

Dr Pixley (1904–2000) was a distinguished number theorist and a renowned advocate for creativity in mathematics. As one of my favorite professors at the University of Detroit in the early 1960s, she profoundly influenced my academic and life journey.

I recall a classroom moment when she posed a challenging mathematical question. Although my answer was met with laughter from classmates, Dr Pixley defended its merit and innovation, encouraging me to think creatively.

Her dedication to mathematics was evident in her decades-long study of Waring's Theorem for Fourth Powers—a testament to her determination and fortitude. Dr Pixley inspired me to pursue my interest in mathematics, particularly the Riemann Hypothesis, and her mentorship fueled my passion throughout my life.

Dr Pixley's legacy as a scholar and mentor continues to inspire those who value creativity and perseverance in the mathematical sciences.

Emily Pixley: Pioneering math professor in Detroit

By LEKAN OGUNTOYINBO
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Emily Pixley, a retired mathematics professor who bridged the gender gap in her profession and taught at several universities including what is now the University of Detroit Mercy and Wayne State University during her 43-year career, died Monday at the Presbyterian Village Nursing Home in Redford. She was 96.

The former Emily McCoy Chandler was born in Knoxville, Tenn. She graduated from Randolph-Macon Women's College in Lynchburg, Va., with a degree in psychology in 1926. The following year she got a master's degree in mathematics from the University of Chicago. She stayed on at the university to pursue her doctoral degree in mathematics, which she attained in 1931.

In 1929, while still working on her PhD, she took a job as chair of the math department at St. Xavier College in Chicago. In 1934, she took a job in the Department of Econometrics in the Reconstruction Finance Administration, a former federal agency in Washington, D.C. She and her husband,

Henry Pixley, who was also a professor of mathematics, moved to Detroit at the onset of World War II, and both took jobs at Wayne State.

The university temporarily suspended its policy against having a married couple in the same department due to the labor shortage.

Mrs. Pixley took a job on the mathematics faculty of the University of Detroit in 1947. She twice performed the duties a chairperson of the department would, but she was never formally named chair because of her gender, said her son, David Pixley. The university's restrictions against having a chairwoman were eventually dropped. Mrs. Pixley retired from the university in 1972.

In addition to her son, she is survived by another son, Richard Pixley; a sister, Dorothy Bentley; eight grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

Visitation will be 5 to 9 p.m. today and 3 to 9 p.m. Friday at the Harry J. Will Funeral Home, 37000 Six Mile in Livonia. Services will be held Saturday at 11 a.m. at the funeral home.