PREFACE TO *2001: A MATHEMATICS ODYSSEY*

This issue of the *Rocky Mountain Journal of Mathematics* contains the proceedings of the conference, *2001: A Mathematics Odyssey*, which took place August 6–10, 2001, at Mesa State College in Grand Junction, Colorado. Twenty-seven participants representing 7 countries, 3 continents and 6 languages (including mathematics) met in honor of the 70th birthday of William B. Jones, Professor Emeritus from University of Colorado, Boulder. It was a wonderful birthday celebration, assembling many prominent mathematicians for the occasion, including 6 out of 11 of Professor Jones' former Ph.D. students.

We extend special thanks to the plenary speakers Annie Cuyt, Lisa Lorentzen, Olav Njåstad, Walter Van Assche, and Haakon Waadeland. The conference topics reflected areas of interest to Bill Jones including the analytical theory of continued fractions, orthogonal polynomials, frequency analysis, Padé tables, rational approximation, moment problems and special functions. We are very pleased that so many prominent researchers in the field could participate in this mathematical birthday celebration for Bill and that their current work could be included in this volume.

We are especially grateful that Wolf Thron, Professor Emeritus from University of Colorado, Boulder, was able to attend the conference dinner. Bill and Wolf had a close working relationship for many years and they played a lead role developing advances in the theory and application of analytical continued fractions. Wolf's presence at the dinner was especially meaningful since this was the last time many of us saw Wolf. He unexpectedly passed away on August 21, 2001, just 11 days after the conference. He will be greatly missed, both as a mathematician and as a friend. We dedicate these proceedings to Bill and to the memory of Wolf. You will find biographies for both Bill and Wolf in the pages following this preface.

We, the organizers, would like to thank the Department of Computer Science, Mathematics and Statistics, the Office of Academic Affairs and the School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics at Mesa State College for their encouragement and financial support. We also appreciate the flexibility of Mesa State College's housing and dining offices in

accommodating the needs of conference participants. We wish to thank Tom Sherman, John Quigg, Andrew Bremner and Carol Nuñez from *Rocky Mountain J. Math.* for working with us in publishing these proceedings. Thanks also to the referees of the papers included in these proceedings for their careful reviews and recommendations. Finally, we thank the researchers and participants in the field for making this conference a success. We wish you all the best.

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