

Zurich Colloquium in Mathematics

Prof. Jean-Pierre Serre

Cohomological invariants in topology and algebra

20 September 2022, 16:30-18:15

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My introduction:

Our speaker today is Prof. Jean-Pierre Serre who has had a research career in mathematics which can only be described as spectacular. He started as a topologist studying spectral sequences and the homotopy groups of spheres (for which he was awarded a Fields medal in 1954 -- at age 27). Afterwards, he turned his interest to algebra and algebraic geometry. His work on varieties, sheaves, and cohomology played a fundamental role in the modern formulation of the subject. Later, his focus shifted to number theory with results and guiding conjectures on modular forms and Galois cohomology. He was awarded the Abel prize in 2003 for his role in shaping modern mathematics. In addition to all of these great achievements, I would like to add a smaller one. He was well known among the Harvard students in the 1990s as being an outstanding ping-pong player. And I had the opportunity to test this once in a best of 3 set match. I can report, 30 years later, the result was another victory for him. We are very happy to have Serre speaking today.