

Temple University Mathematics Colloquium

Karen Parshall

University of Virginia

will speak on

Writing the biography of
James Joseph Sylvester (1814-1897): asking
the “right” questions and finding the “right”
answers in the absence of a paper trail

In writing a biography, one question is always clear to the historian: what was the subject doing in the years from x to y ? The answer to this question can be frustratingly elusive, however, if few sources, published or archival, remain. Taking the years from 1868 to 1876 in the life of the English algebraist, James Joseph Sylvester (1814–1897), as its case in point, this talk will explore ways of getting the “right” answers to the “right” questions about the life of a particularly interesting mathematician at a particularly crucial point in his life.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2004

LECTURE AT 4:00 PM(‡)

TEA, COFFEE, AND CAKE AT 3:30 PM.

ROOM 617, WACHMAN BUILDING

DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS