

# Publisher's Editorial

## Doug Faires Lifetime Achievement Award for 2022

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Several years ago, the Consortium for Mathematics and Its Applications (COMAP) instituted the Doug Faires Award. In memory of Doug Faires, a gifted teacher and mathematics educator, the purpose of this award is to recognize individuals either for their many years of service or who in one special year made outstanding contributions to mathematics education in the spirit of Doug. Doug was a master at getting the best out of those around him, encouraging them to recognize their own potential, and mentoring them to achievements far beyond their expectations. The recipient is acknowledged as emulating Doug, who as a dedicated teacher believed in the power of mathematical modeling to motivate students at all levels and to lead them on a path to life-long learning.

COMAP is pleased to announce that **Dr. Kathleen (Kathi) Snook** is the recipient of the 2022 Doug Faires Lifetime Achievement Award.



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Kathi has been at the heart of COMAP's international mathematical contests in modeling for many years. Starting as a Mathematical Contest in Modeling (MCM<sup>®</sup>) triage judge in the 1990s, she has triaged and/or final judged in every COMAP contest, written and edited many contest problems, and served as the High School Mathematical Contest in Modeling (HiMCM<sup>®</sup>) Director as well as the U.S. Regional Senior Judge for the International Mathematical Modeling Challenge (IM<sup>2</sup>C<sup>®</sup>). In 2021, she initiated the Middle Mathematical Contest in Modeling (MidMCM<sup>®</sup>), COMAP's newest contest for middle school/level students, and became its first Director. Always focused on improving mathematics education, Kathi has coordinated numerous talks, panels, conference sessions, webinars, and workshops focused on applied problem solving and mathematical modeling.

In the past two years, Kathi was responsible for coordinating a series of COMAP transitions aimed at continuing into the future COMAP's positive-first-derivative trajectory of improvements in mathematics and modeling education.

As COMAP's first Director of Operations, Kathi planned and facilitated our semi-annual Contest Director meetings, adding a level of organization, coordination, and communication that has improved the operations of all contests. Kathi managed the redesign and construction of our new website, which includes a new look, improved search capability for COMAP's many resources, and a blog (<https://www.comap.com>). She also launched our entry into the world of social media (follow us at @COMAPMath). Kathi has done all of this and much more with grace and with a deep commitment to mathematics education.

Recently retired, Kathi has stepped back from day-to-day COMAP activities; but her imprint will remain on all that we do and how we present ourselves to our community. She will always remain a valued and beloved member of the COMAP family. I can think of no one more deserving of the Doug Faires award.

In her own words:

I am honored to receive the Doug Faires Award from COMAP. I did not personally know Doug, but I am humbled to be seen as even attempting to emulate his example as an educator and mathematics modeler.

My journey to becoming a mathematics educator began as a US Army engineer. Engineering is truly applied mathematics, and every army officer is a teacher.

I jumped at the opportunity to join the Mathematical Sciences Dept. at the US Military Academy at West Point. There I met Frank Giordano, who supported and mentored me in my love of teaching. Frank was instrumental in my development as an applied mathematician and a mathematics educator. Frank sent me as a young instructor to a calculus reform conference; I was hooked on mathematics, on

teaching, and on curricular development. Frank first, and then Chris Arney (also at West Point), cultivated the ideas of mathematical modeling and the methods to integrate modeling into the curriculum. A group of faculty members began to write Interdisciplinary Lively Applications Projects (ILAPs) for publication by COMAP to further the integration of this applied problem solving into classrooms. Thank you to both Frank and Chris (who are both previous Doug Faires award winners).

I also thank my mathematics education mentor, Rich West. Rich had broken the ice of having a mathematics educator in the Mathematical Sciences Dept. I learned so much from Rich and in working with him, in designing faculty development workshops and seminars, in improving course design and organization, and in understanding assessment. In my development as a mathematics educator, I also credit two master teacher mentors: Lida Barrett and Don Small. Both Lida and Don were civilian professors at West Point. We had long discussions about students, and teachers, and curriculum, and pedagogy (and life). Thank you to Rich, Lida, and Don.

I began to work with COMAP in the mid-1990s. I wrote, reviewed, and edited materials, including ILAPs. My modeling contest activities began with triage judging at the MCM.

After I retired from the army and moved to Massachusetts in the early 2000s, COMAP's Executive Director Sol Garfunkel invited me to work on curricular and professional development projects. These projects helped to expand my education experience to the elementary and secondary levels.

I judged in COMAP's high school and college contests. Over time, I became the Director of HiMCM and the senior U.S. judge for IMMC, and I assisted in the coordination of all of COMAP's contests.

When COMAP recently reorganized its structure, I was honored to serve as the first Director of Operations and continue my work with contest coordination and outreach.

I enjoyed every chance that I had to share the work of COMAP and its contest modeling opportunities through conference presentations, workshops, webinars, and panels. I recognize the amazing work of all the contest directors, judges, team advisors, and COMAP staff who come together each year to make the contests successful and impactful to students; all to improve mathematics education through the integration of modeling. Thank you to Sol for giving me the opportunity to do this important work.

When I was a young girl in high school, my guidance counselor discouraged me from taking mathematics, physics, and chemistry. My parents, however, encouraged me to do what I wanted (and they bought me a calculator for Christmas). At the time, I hoped to be a mathematics teacher. Through a circuitous journey, I did become

one; and it has been way more enjoyable and rewarding than what my teenage self had envisioned. I am so grateful to all those whom I crossed paths with along the way. Thank you for your impact, guidance, support, and friendship.

## About the Author

Solomon Garfunkel is the founder and Executive Director of COMAP and Executive Publisher of this *Journal*.

He served on the mathematics faculties of Cornell University and the University of Connecticut at Storrs, but he has dedicated the last 45 years to research and development efforts in mathematics education. He was project director for the Undergraduate Mathematics and Its Applications Project (UMAP) and the High School Mathematics and Its Applications Project (HiMAP) funded by NSF, and directed three telecourse projects: *Against All Odds: Inside Statistics*, *In Simplest Terms: College Algebra*, and *For All Practical Purposes: Introduction to Contemporary Mathematics*.