

ALAIN CONNES RECEIVES HONORARY DEGREE FROM QUEEN'S

At the afternoon convocation on June 2, 1979 the degree of Doctor of Laws (honoris course) was awarded to the French mathematician Alain Connes. The following citation was written by A. J. Coleman and E.J. Woods.

Alain Connes was born and raised in the south of France, received his university education in Paris, and now holds a position at the University of Paris. At the age of 28, he became world-famous by solving in a very beautiful and constructive manner a longstanding problem related to the central issue of the classification of operator algebras. In achieving this, he manifested great courage to persevere and brilliance as his mind soared among recondite abstractions whose complex intertwinings few of us can imagine. The significance of this work was quickly recognized by the International Mathematical Union and by the French Academy of Science. His great theorem was obtained while he visited Queen's in 1974-75 when, under the enlightened policies of France, he was permitted to discharge his military service by bring French culture to the barren shores of Lake Ontario. Together with contributions from other mathematicians, the work of Alain Connes has brought order and structure to an area where previously there had been chaos and confusion.

His more recent work relating operator algebras to the geometrical objects known as foliated manifolds indicates his ability to create new and unforeseen relationships.

Alain Connes, now in his 32nd year, is, according to our records, the youngest person on whom Queen's has bestowed an Honourary Degree. We honour him not only for his past achievements, we honour him for the great potential we see in him for his future impact on mathematics and science, but above all we honour Alain Connes as a man of modest and generous spirit who is a heart-warming exemplar of the high culture which France has contributed to Canada and the world.