

February 1986

CONVERSATIONS UNLIMITED Feb. 3, 1986

INTRO UP AND UNDER

Hi, everybody. Much attention has been paid lately to the numbers game, what we call the lottery. Much attention is being paid on college campuses today to another kind of numbers game -- the teaching of mathematics. Go ahead, you who struggled, as I did, to earn a low D grade in trigonometry. You can make a face and say "ugh." Our guest today is a mathematics professor who has embarked on a

mission that I believe will be supported by all of us who have worked hard to learn some basic mathematics. I'm talking about Dr. Ronald Douglas, who is dean of physical sciences and mathematics at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Dr. Douglas has launched an effort to improve the teaching of calculus. Your goals, as I understand them, Dr. Douglas, include improving the learning of calculus for the student and to put some fun in the process for the teacher.

INTERVIEW DR. DOUGLAS:

- Brief overview of his initiative
- Background: his ninth grade introduction to calculus
- How he became involved two years ago
- His writing, Sloan Foundation proposal
- The January workshop at Tulane
- Feedback: students, teachers
- "Governors, legislators, public" -- why?
- Brief sketch of how improvements can be made

14:00

We'll take a short break now. When we return, we'll talk more with Professor Ron Douglas about how the teaching of mathematics can be improved -- and why. Stay with us.

BRIDGE MUSIC UP AND UNDER

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Hi. I'm Al Oickle, and I'm at the State University of New York at Stony Brook with Dr. Ronald Douglas. We're talking about Dr. Douglas' proposals for changing the teaching of the mathematics subject called calculus. Not everyone agrees that your proposals for change would be improvements, do they, Dr. Douglas?

INTERVIEW DR. DOUGLAS:

- The Tulane conference:

- * Some of those who attended
- * How did the conference function?
- * How widespread were the opinions? Debates?
- * What conclusions were reached?

-- Now what?

-- Role of Sloan Foundation

-- Still time for input? How?

29:00

OUTRO

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