

A Mathematics Homecoming

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James "Mac" Hyman, who graduated from Tulane in 1972 with honors in both math and physics, has returned to join the math department faculty and is now the new holder of a distinguished chair.



James "Mac" Hyman is the new holder of the Evelyn and John G. Phillips Distinguished Chair in Mathematics. (Photo by Tracie Morris Schaefer)

On Thursday (April 29), Hyman was invested as holder of the Evelyn and John G. Phillips Distinguished Chair in [Mathematics](#) in a ceremony in the Freeman Auditorium at the Woldenberg Art Center. He is the second faculty member to be invested as the Phillips chair.

"The problems facing the world today have never been bigger," Hyman said at the ceremony in his honor. "They've never needed mathematicians and scientists more than they do today. As mathematicians, we have to be proactive because this is really our role in society. It's not to sit behind a desk and count numbers."

The Phillips chair was established through the generosity of Louis A. and Julia T. Beecherl and the Bosque Foundation, the Louisiana Land and Exploration Foundation, and with matching funds from the Louisiana Board of Regents Endowed Chairs for Eminent Scholars program.

"When I met Mac," provost Michael Bernstein said, "I was powerfully struck by the excitement, the engagement and the commitment that he has, not simply to the Department of Mathematics, or the School of Science and Engineering, and not simply to Tulane, but his commitment to home, to New Orleans."

"You can come back home," Hyman said upon receiving the honor. "I don't care what Thomas Wolfe says. This is the right place for me, a place where I can give back what people gave me. I got an education at Tulane that most people can only dream of getting."

Hyman led the Mathematical Modeling and Analysis Group at Los Alamos National Laboratory for more than 20 years.

He has produced more than 200 scientific publications and edited nine books on topics that include

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creating and analyzing better numerical methods, analysis chaos and coherence in nonlinear systems and the spread of emerging infectious diseases.

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