



## John Griggs Thompson

**John Griggs Thompson** was born in Ottawa, Kansas, USA on October 13, 1932, and now holds a position as Graduate Research Professor at the Department of Mathematics, University of Florida in Gainesville.

Thompson received his B.A. from Yale University in 1955 and his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1959. His thesis advisor was Saunders MacLane, one of the founding fathers of category theory.

Thompson was Assistant Professor at Harvard University until he was appointed Professor at the Mathematics faculty, University of Chicago, in 1962. In 1970 he moved to Britain to take up the Rouse Ball Professorship of Mathematics at the University of Cambridge. After 23 years in Cambridge he moved back to the United States to his present position at the University of Florida. He is currently Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at the University of Cambridge.

John Griggs Thompson has been awarded Honorary Doctorates at the Universities of Illinois, Yale, Oxford and Ohio State. He was elected a member of the US National Academy of Sciences in 1967, and became a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1998. He is a Foreign Member of the Royal Society of London and of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Thompson has received many international awards for his outstanding contribution to mathematics. Among them are the Fields Medal, the Senior Berwick Prize, the Sylvester Medal, the Wolf Prize and the Poincaré Medal. In 2000 he was awarded the National Medal of Science by US President Bill Clinton.

The late Walter Feit, with whom Thompson proved one of the key theorems of group theory, said of him: "He is a mathematician who studies important problems and does not let difficulties discourage him. He frequently overcomes such difficulties by introducing new ideas which then have an enormous impact on future developments." This impact is all the greater for the generosity with which he shares the ideas with his many research students and other mathematicians.