

**MEMORIAL RESOLUTION**  
**MARIA WONENBURGER**  
**(July 17, 1927 – June 14, 2014)**

Maria Wonenburger died June 14, 2014, in A Coruña, Spain, at the age of 86. She was a member of the Mathematics Department here at Indiana University from 1967 to 1983.

Maria was born in A Coruña in 1927. She obtained her undergraduate degree from the Universidad Central de Madrid in 1950. She did graduate work at the Universidad de Madrid and in 1953 was awarded a Fulbright scholarship, the first to be offered in Spain. She was accepted to Yale University and worked under the direction of Nathan Jacobson, obtaining her doctorate in 1957. Because her U.S. degree was not recognized in Spain she returned home to complete another doctorate under the direction of German Ancochea. In 1960 she again came to North America and held positions at Queen's University in Ontario, the University of Toronto and SUNY at Buffalo before she came to Indiana as a full professor in 1967.

After joining the department here at IU, Maria quickly became an important part of the graduate mathematics program. In the first five years she directed the thesis work for five Ph. D. students who completed their degrees in this period. She was also very involved in seminars and in organizing the graduate program. She played an especially important role in organizing the graduate program in algebra, an area of strong interest and demand by graduate students at that time. She was always a good citizen in the department, willing to help out on jobs that needed to be done, and always available for colleagues and students.

Maria's work was in group theory, particularly classical groups, and in Lie theory. She is considered one of the founders of the theory of Kac-Moody algebras, a class of infinite dimensional Lie algebras with many applications. Robert Moody introduced these algebras in his doctoral thesis, written under her direction at the University of Toronto. At Indiana she continued this work and one of her students, Stephen Berman, has made important contributions, including joint work with Maria and Robert Moody.

In 1983 Maria left academia and returned to Spain to be with her mother. There late in her life, following publication of her biography in *La Gaceta de la Real Sociedad Matemática Española (RSME)*, she was rediscovered by the Spanish mathematical

community and received many honors. In 2007 she was named a Social de Honor by the RSME and the Xunta de Galicia established a prestigious research award bearing her name. In 2010 she received an appointment as Doctor Honoris Causa by the Universidad de A Coruña. In 2012 her hometown opened a new park named in her honor.

Maria was a beloved colleague, who contributed to the department for many years and in many ways. She was an excellent teacher, researcher, and advisor. She was also a kind, vibrant person with a ready laugh and smile.

Darrell Haile and Daniel Maki