

About May 12

May 12 is the birthdate of Maryam Mirzakhani, the first and only woman Fields Medalist, who unfortunately died on July 2017, three years after receiving the most coveted award in mathematics at the ICM in Seoul. On 31st July 2018 in Rio de Janeiro the Women's Committee of the Iranian Mathematical Society proposed to the participants of the World Meeting for Women in Mathematics, that May 12th should be recognized and supported to celebrate women in mathematics, which was approved by a vast majority of participants. The initiative has been disseminated by a Coordination Group (Nikita Agarwal [India], Carolina Araujo [Brazil], Mojgan Mahmoudi [Iran], Marie Françoise Ouedraogo [Burkina Faso], Olga-Paris Romaskevich [France-Russia], Marie-Françoise Roy [France], Elisabetta Strickland [Italy], Petra B. Taylor [USA]) in collaboration with EWM, the European Women in Mathematics, AWM, the Association for Women in Mathematics, the African Women in Mathematics, the Indian Women in Mathematics, the Colectivo de Mujeres Mathematicas de Chile and the Women's Committee of the Iranian Mathematical Society.

Last year more than 100 events took place around the world and this year, notwithstanding the pandemic of Covid-19, 240 events are registered on the website: <https://may12.womeninmaths.org/>

Furthermore about 15000 requests for the screening of the documentary film "Secrets of the surface: the mathematical vision of Maryam Mirzakhani" by George Paul Csicsery have been made.

All these initiatives prove once more that Maryam Mirzakhani, even if she is gone far too soon, represents a strong inspiration for the thousands of women who pursue math and science, not only because she has been a brilliant mathematical theorist, but also because she was a humble person who accepted honors only with the hope that they might encourage others to follow her path.

Elisabetta Strickland

Ambasciatrice per l'Italia presso la CWM-IMU