



Press Release – Thursday 1st February 2019

The Alexandria Figueroa and Robert Penner Chair established at the Institut des Hautes Etudes Scientifiques

The Alexandria Figueroa and Robert Penner Chair has been created with Robert Penner's generous gift to the Friends of IHES, the US-based public charity supporting the Institute.

A mathematician very close to the IHES, which he has been visiting regularly for more than 25 years, Prof. Penner wanted to pay tribute to his partner who died in January 2018. *"I am a great believer in the Institute's mission and am pleased to have associated our names to the IHES,"* said Robert Penner. *"Even with her only brief glimpse of it, Lexy was dazzled that there could be such a place as the IHES and would be gratified with this association."*

The gift will endow a triennial chair of Mathematics at the Institute that will provide support for prominent scientists. Triennial chairs are a specific type of invitations of IHES large visitors program: chair holders are nominated by the Scientific Council, and come to the IHES for at least three months each year over three consecutive years, benefiting from the outstanding research and living conditions offered at the Institute.

"We are very grateful to Bob for his generous donation. It enables the IHES to fulfill its mission to offer exceptional scientists a place where their research can flourish," said Michael R. Douglas, Chairman and President of the Friends of IHES.

"This generous gift from Bob is also an important contribution to our ongoing [fundraising campaign](#), and I express my deepest gratitude for his support" said Emmanuel Ullmo, Director of the IHES. *"Having scientists supporting our campaign is very meaningful and encourages us to pursue our efforts to defend the importance of unconstrained research."*

The first chair holder of the Alexandria Figueroa and Robert Penner Chair will be Prof. Joseph Ayoub from the University of Zurich. A specialist in algebraic geometry, a field with a long tradition at IHES, Ayoub is best known for his work on "motives", a mathematical concept found by Grothendieck at IHES in the early 1960s. At IHES, Ayoub will benefit from all aspects of the academic and community life, and will contribute to the scientific dynamism of the Institute.

[Institut des Hautes Études Scientifiques \(IHES\)](#)

IHES is a private research center dedicated to mathematics, theoretical physics and related fields.

The Institute has a restricted number of permanent members, either mathematicians or theoretical physicists, and welcomes about 200 visitors per year, which come from all over the world for research stays. Research freedom, independence and interdisciplinarity are the founding pillars of IHES.

[Friends of IHES](#)

Friends of IHES, Inc., created in 1999, is a not-for-profit organization in the United States with the primary goals to increase the visibility of IHES in the United States, to coordinate the network of current and former American visiting scholars to the Institute, and to raise funds for IHES. Friends of IHES, Inc. is a Public Charity under Section 170 (b) (1) (A) (vi) of the Internal Revenue Code and exempt from Federal Tax under Section 501 (c) (3).

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