

**PRESS RELEASE
WINNERS ANNOUNCED
1998/1418H KING FAISAL INTERNATIONAL PRIZE
FOR
SCIENCE**

Topic: MATHEMATICS

The King Faisal International Prize for Science is awarded this year for Mathematics. The Selection Committee decided that the Prize should be awarded to:

PROFESSOR ANDREW JOHN WILES
Professor of Mathematics at Princeton University in the USA

He has been awarded the 1998 King Faisal Prize in Science for having brilliantly succeeded in solving "Fermat's Last Theorem" which is one of the most famous problems in mathematics. It was unresolved for over 350 years during which it attracted continual interest. There had been many previous attempts to solve it that were all unsuccessful.

This contribution is not just a major addition to mankind's mathematical knowledge but has also a positive influence on the public perception of mathematics. Great public interest was shown when, last year, several television programmes were broadcast detailing the history of Fermat's Last Theorem and its final solution by Professor Wiles.

The work of Professor Wiles is a landmark in number theory. This branch of mathematics, although very abstract, has lately produced outstanding practical applications. Among these is the development of public key cryptography allowing or communication on public computer networks, such as the Internet, with complete privacy and without the risk of eavesdropping by non-authorized persons.