



## MoMath Executive Bios

### Glen Whitney, Founder and Executive Director

In second grade, Glen Whitney, age 7, could not remember which way math's "greater than/less than" signs were supposed to face. Then his teacher told him that the sign was like the jaws of a hungry alligator wanting to eat more fish, and it became clear which way the sign should face in an equation. This early memory of math may have something to do with why Glen Whitney is now the Founder and Executive Director of the Museum of Mathematics.

Whitney, who grew up in New York and Massachusetts, overcame that second grade math hurdle and went on to study math at Harvard. He then earned a Ph.D. in mathematical logic from UCLA.

Whitney began his career on the theoretical side of mathematics, teaching at the University of Michigan. There, he led a freshman seminar on logic puzzles (including the kind even non-math majors attempt), which concluded by proving some of Godel's famous theorems on incompleteness.

Whitney made a successful leap into the applied side of math in 1997, joining Renaissance Technologies as a hedge fund quantitative analyst. During this time, Whitney was an elementary school math club coach and discovered the spirit of hands-on exploration with kids.

Hands-on exploration with kids (of all ages) is what the Museum of Mathematics is all about. In fact, it was the children of Glen Whitney and Associate Director Cindy Lawrence that brought the two together and led to the creation of the Math Midway and then the Museum.

One inspiration for Whitney was a small math museum in Long Island's Nassau County. Whitney enjoyed the museum with his family and was disappointed when he found out the museum had closed. Whitney at first wished he had been able to help save the Long Island museum. But then something more ambitious came to mind, and the Museum of Mathematics was born as an idea in Glen Whitney's head.

Now, the Museum has moved from the theoretical to the actual, and Whitney has dedicated himself to changing public perceptions about mathematics and improving the way we educate our youth. "Kids are born as explorers," Whitney says. "They ask questions about everything. Math is a ripe area for exploring patterns and asking questions, but kids can pick up a social message that math is weird. We want to send a message that it's cool to love math."

The Museum Whitney founded makes it hard not to love math. Whitney is proud of all 40+ exhibits, but he especially enjoys the beautiful imagery of Feedback Fractals and the Human Tree. And when it comes to numbers, Whitney reveals for the first time that he is "partial to primes."

Whitney lives on the north shore of Long Island.



### **Cindy Lawrence, Associate Director and Chief of Operations**

“Kids did it,” says Cindy Lawrence, giving credit to the children (including her own) who inspired the creation of the Museum of Mathematics (MoMath).

Lawrence is MoMath’s Associate Director and Chief of Operations. She has worked side by side with Founder/Director Glen Whitney since the Museum was just a concept, on all aspects of planning, development and operations.

Lawrence began her career as a CPA at Price Waterhouse, and then after a stint at *Newsday*, moved into education. Lawrence spent 16 years working as the national editor for the Becker CPA Review Course, which is owned by DeVry, writing curricula and addressing questions from students and instructors worldwide.

At MoMath’s inception, Lawrence spearheaded the effort to create the Math Midway, the carnival-themed traveling math exhibition that was a precursor to MoMath and which inspired several Museum exhibits.

Lawrence also led the creation of Math Encounters, a popular monthly event series that communicates the richness of mathematics to the general public, and the MoMath Masters, a lighthearted annual math tournament for adults.

In her senior year at Comsewogue High School, Lawrence had an influential calculus teacher who gave her an eye-opening new perspective on math that changed her life. “Incredible! Beautiful! Wonderful!” is how she remembers the excitement of mathematical discovery; and today Lawrence works to change public perceptions of mathematics and to improve the way America’s young people are educated in math so they can also experience the same mathematical joys.

Lawrence created and directs an extracurricular mathematics program for gifted middle school and high school students through a joint venture with Brookhaven National Laboratory. These successful programs are now part of MoMath.

Lawrence, who lives in Port Washington, NY, the same Long Island town where she grew up, was high school valedictorian, a feat repeated at the same school by her son, David M. Lawrence, her older daughter, Rachel S. Lawrence, and her niece, Samantha Cootner. Lawrence’s youngest daughter, Hannah L. Lawrence, will graduate in 2014.

At MoMath, Lawrence particularly enjoys the Wall of Fire, which is based on an exhibit from the Math Midway. “It holds a surprise for everyone at any level of math knowledge,” says Lawrence, whose favorite number happens to be four. “I still remember the first time I played with the exhibit. There was a strong sense of wonder and excitement.”



## **Tim Nissen, Chief of Design**

Tim Nissen, Chief of Design at MoMath, is one of the most highly regarded exhibit designers in America. He brings enormous experience and imagination to the job of bringing more than 40 interactive, cutting-edge exhibits to life at MoMath's new permanent home on the north side of Madison Square Park in Manhattan.

Prior to joining the Museum, Nissen was a project director at Ralph Appelbaum Associates, where he worked on exhibit halls for the Dallas Museum of Science and Nature, park planning for the Central City District of Philadelphia, and an art installation for the Stanford Law School. While at Appelbaum, Nissen also led design of the Math Midway, the traveling exhibition that is a precursor to the Museum of Mathematics.

Nissen also served as the Associate Director of Exhibition Design at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) where his responsibilities included art direction, technical direction, and management of the in-house design studio. He was also involved in project development from concept to execution, and he collaborated with other institutions to support worldwide exhibition travel programs.

Before joining AMNH, Nissen practiced architecture as an associate at the Rockwell Group. Nissen also worked for Ike and Kligerman, Architecture Plus Furniture; and Buttrick, White and Burtis. He holds a B.A. in architecture from Carnegie Mellon University.

Nissen lives in New York City with his wife and son.

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