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American accepts Abel Prize for mathematics

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OSLO, Norway — American John Tate accepted Norway's 6 million kroner (\$900,000) Abel Prize for mathematics Tuesday for his role as "a prime architect" of number theory.

Tate received the award from King Harald V at a ceremony in Oslo.

Kristian Seip, chairman of the prize committee, said Tate's "vast and lasting impact" on number theory has "left a conspicuous imprint on modern mathematics." Number theory investigates the basic properties of numbers and has been central to the development of modern computing technology.

Tate told The Associated Press after the ceremony that he hopes the prize will inspire governments and other funding bodies to increase their budgets for basic research.

"To the people who distribute the funds — who out of necessity have to support stuff that's of practical value to society — it's not so clear that it's worthwhile supporting basic research," Tate said. "But in the long term it's very important. Knowledge that seemed just for its own sake has turned out to be of great value."

Now retired, Tate has held professorships at Harvard University and the University of Texas in Austin.

The annual Abel Prize was created by the Norwegian government in 2003. The winner is selected by an international committee of five mathematicians.

Online:

<http://www.abelprisen.no>

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American John Tate received the award for his role as "a prime architect" of number theory, presented in Oslo on May 25, 2010. The Abel Prize, which Tate has had a "great influence" on number theory, was presented to him by King Harald V of Norway. (AP Photo / Bernt...

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