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Dr. Joy Morris to receive Canadian Mathematical Society award

Dr. Joy Morris, a professor of mathematics at the University of Lethbridge, is this year's recipient of the Canadian Mathematical Society's (CMS) Graham Wright Award for Distinguished Service.

The award recognizes individuals who have made significant and sustained contributions to the Canadian mathematical community and particularly to the Canadian Mathematical Society.



"It's a big honour," says Morris, who joined ULethbridge in 2000 after completing her PhD at Simon Fraser University. "It's an important award to the Canadian Mathematics Society, as it is one of two awards that automatically give you the honour of becoming a fellow of the society."

In Morris's case, she served on the society's executive and was instrumental in helping the group navigate through some troubled waters. Morris is a member of the CMS executive committee, where she is vice-president (west). Her leadership of an ad hoc human resources committee helped guide the CMS through a complex governance process. The award acknowledges her contributions to the CMS and the Canadian mathematical community. She will also be named to the 2026 Class of Fellows.

"Service isn't always the most recognized part of what we do in our work at the University, but it's always been very important to me," Morris says.

Morris had excellent role models for service in her parents. Her father was a sociology professor at York University, and her mother was a social worker.

“When I was little, I made a rule that she wasn’t allowed to be out more than three evenings a week at meetings,” she says. “She was always very dedicated to service and eventually became a member of the Order of Canada.”

Service has also been a theme throughout Morris’s life. When she was a student at Simon Fraser University, she served on the Student Union executive and then on the executive of the Canadian Federation of Students. She did presentations on student debt and met with former prime minister Paul Martin, who was the finance minister at the time.

When a friend with a middle-school-aged child confessed to having frustration when trying to help with math homework, Morris created evening sessions for parents to help them understand the math curriculum. She worked with ULethbridge math education students to establish an outreach program called Parent Math Help. A student who participated had high praise for the endeavour:

“It was an obvious privilege to experience Joy’s instructional excellence at the University, but Joy’s community impacts stretched much further,” wrote Kailee Jacobson (BSc/BEd ’18). “Watching Joy interact with the parents who attended her sessions arguably taught us more about how to reduce the stigma of mathematics and increase someone’s self-confidence than our textbooks ever did.”

The Lethbridge School District No. 51 honoured the initiative with a Friends of 51 award. The evening sessions had been running for five years when the COVID pandemic restrictions forced them to close.

At ULethbridge, Morris has also received service awards. In 2002, she received Prairie Baseball Academy’s Professor of the Year teaching award. She was presented with the University of Lethbridge Students’ Union Excellence in Teaching Award in 2018, a testament to her prowess in the classroom. In 2022, Morris received the Sutherland Service Award from the University of Lethbridge Faculty Association. The award recognizes someone who goes above and beyond in support of the academic staff at ULethbridge.

Morris will receive the Graham Wright Award at the society’s winter conference in December in Montreal.

[Read online.](#)

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Our University's Blackfoot name is Iniskim, meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. The University is located in traditional Blackfoot Confederacy territory. We honour the Blackfoot people and their traditional ways of knowing in caring for this land, as well as all Indigenous Peoples who have helped shape and continue to strengthen our University community.