



A3 & His Algebra: How a Boy from Chicago's West Side Became a Force in American Mathematics

Nancy Albert

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A3 & HIS ALGEBRA is the true story of a struggling young boy from Chicago's west side who grew to become a force in American mathematics. For nearly 50 years, A. A. Albert thrived at the University of Chicago, one of the world's top centers for algebra. His "pure research" in algebra found its way into modern computers, rocket guidance systems, cryptology, and quantum mechanics, the basic theory behind atomic energy calculations. This first-hand account of the life of a world-renowned American mathematician is written by Albert's daughter. Her memoir, which favors a general audience, offers a personal and revealing look at the multidimensional life of an academic who had a lasting impact on his profession. SOME QUOTATIONS FROM PROFESSOR ALBERT: "There are really few bad students of mathematics. There are, instead, many bad teachers and bad curricula" "The difficulty of learning mathematics is increased by the fact that in so many high schools this very difficult subject is considered to be teachable by those whose major subject is language, botany, or even physical education." "It is still true that in a majority of American universities the way to find the Department of Mathematics is to ask for the location of the oldest and most decrepit building on campus." "The production of a single scientist of first magnitude will have a greater impact on our civilization than the production of fifty mediocre Ph.D.'s." "Freedom is having the time to do research Even in mathematics there are 'fashions'. This doesn't mean that the researcher is controlled by them. Many go their own way, ignoring the fashionable. That's part of the strength of a great university."

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