

GIBBENS, Gladys. January 21, 1893–September 24, 1983.

H. SOPHIE NEWCOMB COLLEGE (BA 1914), TULANE UNIVERSITY (MA 1916), UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO (PhD 1920).

Gladys Elizabeth Corson Gibbens was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, the eldest of three children of Belle Frances (Arbour) (1866–1954) and William Joseph Gibbens (1864–1934). Her mother was born in Baton Rouge and attended a private academy before her marriage in 1891. Her father was also born in Louisiana, attended Louisiana State University, and became an engineer. His occupation was described variously as sugar engineer, sugar machinist, proprietor of mill supplies, and merchant of machinery. The other children in the family were (Elizabeth) Hathaway (1894–1971) and William Joseph Jr. (1896–1976).

Gladys E. C. Gibbens attended private kindergarten and public grade school and was a boarding student at Ursuline Academy, a private Roman Catholic school for girls in New Orleans. After graduating from Ursuline Academy in 1910, she entered H. Sophie Newcomb College, a degree-granting, coordinate college for women in Tulane University in New Orleans. She was a member of Kappa Alpha Theta social sorority.

Gibbens graduated in 1914, and from 1914 to 1917 she held a teaching fellowship in mathematics at Newcomb College while she was studying at Tulane University. She received her master's degree in 1916, one of five master's degrees granted by Tulane at that June commencement.

In 1917 Gibbens moved to Chicago, where she studied for nine quarters at the University of Chicago during the next three years. In 1917–18 she was on the program committee of the Junior Mathematical Club, and in February 1918 she spoke at the club meeting about the limaçon, the topic of her master's thesis. In 1918–20 she also held a fellowship in the mathematics department. Gibbens took courses with E. H. Moore, L. E. Dickson, G. A. Bliss, E. J. Wilczynski, and F. R. Moulton, and wrote her dissertation under the direction of Wilczynski.

After receiving her PhD from the University of Chicago in 1920, Gibbens took a position as instructor at the University of Minnesota. She remained there throughout her career: as instructor 1920–25, assistant professor 1925–47, associate professor 1947–58, and associate professor emeritus after her retirement in 1958. Her slightly younger colleague [Elizabeth Carlson](#) had a similar employment history there. The two also shared an office for many years.

Gibbens taught a variety of courses at Minnesota. They included elementary and advanced undergraduate courses in algebra, geometry, and analysis, and several dealing with the mathematics of finance. She was usually course chairman for at least one course every quarter; this included administering the final examinations. She was long associated with Raymond W. Brink, department chairman after 1940, in a course in the field of general education. She generally worked during a summer session each year, often teaching differential equations or an upper level geometry course. In the summers of 1935 and 1936, she and Elizabeth Carlson co-taught a reading course for seniors. She also taught in the War Training Program in the summers of 1943 and 1944 and served as acting chairman of the department for several weeks each summer from the mid-1940s until near the time of her retirement.

While at the University of Minnesota, Gibbens regularly attended meetings of the Minnesota Section of the MAA. At her first meeting in June 1921 she was

elected to the executive committee of the section. The following year she served as acting secretary and was elected to the executive committee two more times during the 1920s.

Gibbens returned to New Orleans after her retirement in 1958. In the late 1930s, she indicated that her hobbies were gardening and music and that her favorite recreations were golf and boating. In 1982 she wrote that she had worked as a volunteer teacher in a hospital for crippled children. Gibbens died at age ninety at Tulane Medical Center in New Orleans after a long illness. Interment was in Lafayette Cemetery No. 1 in New Orleans.

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

Thesis and dissertation:

1916 A study of the limaçon. MA thesis, Tulane University. Typescript.

1920 A comparison of different line-geometric representations for functions of a complex variable. PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, directed by Ernest Julius Wilczynski. Printed, 1922, by Collegiate Press, George Banta Publishing Company, Menasha, WI.

Publications:

1930 Some constructions for the classical problems of geometry. *Amer. Math. Monthly* 37:343–48. Review: *JFM* 56.0813.03 (H. Pietsch). Presented as “Some methods for the classical problems of geometry” to the MAA, Northfield, MN, 17 May 1930.

1944 Review of *Mathematics of Business and Finance*, by W. B. Dyess and R. O. Gilmore. *Accounting Rev.* 19:97.

Abstracts not listed above:

1921 A comparison of different line-geometric representations for functions of a complex variable. *Bull. Amer. Math. Soc.* 27:305–6 #27. Based on PhD dissertation. Presented by title to the AMS, Chicago, 30 Dec 1920.

1924 A study of the relations between the focal surfaces of two congruences obtained from certain functions of a complex variable. *Bull. Amer. Math. Soc.* 30:393 #5. Presented to a meeting of the AMS, Chicago, 18–19 Apr 1924.

References to: AmMSc 4–8, 9P–11P; AmWom 1935–40.

“Gibbens,” (Death notice) *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, 27 Sep 1983.

“Gladys Corson Gibbens Funeral Held,” *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, 27 Sep 1983.

Other sources: Master’s thesis vita 1916; PhD dissertation vita 1922; Owens questionnaire 1940; Smithsonian questionnaire 1982; communication with Warren Loud, former colleague; Tulane University Archives; University of Minnesota mathematics department; US Census 1900, 1910, 1920, LA; SSDI.

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