

**Professor Shiing-shen Chern** retired from UC Berkeley and is now based in the Nankai Institute of Mathematics, which he founded in 1985. He is also the founding director of the Mathematical Science Research Institute, Berkeley (1981).

He was awarded the National Science Medal in 1975 and Wolf Prize in Mathematics in 1983/4. His area of research was differential geometry where he studied the (now named) Chern characteristic classes in fibre spaces.

The Chern Visiting Professorship, begun in 1996, honors the Berkeley professor emeritus widely regarded as the greatest geometer of his generation. "Chern's belief in young people and his encouragement of them had a lot to do with the spectacular growth of geometry in the second half of this century", mathematician Blaine Lawson has said. "It is not easy to find a geometer who was not for some period of time either a student or a post-doctoral fellow in the orbit of Chern". (<http://math.berkeley.edu/>)