



Elizabeth Phillips

(1937 -)

Inducted: **2009**

Locale: **East Lansing**

Era: **Contemporary**

Area(s) of Achievement: **Education**

As educators, Glenda Lappan and Elizabeth Phillips were concerned that too many students were entering college with weak mathematics skills. To improve students' mathematical opportunities, they developed a comprehensive middle school curriculum taught in all 50 states.

Professor Lappan and Phillips, an academic specialist in Michigan State University's Division of Science and Mathematics Education and Department of Mathematics, focused their research efforts on the middle school years where many students' attitudes and aptitudes are shaped. With a National Science Foundation grant, they developed five curriculum units for teachers and students focused on important ideas in mathematics. After the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics released a formal set of curriculum standards for the nation, the duo was prompted to do even more.

Lappan, Phillips, and William Fitzgerald of MSU led a team that spent six years writing, field testing, and evaluating curriculum materials; this process resulted in a new three-year curriculum for middle school mathematics called the Connected Mathematics Project (CMP). The results were undeniably impressive. Besides being accepted by school districts across the nation, the Connected Mathematics Project was awarded 'Exemplary' status by the U.S. Department of Education and gained international recognition as well.

Lappan and Phillips donated their personal portions of the royalties from CMP to MSU to establish two endowment funds. Among the initiatives supported by the endowments are the investiture of an international scholar as the Lappan-Phillips-Fitzgerald (LPF) Chair in Mathematics Education, an LPF Visiting Scholar program, and research support for faculty and graduate students.