Karol Borsuk Encyclopedia Article

Karol Borsuk

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Karol Borsuk

1905-1982

Born in Warsaw, Poland, in 1905, Borsuk earned his doctorate in geometry from the University of Warsaw in 1930. Other than several one-year appointments spent in the United States, Borsuk lectured in Warsaw for the balance of his career. He is best known for his work in founding the theory of retracts and the important concept of neighborhood retracts and notion of cohomotopy groups. The Nazi occupation of Poland during World War II was a difficult time for the entire academic community. Borsuk did his best to keep the University going and was imprisoned by the Nazis for his efforts. Fortunately, he escaped but remained in hiding through the rest of the occupation. He died in Warsaw in 1982.