REAVIS, Mabel (Griffin). August 28, 1907–November 19, 1999.
Duke University (Woman's College) (BA 1928), Duke University (MA 1930, PhD 1933).

Mabel Jeanette Griffin was the youngest of four children of Naomi Frances (Burke) (1874–1966) and Charles A. Griffin (1871–1958). Her parents were both born in Chatham County, in central North Carolina. Her mother was born in Pittsboro, where she attended the Pittsboro Academy; her father attended county schools and became a carpenter and home builder. They were married on January 9, 1895. The two older children, Pearl (1895–1975) and George Sidney (1898–1981), were born in Pittsboro; Theodore Alton (1904-1964) and Mabel were born in Durham, North Carolina. Pearl Griffin attended Duke University, and George and Theodore attended the city schools in Durham. George became a hosiery mill owner, and Theodore was in the insurance business.

Mabel Griffin was one of the first undergraduates at Duke University's Woman's College, which was founded in 1924 as a coordinate college for women. She received her bachelor's degree magna cum laude in 1928. The next year she had a high-school teaching position and then returned to Duke for graduate work in mathematics. She had a graduate scholarship 1929–31, a graduate fellowship 1931–32, and was an assistant at Duke 1929–32. She completed the work for her master's degree in 1930. She taught in high school 1932–33, the year before she received her PhD with a dissertation written under the direction of J. M. Thomas. Ruth Wyckliffe Stokes had received her doctorate from Duke two years earlier, the first in mathematics from Duke. After receiving her doctorate, Mabel Griffin taught one more year in high school before teaching two years, 1934–36, as professor at Campbell Junior College (now Campbell University) in Buies Creek, North Carolina.

On August 3, 1936, Mabel Griffin married L. Boyd Reavis, who was born in 1907 in Warrenton, North Carolina. L. B. Reavis graduated from Campbell Junior College in 1930. He received further education from Wake Forest University in Winston Salem, North Carolina; Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas; and Howard Payne College (now University) in Brownwood, Texas, from which he earned a Doctor of Divinity degree. After their marriage, they lived in Fort Worth and then Temple, Texas.

For the first four years of their marriage, 1936–40, Mabel Reavis taught as assistant professor at Mary Hardin–Baylor College (now University of Mary Hardin–Baylor) in nearby Belton, Texas. Mary Hardin–Baylor was established in the mid-nineteenth century as the women's division of Baylor University and remained a women's college until 1971. Mabel Reavis later served as a trustee of the college.

In 1939 L. Boyd Reavis took the first of several positions as pastor in Texas. During the next ten years he was pastor of the First Baptist Church in Plainview 1939–45 and of the First Baptist Church in Paris 1945–49. During this time their three children were born. Raynor Boyd was born in December 1940, graduated from Baylor University, and became an executive with an aerospace corporation. Roma Jean, born in April 1943, earned both a bachelor's and a master's degree from Baylor, and became co-host of the Don Wade and Roma Morning Show on WLS radio in Chicago in 1985. Ralph Griffin, born in November 1946, graduated from Texas Christian University and then earned a PhD in education from North Texas State University before holding positions in academia.

In 1949 the Reavis family moved to High Point, North Carolina, where L. Boyd Reavis was pastor of the Green Street Baptist Church for the next four years. Mabel Reavis resumed her career as professor and head of the mathematics department at High Point College 1950–53. In 1953 they returned to Texas, where L. B. Reavis was pastor of the First Baptist Church in Denton for the next two years. In 1955 they moved to Fort Worth, where they remained for forty years. He became director of development for Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and held that position until his retirement in 1973.

In 1955 Mabel Reavis began an eighteen-year period as a mathematics faculty member at Texas Christian University. She was assistant professor 1955–58, associate professor 1958–73, and retired as professor emeritus in 1973. During five summers in the 1960s she was director of the mathematics section of the NSF summer science institute at Texas Christian. Mabel Reavis wrote in 1981,

> Teaching is totally satisfying to me. In addition to my enjoyment of subject matter I find the students themselves and their development of potential just as important to me. Counseling outside the classroom has consumed much of my time at T. C. U. The demands of rearing 3 children, being supportive of my husband in his ministry, and University teaching have precluded my pursuance of further research in mathematics except for direction of several Master's theses. (Smithsonian questionnaire)

During her years as a student, Reavis became a member of the education honor societies Delta Kappa Gamma and Kappa Delta Pi, and the physics honor society Sigma Pi Sigma. Later she served as vice president of the TCU chapter of Phi Beta Kappa and served on the TCU faculty senate. She was a member of the TCU Faculty Woman's Club and the Seminary Woman's Club at Southwestern Seminary. She also belonged to the Ridglea Country Club in Fort Worth.

Reavis was a Baptist and included various church-related activities among her interests. She served as an Associational Young People's leader, edited church bulletins, was a member of various study clubs, lectured for local clubs and societies, and engaged in Bible teaching. She listed reading and travel among her interests and, in 1981, described her political affiliation as Independent. In 1991 she and her husband established the L. B. and Mabel Reavis professorship and scholarship program at Campbell University; Reavis scholars are honored for leading their churches in growth and evangelism.

L. Boyd Reavis died in their Fort Worth home in March 1995. Mabel Reavis remained in Fort Worth until 1998, when she moved to Chicago to be close to her daughter. Mabel Griffin Reavis died in her Chicago home in November 1999 at age ninety-two. She was survived by her three children, seven grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. She was buried in Laurel Land Memorial Park in Fort Worth.

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

Thesis and dissertation:
1930 [Griffin, M. J.] A note on the uniform convergence of infinite series. MA thesis, Duke University. Typescript.
1933 [Griffin, M. J.] Invariants of Pfaffian systems. PhD dissertation, Duke University, directed by Joseph Miller Thomas. Typescript. Printed version, 1933, reprinted from *Trans. Amer. Math. Soc.* 35:929–39.

Publication:
1933 [Griffin, M.] Invariants of Pfaffian systems. *Trans. Amer. Math. Soc.* 35:929–39. Published version of PhD dissertation. Reviews: *JFM* 59.0467.01 (M. Pinl); *Zbl* 008.06502 (J. M. Thomas). Presented by title to the AMS, Atlantic City, NJ, 27 Dec 1932; abstract: *Bull. Amer. Math. Soc.* 39:26 #16.

References to: AmMSc 6, AmWom 1935–40, WhoAmW 4.
Walker, Paula. "Smithsonian to Honor Woman Math Pioneer." *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, 30 Aug 1981.
"Mabel Griffin Reavis." (Obituary) *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, 21 Nov 1999.

Other sources: Smithsonian questionnaire 1981; Smithsonian meeting tapes 1981; Duke University Archives; L. B. Reavis (obituary) *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, 21 Mar 1995; US Census 1910, 1920, 1930 NC.

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