

**PIXLEY, Emily (Chandler).** August 19, 1904–August 28, 2000.

RANDOLPH-MACON WOMAN'S COLLEGE (BA 1926), UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO (MS 1927, PhD 1931).

Emily McCoy Chandler was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, the daughter of Mayme (McCoy) (b. ca. 1879) and David Sanders Chandler (b. 1876), both Tennessee natives. The 1920 census lists three daughters: Emily, age fifteen; Dorothy A., age ten; and Carlotta B., age two months. Her father was a district passenger agent with the railroad.

Chandler attended primary and secondary school in the Knoxville public school system and graduated from Knoxville High School in 1922. She then entered Randolph-Macon Woman's College (now Randolph College) in Lynchburg, Virginia, where she majored in psychology and mathematics and minored in English. One of her teachers was [Gillie Larew](#), who had been a mathematics faculty member at Randolph-Macon since 1903 and who later served as a personal reference for Chandler. While at Randolph-Macon, Chandler was active in student government, the YWCA, and the Inter-racial Committee. Immediately after her graduation, Chandler entered graduate school at the University of Chicago in the summer quarter of 1926. She attended four straight quarters before receiving her master's degree in 1927 with a thesis in analysis written under the direction of L. M. Graves.

After receiving her master's degree, Chandler took a position as instructor and acting head of the mathematics department at Saint Xavier College for Women (now Saint Xavier University) in Chicago while she continued her graduate work part time at the University of Chicago. After four years she finished the work for her doctorate, having studied with L. E. Dickson and [Mayme I. Logsdon](#), among others. She wrote her dissertation in number theory under Dickson and received the PhD in 1931.

A fellow graduate student at Chicago was Henry Howes Pixley, who also earned a master's degree in mathematics in 1927 and a doctorate in 1931 as a student of Graves. Pixley was born in Skaneateles, New York, on July 18, 1902, received most of his elementary and secondary education in Michigan, graduated from high school in Florida, and received his BA degree in 1923 and MA degree in 1924 from John B. Stetson University in Deland, Florida. Between 1924 and 1931, the date of his doctorate from Chicago, Henry Pixley held instructorships at Georgia School of Technology (now Georgia Institute of Technology), Rutgers University, Bryn Mawr College, and the College of the City of Detroit. Emily Chandler and Henry Pixley were married on September 8, 1931.

Although inquiries for a position in Detroit for Emily Chandler were made in the spring of 1931, both Pixleys retained their positions after their marriage, she at Saint Xavier in Chicago, where she continued as professor and department chairman 1930–36, and he at the College of the City of Detroit as instructor 1930–34. In 1933–34 Emily and Henry Pixley had leaves of absence from their academic positions and worked in areas having to do with labor productivity and mathematical economics for the National Recovery Administration. Three of the tables she prepared for the NRA appeared in a 1935 article, "Economic theory of the shorter work week," by Charles F. Roos (*Econometrica* 3:21–39).

In 1933 the College of the City of Detroit united with other public colleges in Detroit, and in 1934 the institution was named Wayne University; it was renamed

Wayne State University in 1956. Henry Pixley remained at Wayne as assistant professor 1934–37 and associate professor from 1937 until his retirement in 1972. After 1945 his responsibilities were largely administrative; he was assistant dean of the College of Liberal Arts 1945–47; director of admissions, records, and registration 1947–53; and associate dean of administration 1953–69 before returning to the classroom as associate professor.

In 1936 Emily Pixley began an association of a dozen years with Wayne University. She was hired in September 1936 as a special instructor with an hourly salary. She worked as a special instructor part time 1936–42 and full time 1942–47. Also, during her first years there, the Pixleys had three children: Dorothy Anne, born in August 1937; David Chandler, born in June 1939; and Richard Henry, born in June 1942.

In September 1947 the title of Emily Pixley's position changed from special instructor to regular substitute assistant professor with a teaching load of sixteen hours per week. In April 1948, in a memo from the mathematics department chairman to the dean, it was noted that there had been "progress in the matter of adherence to the university policy relative to employment of man and wife," a policy that had been ignored for three years because of the difficulty in hiring "qualified personnel." He also wrote that "while the quality of teaching will be lowered somewhat by making Mrs. Borgman and Mrs. Pixley the first to go, university policy demands that this be done, and I have already made clear to those affected that this will require the termination of their services in June 1949" (Alfred L. Nelson, Mathematics Department, to Dean C. B. Hilberry, April 23, 1948, University Archives, Wayne State University).

Emily Pixley did not wait for the university anti-nepotism policy to be satisfied by the termination of her services in 1949, but found employment at the University of Detroit (now University of Detroit Mercy) for the academic year 1948–49. She spent the remaining twenty-five years of her career there: as assistant professor 1948–51, associate professor 1951–56, and professor from 1956 until her retirement in 1973 as professor emeritus. She also served as acting department chair in the summers 1963–69 and in the academic year 1968–69. One of her sons reported for her obituary in the *Detroit Free Press* that "she was never formally named chair because of her gender."

In the late 1940s Emily Pixley indicated that her church preference was Congregational and that she had traveled in Alaska, Europe, and the United States. She also noted that she read French, German, and Italian. She had recently served as chairman of the faculty wives scholarship committee at Wayne and as president of the Randolph-Macon alumnae, presumably in Detroit.

Henry Pixley died in Detroit on October 9, 1985, at age eighty-three. Emily Pixley remained in the metropolitan Detroit area and died on August 28, 2000, at age ninety-six, in Presbyterian Village Redford in Redford Township, Michigan. She was survived by her two sons, a sister, eight grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

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

**Thesis and dissertation:**

**1927** [Chandler, E. M.] The elementary transcendental functions in terms of integrals. MS thesis, University of Chicago, directed by Lawrence Murray Graves. Typescript.

**1931** [Chandler, E. M.] Waring's theorem for fourth powers. PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, directed by Leonard Eugene Dickson. Private edition, 1933, distributed by the University of Chicago Libraries. Review: *JFM* 59.0950.04 (F. Behrend).

**References to:** AmMSc 6-7, 10P-11P; AmMWSc 12P-13P, 14-21; WhoAmW 8-9.  
Oguntoyinbo, Lekan. "Emily Pixley: Pioneering Math Professor in Detroit." (Obituary) *Detroit Free Press*, 31 Aug 2000.  
"Emily Chandler Pixley, Chaired U-D's Mathematics Dept." (Obituary) *Detroit News*, 1 Sep 2000.

**Other sources:** MS thesis vita 1927; PhD dissertation vita 1933; Owens questionnaire 1937; University of Chicago Archives; communication with Wayne State University Archives; "WSU dean was a solver of problems," (Henry H. Pixley obituary) *Detroit Free Press*, 12 Oct 1985; US Census 1920, 1930 TN.

Last modified: December 14, 2008.