

ALLEN, Bess (Eversull). May 18, 1899–March 18, 1978.

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI (BA 1921, MA 1922, PhD 1924).

Bess Marie Eversull was born in Elmwood Place, a village adjacent to Cincinnati, Ohio, the first of two daughters of Olive (Magrew) (1872–1954) and Warner Solomon Eversull (1865–1944), both of Ohio. Her parents had married in 1896, and the younger daughter, Edna (1901–1955), was born two years after Bess. Warner Eversull was principal and later superintendent of a public school in the area.

Bess Eversull attended Woodward High School in Cincinnati before enrolling at the University of Cincinnati where she received all of her formal postsecondary education. She held a Washburn scholarship the first two years of her undergraduate work and graduated in 1921 with a combined major in mathematics and English and a minor in French.

Eversull continued her studies at Cincinnati until she completed the work for her doctorate with a minor in physics. She was a Baldwin fellow 1921–23, a Taft fellow 1924, and assisted and taught intermittently. Both her 1922 master's thesis and her 1924 doctoral dissertation examined triple Fourier series, and each was published the year she received the degree. She was the first doctoral student of Charles N. Moore and was the third person and the first woman to earn a doctorate in mathematics at Cincinnati.

Bess Eversull was an instructor at Smith College 1924–27. In October 1927 she married Charles Easton Allen (1899–1975), and within a year they were living in Detroit, where by 1930 Charles Allen was a civil engineer working as a building inspector for the City of Detroit. Nearly twenty years after her marriage Allen indicated in a job application that she had no children and that she had done only volunteer work, mostly non-mathematical, since her marriage, except during the war. She worked as a mathematician for the Jam Handy Organization, which made films for the armed services, from May 1942 until August 1943. Her volunteer activities consisted of settlement work, YWCA board work, tutoring high school and college students, and tutoring at the veterans' hospital; in 1945 she taught in the New Boston, Texas, high school as a substitute for two months.

In February 1947 Allen resumed her professional work by taking a position as a regular substitute instructor at Wayne University (now Wayne State University) in Detroit. She continued there as instructor 1948–50, assistant professor 1950–59, associate professor 1959–64, and associate professor emeritus after her retirement in 1964.

While at Wayne State University she taught elementary and beginning graduate courses, was a regular attendee at department colloquia, prepared catalogue material, was in charge of placement examinations, and supervised part-time instructors. The department recommendation for her promotion to associate professor contains the following observations: "In her unusual devotion to work in the classroom and in interest in her students, Mrs. Allen sets an example for the rest of the staff. . . . The candidate is an excellent teacher. . . . She spends more time in giving individual assistance to students in and out of the class than any other member of the department. . . . Without Mrs. Allen's presence in the Math Department, much of the essential detailed work would not be done" (Wayne State University Archives).

Allen's activities outside the department included serving as a member of the university honors convocation committee, as secretary of the WSU chapter of Phi

Beta Kappa, as liaison member between WSU and the AAUW, as director of the Faculty Women's Club, and as sponsor of the WSU chapter of Delta Omicron, a national music fraternity. She often attended MAA meetings and wrote several reviews for the *Monthly*. Professional affiliations included the Industrial Mathematics Society, Detroit, and the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters. After her retirement from Wayne State in 1964, she taught for a few years in the late 1960s at the Detroit Institute of Technology.

Charles Allen died in 1975, and Bess Allen died at her home in Detroit, Michigan, in 1978, two months before her seventy-ninth birthday. After cremation her remains were interred in the Evergreen Cemetery in Detroit.

Organizational affiliations: AMS, MAA, AAAS, AAUW, Phi Beta Kappa.

Thesis and dissertation:

1922 [Eversull, B. M.] On the convergence factors in triple series and the triple Fourier's series with an application to a physical problem in the flow of heat. MA thesis, University of Cincinnati. See also **1922** in **Publications**.

1924 [Eversull, B. M.] The summability of the triple Fourier's series at points of discontinuity of the function developed. PhD dissertation, University of Cincinnati, directed by Charles Napoleon Moore. Typescript. Printed version, 1924, reprinted from *Trans. Amer. Math. Soc.* 26:313–34.

Publications:

1922 [Eversull, B. M.] On convergence factors in triple series and the triple Fourier's series. *Ann. of Math.* 2nd ser., 24:141–66. Reviews: *JFM* 49.0207.04 (E. Hille); *Rev. semestr. publ. math.* 31, pt. 2: 19 (W. A. Wythoff). Presented as "On convergence factors in triple series and the triple Fourier series" to the AMS, Chicago, 14 Apr 1922; abstract: *Bull. Amer. Math. Soc.* 28:289 #5.

1924 [Eversull, B. M.] The summability of the triple Fourier series at points of discontinuity of the function developed. *Trans. Amer. Math. Soc.* 26:313–34. Published version of PhD dissertation. Reviews: *JFM* 50.0205.02 (J. Radon); *Rev. semestr. publ. math.* 32, pt. 1: 14–15 (P. Mulder). Presented as "On the summability of the triple Fourier series at points of discontinuity of the function involved" to the AMS, Cincinnati, OH, 28 Dec 1923; abstract: *Bull. Amer. Math. Soc.* 30:219 #2.

1957 Review of *Fun with Mathematics*, by J. S. Meyer. *Amer. Math. Monthly* 64:684.

1959 Review of *An Introduction to Mathematics*, by A. N. Whitehead. *Amer. Math. Monthly* 66:829.

1960 Review of *Elementary Analysis, a Modern Approach*, by H. C. Trimble and F. W. Lott, Jr. *Amer. Math. Monthly* 67:1045.

Reference to: AmMSc 4.

Other sources: Owens questionnaire 1937; communication with Wayne State University Archives; US Census 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930 OH, 1930 MI; Michigan death certificate.

Last modified: July 19, 2009.