Fields Medallists

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The Fields Medal is awarded to up to four mathematicians at each International Congress of Mathematicians, held every four years. It gives recognition and support to mathematical researchers under the age of 40 who have made outstanding contributions to their subject.

John Charles Fields was a mathematics professor at the University of Toronto, and President of the Toronto Congress in 1924. The idea for the medals came from Fields after the Toronto meeting ended with a financial surplus. This profit, together with later money from his estate, provided the funding for these medals.

The first Fields Medals were awarded in 1936 at the International Congress in Oslo, to Lars Ahlfors and Jesse Douglas. Made of gold, they feature Archimedes on one side and an inscription on the other. Over fifty mathematicians have received Fields medals, the youngest being Jean-Pierre Serre who received it in Amsterdam in 1954 at the age of 27.

In 2008 the Republic of Guinea issued two sheets of stamps depicting Fields Medallists. One sheet features David

Mumford (Vancouver, 1974) and a stamp showing Laurent Schwarz (Cambridge, 1950) and one side of the medal. The other sheet contains illustrations of Efim Zelmanov (Zürich, 1994) and Pierre Deligne (Helsinki, 1978), a stamp showing J. C. Fields and the other side of his medal, and five other stamps featuring André Weil and Fields medallists Alain Connes (Warsaw, 1983), Alan Baker (Nice, 1970), Vladimir Drinfel'd (Kyoto, 1990), Simon Donaldson (Berkeley, 1986), and Andrei Okounkov (Madrid, 2006).

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