

African American Educator & Mathematician Dr. Etta Zuber Falconer, PhD



Early Life

- Etta Zuber Falconer was born in 1933 to a family that valued education.
- She graduated from a segregated high school in Tupelo, Mississippi at age 15.

Contributions

- She researched the topic of quasigroups* for her PhD.
- She dedicated her tenure at Spelman College** to increasing the number of African-American women enrolled in STEM-related programs. Over the course of her time at Spelman College, enrolment for women in STEM-related programs tripled to approx. 40% of the student body.
- She served as chair of the Department of Mathematics and chairperson of the Division of Natural Sciences at Spelman.

*A quasigroup is a set with a binary operation (usually multiplication) in which the equations $ax=b$ and $ya=b$ always have a unique solution

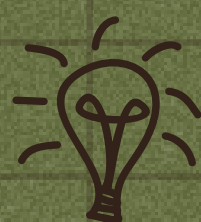
1933-2002

Education

- 1953: Graduated 'summa cum laude' (highest academic achievement) from Fisk University with a Bachelor of Mathematics degree and a minor in Chemistry
- 1954: Awarded a Master's degree in mathematics from the University of Wisconsin.
- 1964-65: Attended the National Science Foundation Teacher Training Institute at the University of Illinois-Champaign
- 1969: Received a PhD in Mathematics at Emory University
- 1982: Received a Master's degree in Computer Science from Atlanta University

Adversity

The University of Wisconsin, at the time, had neither black nor female professors, and Etta's fellow graduate students failed to take her seriously. Her 'all white' algebra class laughed at her when she first walked into the classroom.



***Spelman College was historically known as a college for Black women*

