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**“Imagining Numbers”: Author and Professor Barry Mazur
in Conversation with William R. Hearst, III**

The Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (MSRI), in association with the Commonwealth Club of California, presents distinguished mathematician **Barry Mazur**, author of *Imagining Numbers* (*particularly the square root of minus fifteen*), in conversation with **William R. Hearst, III**, former editor and publisher of the *San Francisco Examiner* and MSRI Trustee, on TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9TH from 5:15 pm to 7:30 pm, at the Commonwealth Club, 595 Market Street, 2nd Floor, San Francisco.

In conversation with Will Hearst, Barry Mazur will discuss the imaginative aspects of both poetry and mathematics, and how creative breakthroughs occur. Mazur’s *Imagining Numbers* traces the inventive use of imaginary numbers to 16th century Italy, where a novel “fiction”—the square root of a negative number—led to real solutions of difficult equations. Mathematicians (amateur and professional), physicists and engineers played with this idea over the next centuries, and it has born a cornucopia of essential applications. Without requiring a math background, Mazur guides the reader across algebraic and geometric terrain to make simple calculations with imaginary numbers. Such first-hand learning provides insight into the creative leap to this remarkable discovery. Mazur finds parallels to the interpretive work of poetic imagery in this unique exploration of a mathematical quest.

Dr. BARRY MAZUR came to the Society of Fellows at Harvard University in 1960, and has remained at Harvard ever since. He is currently Gerhard Gade University Professor in the mathematics department. He has done research in Topology, Algebraic Geometry, and Number Theory, is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, has been a member at the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (MSRI), and serves on the MSRI Board of Trustees.

WILLIAM R. HEARST, III, is a partner with Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers, a venture capital firm located in Menlo Park, CA. Mr. Hearst is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and a trustee of: The Hearst Foundation, Carnegie Institution of Washington, California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, and the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute in Berkeley. Will Hearst was editor and publisher of the *San Francisco Examiner* from 1984 until 1995. He is a 1972 graduate of Harvard University, holding an AB degree in Mathematics.

WHERE: The Commonwealth Club of California; 595 Market Street, 2nd Floor, SF.

WHEN: Tuesday, September 9th; Reception at 5:15 pm, Program and Book-signing from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm

HOW: Tickets, \$9 for Commonwealth Club and MSRI members, \$15 for non-members; Register by calling the Commonwealth Club at (415) 597-6700 or, online at <http://www.msri.org/calendar/index.html?tab=publicevents>