

UPR inaugurates Professors Portrait Gallery

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A group of math and science professors, some in their 80s, gathered last week at the University of Puerto Rico to pay homage to their own, being the first faculty to do so.

At the opening of the Professors Portrait Gallery in the modern Natural Sciences Building, all emeritus professors from 1968 to the present were honored.

"What better way to celebrate our 100th anniversary than by honoring professors who have given so much?" said Río Piedras campus chancellor Gladys Escalona de Motta.

Biologist Jaime Rosado, elected professor emeritus in 1983, spoke of the importance of the classroom teacher.

"Excellence is passed on in the classroom in the day to day experience," he said as he strode back to cut the ribbon on his photograph.

A special posthumous honor was bestowed on the late Rumanian mathematician Elena Ioana Cioranescu, named Woman of the Year 2002 by the American Biographical Institute. The woman who helped develop the UPR doctoral program in mathematics died suddenly on July 28, 2002, of a heart attack at age 60.

In presenting the award, Escalona said Cioranescu had published more than 60 research articles in first-rate mathematics journals. She spoke six languages and sat on many doctoral examining boards in Europe and South America.

A native of Bucharest, she studied under her famous math-



Rumanian mathematician Elena Ioana Cioranescu

ematician father Nicolae Cioranescu. Armed with her doctorate from Germany, she taught in Rome, Santiago, Chile

and for 13 years at the UPR, where she directed 11 masters theses.

In August, a scientific conference will gather world-famous mathematicians in Río Piedras in her honor.

The diploma from the Institute was presented to the head of the math department Luis Raúl Perichi, accepted it to be permanently displayed in the department.

Cioranescu's widower, Dumitru Matei Iancovici, was also on hand to see the homage to his wife.

Of the 17 professors honored, five are still living, but not all attended the ceremony. Instead a relative or colleague cut the ribbon on their photograph and said a few words to recall them.

"Choosing an emeritus professor is a titanic labor, because you must consider teaching, research and human qualities," said UPR vice president of Research and Technology, Manuel Gómez Rodríguez.

"I've been here so long that all these professors taught me," said Escalona de Motta. "Thank you all for what you have given me and what you have given the university."

The emeritus professors included four women and 13 men, nine in biology, five in chemistry, two in mathematics and one in physics.

The only emeritus professor in physics was Leticia del Rosario, who retired in 1974 and became executive director of the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture.

For 20 years after that there were no women in the physics department.

Del Rosario, who is almost 90, was too indisposed to attend the ceremony.