



ABEL PRISEN

The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters has decided to award the Abel Prize for 2008 to

John Griggs Thompson

University of Florida in Gainesville, USA

and

Jacques Tits

Collège de France, Paris, France

“for their profound achievements in algebra and in particular for shaping modern group theory”

John Griggs Thompson and Jacques Tits are awarded the Abel Prize for their contributions to what is known as group theory. Group theory is the “science of symmetries”, where one tries to understand the relation between reflections and rotations of an icosahedron, to reveal the secrets of Rubik’s cube or to control the symmetries among the solutions of the fifth degree equation, as done by Niels Henrik Abel.

Thompson and Tits have invented important new concepts and proved fundamental results in this field, and their names now appear prominently in the history of group theory. Thompson revolutionised the theory of finite groups by proving extraordinarily deep theorems that laid the foundation for the complete classification of finite simple groups. Tits created a new and highly influential vision of groups as geometric objects.

The Abel committee says: “The achievements of John Thompson and of Jacques Tits are of extraordinary depth and influence. They complement each other and together form the backbone of modern group theory.”

The Niels Henrik Abel Memorial Fund was established in 2002, to award the Abel Prize for outstanding scientific work in the field of mathematics. The prize amount is 6 million NOK (about 750,000 Euro) and it was awarded for the first time in 2003.

The prize is awarded by the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, and their choice of Abel Laureate is based on a recommendation by the Abel Committee consisting of five internationally recognized mathematicians.

The Abel Prize will be presented by His Majesty King Harald at the Abel Prize Award Ceremony in Oslo, May 20, 2008.

For more information about the laureates, their achievements, group theory or the Abel Prize, visit the Abel Prize website www.abelprisen.no/en/



John Griggs Thompson



Jacques Tits