

FOREWORD

In 1988 Vincent J. Duncan and Annamarie Micus Duncan sponsored a chair at the University of Notre Dame in honor of Walter Duncan, a 1912 graduate of Notre Dame and a long time trustee of the University. In the fall of that year I was appointed to this chair. In conjunction with the inaugural lecture, the University of Notre Dame held a symposium on value distribution in several complex variables April 28/29, 1990. It was to reflect the growth of this field from its beginning about 60 years ago as well as its connections to related areas. The Symposium was solely funded by Notre Dame. Thus only speakers present within the USA at the time could be invited and support was restricted to them. Professor Shiing-shen Chern, who contributed substantially to the field and helped to build up Mathematics at Notre Dame, declined to lecture, but he participated actively in the Symposium as an honored guest. Professor Phillip Griffiths made significant contributions to the field, but in the end, his obligation as Provost of Duke University prevented him from coming. The names of the other invited speakers and the title of their talks can be found in the Symposium program reprinted below. Two significant lectures preceded the Symposium the day before. Sponsored by the Physics Department, Paul Chu gave an University wide address on superconductivity. Professor Chern attended his son in law's lecture. Dr. Peter Polyakov, a close collaborator of Professor Henkin and a recent immigrant to the USA, spoke about a proof of a 1973 conjecture of mine in a mathematics colloquium. The Symposium was well attended, but, unfortunately no precise list of participants was kept.

In these proceedings, some speakers wrote on the topics of their lectures, some others selected different topics and some did not send contributions. Serge Lang, who had spoken on William Cherry's results, requested, that in the Proceedings these results should be communicated directly. My inaugural address in the Proceedings is an expanded version of the original one.

I thank all those who made this Symposium and these Proceedings possible and those who contributed and helped with it. In particular I thank the donors for their generosity.

Wilhelm Stoll
July 1991