

2019 Hall of Fame Honoree

Theodora (Benzelewski) Prettyman Class of 1961

Combining a love of teaching with an innovative perception of how best to teach, Thea Prettyman embodied the consummate educational professional. Decades before the technology renaissance, Mrs. Prettyman advocated for the use of technology in the classroom, and she developed the curriculum for the Computer Science Transfer Program at the community college where she taught.



Thea earned her BS and MS in Mathematics at Syracuse University, where she graduated magna cum laude. Her first career step was as a computer programmer for IBM, working on computer programs connected to NASA's satellite program for five years. For the next several years, she devoted herself to being a wife and mother, going "back to school" in 1983 as an Assistant Professor of Mathematics for Essex Community College. Her leadership skills at ECC led to her appointment as Math department chair, and she co-developed a Technical Mathematics course as well as an Honors Statistic course during this time. She also collaborated with the Caroline County Public School system to develop a high school statistics program.

Mrs. Prettyman's professional career at ECC flourished as she was named Interim Chair for the Division of Science and Mathematics, quickly followed by her selection as Academic Dean of Mathematics & Science. Her contributions to higher learning have been significant. During her career she has also served as chair of the Maryland Community College Statewide Mathematics Assessment Task Force and as an evaluator for the Community College of Baltimore County's NCF-CSEM scholarship project.

In 2007, Thea retired with the prestigious honor of Professor Emeritus. She lives in Timonium, Maryland, and is a devoted mother and grandmother to her children, Brian and Enid Prettyman and Kirsten and Jeff Adams and five grandchildren, Devin, Lily, Mason, Meg and Colin.