973. The College

of Liberal Arts and Sciences reported in 2005 that the Florence Black and Wealthy Babcock Professorship in Mathematics was newly established.

Wealthy Babcock died at ninety-four at Presbyterian Manor in Lawrence, Kansas, in 1990. Survivors included a nephew, great-nephews and great-nieces, and great-great-nephews and great-great-nieces. She was cremated with inurnment in the Pioneer Cemetery on the campus of the university.

Organizational affiliations: AMS, MAA, Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Xi, Pi Mu Epsilon.

Thesis and dissertation:

1922 On coaxial minors of determinants. MA thesis, University of Kansas.

1926 On the geometry associated with certain determinants with linear elements. PhD dissertation, University of Kansas, directed by Ellis Bagley Stouffer. Printed version, 1929, reprinted from *Univ. Kansas Sci. Bull.* 19 (3): 27–42.

Publication:

1929 On the geometry associated with certain determinants with linear elements. *Univ. Kansas Sci. Bull.* 19 (3): 27–42. Published version of PhD dissertation. Presented to the AMS, Lawrence, KS, 1 Dec 1928; abstract: *Bull. Amer. Math. Soc.* 35:146–47 #7.

Abstracts not listed above:

1923 A new method of determining sufficient conditions for real roots of equations. *Amer. Math. Monthly* 30:106 #6. Presented to the MAA, Topeka, KS, 20 Jan 1923.

1927 Some important points in the development of the theory of determinants. *Amer. Math. Monthly* 34:400 #4. Presented to the MAA, Topeka, KS, 5 Feb 1927.

Presentation not listed above:

Mathematics in War. Presented to the MAA, Lawrence, KS, 10 Apr 1943.

References to:

“Wealthy C. Babcock.” (Obituary) *Lawrence Journal-World*, 11 Apr 1990.

Mayer, Bill. “[Mayer: Rabid KU Fans Prove Basketball’s Mass Appeal.](#)” *Lawrence Journal-World*, 23 Jan 2005.

Other sources: Price, *History of the Department of Mathematics of the University of Kansas*; US Census 1900, 1910 KS, 1920 NE; SSDI.

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