

# Ruby Tucker—Many Variables, One Constant

In 1992, Ruby Tucker retired from her teaching position at Fort Middle School. A 1963 graduate of Troy University, she had devoted close to 30 years to helping early adolescents discover that mathematics was more, much more, than skills, drills, and standardized tests.

Although she would be out of the classroom on an 8:00-3:45 basis, Tucker knew where and how she, following retirement, would pursue her dual passion for young people and math. This was the Columbus Regional Mathematics Collaborative, established three years earlier and housed in the College of Education. In 1992, CRMC was ably led by her professional friend, Helen Purks (now Helen Purks Collins).

Collins and she had become acquainted through the Chattahoochee Council of Teachers of Mathematics. They were among its leaders during the 1980s and helped establish area math competitions for middle-schoolers. One might argue that the seeds were planted then for the success of students at Blackmon Road who, a year ago, won state-wide recognition for their Mathletes Team.

In November, as part of the Collaborative's twentieth anniversary celebration, Director Kenneth Jones announced the establishment of a



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scholarship in Tucker's honor. In this way, the local math community recognized her contributions throughout the life of the organization.

"In mathematics there are variables and constants, and there have been many variables during the Collaborative's 20-year history, but one constant has been Ruby Tucker," Jones said.

The Tucker Scholarship will support girls who cannot otherwise afford PRIME, the summer camp at CSU for girls ages 11-13. PRIME stands for Positive Reinforcement in Mathematics Education.

Tucker was a resource teacher with the Collaborative from its outset, conducting workshops, and, in Collins' words, "scouring through resource books and old NCTM magazines for middle-school activities."

Tucker was compensated for her work with CRMC until 2006. Since then, she has served in a voluntary capacity. "It



Resource Teacher Hope Phillips and Ruby Tucker take a break to catch up with MathFest participants Cheryl Keck and Mary Mendenhall.



*Columbus State men are weighing the pros and cons of a nursing major.*

nursing because I injured myself a few times as a kid, and I enjoyed learning about health and how to heal myself,” he says.

McDowell likes the challenge and potential for advancement of nursing. “It is very demanding. Becoming an RN opens the door for so many opportunities. Nursing is a vast field.”

He believes that nursing is becoming an attractive career for more men. “I am not familiar with the numbers, but I have seen male nurses on my rotations around area hospitals,” he said. “The main thing is that men and women work together and help each other.”

Jeremy Arie, spokesperson for the Georgia Nurses Association indicates that membership in the association is representative of what you see within the profession statewide. Currently, about 92 percent of the enrollment is female. He suspects that will change over the next twenty years.

“I definitely see the profession as moving towards a profession for both genders,” Arie remarked in a recent interview. “More men are moving into healthcare, especially nursing, because there are nursing jobs out there—and they are portable jobs. Once you have your license, you can typically move from state to state without a problem.”

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was time,” she told the *Quarterly*. “The CRMC depends heavily on grants,” she pointed out, adding, “Someone else could use that money.”

Founding director Collins cannot say enough about Tucker’s work with CRMC. “Ruby never saw a ‘bad’ child—or anyone else, for that matter,” she observes. “She always found and still finds something positive about everyone she meets. She could go into a teacher’s unruly classroom and come back to tell us stories of how creative the children were.”



*CSU alumni Sumei Chen, left, and Jeanette Schomburg are impressed with CRMC accommodations in the Cunningham Center. Both taught at Richards Middle School.*

## Math Collaborative, Twenty Years and Counting . . . Multiplying, Estimating, Problem-Solving, and Measuring

On November 3, The Columbus Regional Mathematics Collaborative (CRMC) celebrated its twentieth year at CSU during a fall MathFest attended by 75 area math teachers, students, and CSU personnel. Former directors Helen Purks Collins, Susan Pruet, Ann Assad, and Kitty Fouche were on hand to share highs and lows in the organization’s history.

Following a buffet dinner at the downtown RiverPark campus, Mary M. Lindquist—a past president of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and retired Callaway Professor at CSU (1984-1999)—moderated a panel comprising former directors.

In that session, Collins detailed how, in the late 1980s, she and others obtained funding both from local sources and the Ford Foundation to build a partnership between educators and business interests. On a lighter note, Ann Assad credited resource teacher Hope Phillips with sparking the removal of the Collaborative from One Clearview Circle when the building was hopelessly infected by mold. One Clearview Circle was eventually razed.

Current CRMC director Kenneth Jones told MathFest participants that the Collaborative has much to celebrate. He and others noted that, among 11 similar collaboratives, most of them in major cities, the CRMC is the only one still operative.

Jones credits former directors with the long-term success of the group. “We have stood on the shoulders of giants,” Jones says.

Jones has led the Collaborative since 2005. Columbus State University pays his salary and provides excellent office and workshop space in the Cunningham Center. Funding for all other budget items—personnel and materials—comes from grants.