



CLAREMONT CENTER
for MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES

CCMS COLLOQUIUM

THE MERCURIAL TALE OF SPHERICAL TRIGONOMETRY

by

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Abstract: The trigonometry we see in high school is merely a pale reflection of the creative, exciting subject that students learned only decades ago. Born of the desire to predict the motions of the heavenly bodies, the trigonometry of ancient astronomers took place not on a flat sheet of paper, but on the celestial sphere. This led to a theory with some of the most beautiful results in all of mathematics, and applications that led to the birth of major modern developments like symbolic algebra and logarithms. Until the subject dropped off radar screens after World War II, it continued to enjoy vitality through applications in navigation and crystallography. The mathematical path we now travel through high school and college, heavily emphasizing calculus, unfortunately has deprived students of other mathematical gems. In this talk, we shall polish some of the tarnish off one of the brightest of those jewels.

Wednesday, October 16, at 4:15pm

Davidson Lecture Hall, Claremont McKenna College

Refreshments at 3:45 p.m. in CMC's Math Commons Room (Adams Hall 209) & wine and cheese after the talk in Math Commons Room (Adams Hall 209)

*The dinner will be hosted by Prof. Francis Su.
Please contact Prof. Su if you are interested in attending the dinner*