Steve Carlson: An MAA Mathematician
Rick Gillman
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As we pass the nine month or so point from the third, and 75th anniversary, trisection meeting of the Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan sections of the MAA, I thought that it would be appropriate to write about the person who was largely responsible for the 50th anniversary meeting.

In 1991, Steve Carlson, at the time an Associate Professor at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, was the new Secretary-Treasurer of the Indiana section. He was reviewing some of the historical records (a one-time infamous box) that came with the position and discovered the story of the 1943 tri-section meeting.

Born and raised in Topeka, Kansas, Steve earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in mathematics and physics from the University of Kansas in 1969. He then served in the United States Army Signal Corp for two years and taught English in Thailand before returning to the University of Kansas for graduate studies. Steve earned his Master of Arts (1975) and Doctor of Philosophy in mathematics (1978), with a focus on topology.

After completing his degree, Steve taught at several universities before settling into his career at Rose-Hulman. He taught at Baylor University and Grinnell College before earning tenure at the University of North Dakota. Steve moved to Rose-Hulman in 1989 and spent the rest of his career there.

Steve was an active scholar publishing research articles in topology in *Topology Proceedings*, *Canadian Journal of Mathematics*, and *Rocky Mountain Journal of Mathematics*. In addition, Steve published expository articles in all of the MAA journals: *The American Mathematical Monthly* (twice), *Mathematics Magazine*, and *College Mathematics Journal*. He was a frequent contributor to *FOCUS*.

He was very proud of his book *Topology of Surfaces, Knots, and Manifolds: A First Undergraduate Course*, published by John Wiley & Sons (2001). Steve's chair at the time noted that this project arose for the same reason that many textbooks do, namely that "there is never a good book that is just right for the course and the professor." But Steve's contribution to the field is an exceptionally elegant one, which is good, as his chair continued that Steve was "almost obsessed about teaching topology and real analysis to our students."

Steve was deeply committed to the MAA and was an active member of the North Central section before moving to Indiana. Besides his five year term as Secretary-Treasurer of the Indiana Section, Steve also served as the section's chair (1995-1998), Governor (1999-2002), historian (2008-2012). In recognition of this effort, he was awarded the section's Distinguished Service Award. Steve was very impactful at the Association level as well. Among the many different committees that he served on, possibly the two most significant were the Committee on Sections, which he served on twice and chaired from 2008-2011, and the Committee on SIGMAAs, which he served on and chaired between 2001 and 2007. Steve was a Visiting Mathematician at the Association headquarters during the 2004-2005 academic year.

Steve retired in 2012, after a rich career of teaching, scholarship, and service to the mathematical community. However, Steve was always particularly happy to write and talk about historical context, an example of which is Steve's biography of former MAA president G. Baley Price on the occasion of his 100th birthday. (Published in FOCUS, May 2005) So it is not surprising that uncovering the history of the

original tri-section meeting and motivating the three sections to hold an anniversary tri-section meeting was one of his proudest professional accomplishments.