Joseph Henry Maclagen Wedderburn Encyclopedia Article

Joseph Henry Maclagen Wedderburn

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Joseph Henry Maclagen Wedderburn

1882-1948

Scottish mathematician who achieved international prominence with his 1907 paper on the classification of semisimple algebras, in which he showed that a simple algebra was a matrix algebra over a division ring. After earning a degree in mathematics from Edinburgh University in 1898, Wedderburn went on to study at both Leipzig and Berlin universities, followed by a year in the United States at the University of Chicago on a Carnegie scholarship. After serving in the British Army during World War I, he was invited to teach at Princeton, where he remained until his early retirement in 1945. Wedderburn was elected to a fellowship in the British Royal Society in 1933, and was made an honorary Fellow of the Edinburgh Maths Society in 1946.