Special Colloquium

The Euclidean States of America: Geometry, Jefferson and Lincoln

Edwin O'Shea

In Honor of
Professor J. Robert Hanson

Professor J. Robert Hanson joined the JMU faculty in 1965. Bob was among the first group of mathematics PhD students at Virginia Tech, defending his dissertation before coming to JMU. His interests over the past half-century have included topics in both algebra and geometry. In addition to his ongoing teaching and advising duties, Bob serves as Assistant Dean of the College of Science and Mathematics.

Friday October 30, 2015
Memorial 6110
3:30 pm

Abstract

The axiomatic method's influence on Thomas Jefferson's writing of the Declaration of Independence is well known among historians of science and political scientists but less so to the mathematical and scientific communities. Even less well known is the significant influence that Euclid's Elements had on the self-taught Abraham Lincoln. This talk aims to summarize and extend existing scholarship on geometry's significant effect on the thinking and rhetoric of Lincoln with some comparative reference to Jefferson's passion for our discipline.

Reception to follow the lecture in the Memorial Hall Forum