

What Kind of Mathematician is Dudley Weldon Woodard?

Although Woodard probably didn't have societal support when pursuing mathematics, he did have familial support. This support could have been what carried him through to become only the second African American to receive a Ph.D. in Mathematics. Woodard overcame the barriers he faced and became a highly regarded mathematician. Deane Montgomery, former president of the American Mathematical Society and the International Mathematical Union described Woodard as, "an extremely nice man, well balanced personally He was also regarded by Leo Zippin, who was an internationally known specialist in Woodard's field as, "one of the noblest men I've ever known." (These quotes can be found in the Journal of Black Studies.Vol.18 No.2, December 1987,170-190.)

Although I found no specific information of Woodard working with other mathematicians to write papers, I do speculate that he did collaborate with other mathematicians. He was the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Howard, and must have worked well with the other professors of Mathematics to get this position and be an effective teacher. Woodard had many students throughout his career as a professor of mathematics, one of his most famous being William Claytor.

Woodard was an independent researcher who published many mathematical papers including Loci Connected with the Problem of Two Bodies, The characterization of the closed N-cell, and On two dimensional analysis situs with special reference to the Jordan Curve Theorem. His many publications and accomplishments prove that Dudley Woodard was a very determined and brilliant mathematician for his time. Although experiencing many of the examples of discrimination and racial obstacles discussed in this course, he was able to overcome and become an African American pioneer in the field of mathematics.