

ALDEN, Marjorie (Leffler). August 29, 1909–October 5, 2000.

MIAMI UNIVERSITY (BA 1930), OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY (MA 1932, PhD 1934).

Marjorie Leffler was born in Kyle, Ohio, the eldest of four children of Stella Eugenia (Durbin) and William Homer Leffler. Her parents were both born in Ohio, in 1882 and 1876, respectively, and married in about 1907. In 1910 the Lefflers were living with Marjorie's maternal grandparents, and William Leffler's occupation was described as commercial traveler. In 1920 there were four children: Marjorie; two brothers, Homer (1913–1977) and Norman (1916–1997); and a sister, Ruth (1918–2006). The family farmed their own land in Butler County, Ohio.

Marjorie Leffler received her primary education in the local township school and her secondary education in the high school of Hamilton, Ohio. In 1930 she graduated from Miami University in neighboring Oxford, Ohio, magna cum laude, with honors in mathematics and with general honors. As an undergraduate Leffler was involved in many activities. These included several sports (hockey, soccer, baseball, and track); classical club; debate; Alethenai, a national literary society; student-faculty council; disciplinary board; and the year book. She was elected to the honor societies Phi Beta Kappa, Kappa Delta Pi (education), Tau Kappa Alpha (journalism), and to Mortar Board.

All of Leffler's graduate work was done at Ohio State University in Columbus. In 1931 she was awarded a university scholarship in mathematics, which she held for two years. She earned a master's degree in 1932; the following year she was an assistant in the university high school while continuing her work for the PhD. She also was treasurer of the local chapter of Pi Mu Epsilon that year. Both her master's thesis and her doctoral dissertation were in analysis and were directed by Tibor Radó.

After completing her work at Ohio State in 1934, Leffler took a position as tutor and instructor at Mills College in California for 1934–35. On December 20, 1934, Marjorie Leffler married Howard Holston Alden (1908–1998), also of Ohio. He had received a BS from Carnegie Institute of Technology in 1930 and an MA in 1931 and a PhD in 1933 in mathematics from Ohio State. In July 1933, he was looking for jobs; one inquiry was to the president of the University of Saskatchewan in which he indicated that he was seeking a permanent position in Canada and that he had had four years of teaching experience at the Carnegie Institute of Technology and at Ohio State.

Marjorie Leffler Alden's subsequent academic positions were at the same institutions as her husband's, but at lower ranks. Howard H. Alden was head of the mathematics department at New Mexico Military Institute, a junior college in Roswell, from 1934 to 1943; was associate professor at the University of Wyoming 1945–46; and returned to Ohio State University as assistant professor in 1946. He was also involved with jet propulsion research during World War II and was a chief engineer working under Robert H. Goddard 1942–45. During this period, Marjorie L. Alden was an instructor at New Mexico Military Institute 1936–43, instructor at the University of Wyoming 1945–46, and instructor at Ohio State starting in 1946. Howard Holston Alden was promoted to associate professor at Ohio State in 1948, while Marjorie Leffler Alden remained as instructor. Both resigned from the university in June 1956, after which it appears they left Columbus.

Marjorie Leffler Alden did not publish her thesis or her dissertation. However, G. E. Albert, a 1938 PhD from the University of Wisconsin who was then at Ohio State, used a proof that appeared in her master's thesis in a 1943 paper, "The closure systems of orthogonal functions," in the *Monthly*. This paper appeared before the Aldens returned to Ohio State.

The Aldens lived for a time in Mesa, Arizona, before moving to California. For several years in the 1980s and 1990s they lived in a retirement home in La Mesa, California. Howard Alden died March 1, 1998, at eighty-nine. After an illness of more than a decade, Marjorie Alden died of cardiorespiratory arrest in Grossmont Hospital in La Mesa at age ninety-one in 2000. Her ashes were scattered at sea.

Organizational affiliations: Phi Beta Kappa, Pi Mu Epsilon.

Thesis and dissertation:

1932 [Leffler, M.] Some elementary aspects of Fourier series. MA thesis, Ohio State University, directed by Tibor Radó. Typescript.

1934 [Leffler, M.] A lemma in potential theory. PhD dissertation, Ohio State University, directed by Tibor Radó. Typescript. Microfilm: 1952. Abstract: *Abstracts of Doctoral Dissertations*. [Graduate School, Ohio State University] 16:86-96. See also **1933**.

Abstract not listed above:

1933 [Leffler, M.] A lemma in potential theory. *Bull. Amer. Math. Soc.* 39:876 #322. Presented to a meeting of the AMS, Cincinnati, OH, 1-2 Dec 1933.

References to: AmMSc 6-7.

Other sources: PhD dissertation vita 1934; communication with Barbara Flory, niece of Marjorie Alden; Miami University Archives; Ohio State University Archives; University of Saskatchewan Archives; US Census 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930 OH; California death certificate; SSDI.

Last modified: July 19, 2009.