

# American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges

## 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference ✨ Boston, MA

### KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



#### Thursday Opening Session

**Javier Gomez-Calderon**  
*The Treasure of Polynomials*

Thursday, November 11, 3:00 pm  
Ballroom Salons E/F/G

Javier Gomez-Calderon joins us in the opening session of the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual AMATYC Conference to give everyone in attendance a greater appreciation of a topic with which all are familiar, polynomials. From the early discovery of the quadratic formula, polynomials have been a fundamental concept in the development of mathematics. Gomez-Calderon's discussion will enable participants to use an historical approach to polynomials and a three-dimensional approach to better understand why polynomials have roots. He will illustrate why polynomials can be considered a mathematical treasure!

Gomez-Calderon is a professor of mathematics at Penn State New Kensington. He is the author or co-author of twenty-nine articles, four textbooks, four in-house booklets, and the advisor of seven student publications. Gomez-Calderon served as the head of the Mathematics Division for the 14 Penn State campuses from 2002 to 2006 and obtained his doctorate in 1986 from the University of Arizona. Gomez-Calderon was the recipient of the 2007 Penn State S. Eisenhower Award for Distinguished Teaching, the 2002 Commonwealth College Outstanding Research Award, the 2001 Valley News Dispatch Coach of the Year, the New Kensington Excellence in Teaching Award in 1989 and 1997, and the Theresa Cohen Mathematics Service Award in 1996.



#### Saturday Awards Breakfast Session

**Lew Lefton**  
*Infinity Bottles of Beer  
on the Wall*

Saturday, November 13  
Breakfast Served: 7:45-8:00 am (**Ticket Required**)  
Program: 8:30-10:00 am  
Ballroom Salons E/F/G

Lew Lefton likes to keep both the right and left sides of his brain working.

His "bread is buttered" by being a faculty member in the School of Mathematics at Georgia Tech, where his responsibilities include being the Director of Information Technology for the College of Sciences. He also teaches and is the author of the textbook *Introduction to Parallel and Vector Scientific Computing*. At first, he seems like yet another friendly neighborhood Ph.D. in Mathematics, doing stuff we don't really understand.

But Lefton is not just your ordinary geek. He is an accomplished and experienced comedian who has done stand up and improv comedy for over 25 years. From his graduate student days in the 1980s, where he created a regular gig called "The Comedy Stop" at the Alley Cat Bar in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, through his later work in New Orleans, where he was a driving force behind "Comedy Gumbo" and the long running Improv group "Brown!", Lefton has always been a supporter and mentor of fledgling comedy talent. Even today, in his hometown of Decatur, GA, Lefton still performs comedy shows, and also directs a youth improv comedy troupe called D.U.C.K. He is a natural teacher, and his broad experiences, sharp wit, and unique perspectives make both his classes and his performances truly engaging and effective.

He says his Saturday morning address is designed for mathematically mature audiences, but there will also be plenty of jokes for friends and spouses. His philosophy is that humor helps loosen up a class and makes them better prepared to learn. This address promises to be one that will be remembered and discussed by AMATYC participants for years. Don't miss it.

Perhaps Lefton's unique talents are best summed up by his business card which reads:

Lew Lefton  
Mathematician/Comedian  
"He's funny and he can prove it"