JUDITA COFMAN
(1936–2001)

Judita Cofman was born in the town of Vršac in 1936. She comes from the well-known Vršac family Cofman (Zoffmann). She completed her elementary and high school education in her hometown, and mathematics studies in Novi Sad. After graduation from the university, she worked at the Zrenjanin High School for two years, and afterwards at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, where she defended her PhD thesis in mathematical sciences, in 1963.

In the middle sixties Judita went to London, where she was doing her research work and she also taught mathematics and methodology of work with students especially interested in mathematics. In 1990 Judita Cofman was invited by the Faculty of Erlangen near Nürnberg to become the head of the Mathematics Teaching Methods Department, the position she held until she retired in August 2001. In September 2001 she was invited to participate in the work of the Postgraduate Studies Department for Mathematics Teaching Methods at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics in Debrecine, where she died in December the same year.

In her PhD thesis "On finite non-Desargue projective planes generated by quadrangle" as well as in her other scientific works (all belonging to the field of finite projective planes), Judita Cofman used very deep theorems from the theory of groups, which still needed some modifications to be applied to geometrical structures, while proofs, regardless of their complexity, were presented in such a way that their main idea could easily be traced. In the period from 1964 to 1972, these papers of Judita Cofman were published in prestigious international mathematical journals.

Judita Cofman dedicated the greatest part of her work in mathematics to fostering young mathematicians. The results of such work were a great number of articles dedicated to mathematics teaching methods, which were published in several international journals. In the last decade of her professional career, Judita Cofman published three books for young mathematicians, where she presented various mathematical problems and tasks, experiences in their solving, as well as an outstanding methical approach to solving non-standard mathematical problems.

Judita Cofman was adorned with finest human characteristics. So greatly talented and educated (she spoke several languages), she was very modest, communicative, always ready to help, not only her friends and colleagues, but also anyone who would turn to her for a help. She was always polite and considerate towards her colleagues as well as anybody coming in contact with her. She cared to keep every single promise she ever gave. Everybody admired her hard work and dedication, feeling her stimulating enthusiasm.

M. Prvanović