

Department of Mathematics

The 3rd Annual Thomas L. Pirnot

Lecture in Mathematics



Tuesday, April 13, 2010 at 3:30 p.m. in Boehm Hall 261

with refreshments from 3:00 to 3:30 p.m.

Our Speaker Is

Dr. William Dunham,

The Koehler Professor of Mathematics at Muhlenberg College

“A Tribute to Euler”

Among history's greatest mathematicians is Leonhard Euler (1707-1783), the Swiss genius who produced an astonishing 25,000 pages of pure and applied mathematics of the very highest quality.

In this talk, we sketch Euler's life and describe a few of his contributions to number theory, algebra, and other branches of mathematics. Then we examine a particular Eulerian theorem: his simple but beautiful proof that there are as many ways to decompose a whole number into the sum of distinct summands as there are ways to decompose it into the sum of (not necessarily distinct) odd summands.

Condorcet, in his Eulogy to Euler, wrote that “All mathematicians now alive are his disciples.” It should be clear to those who attend the Pirnot Lecture that these words are as true today as when they were first set down over two centuries ago.