

Ta-Feng Lin Biography

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Ta-Feng Lin (林大風) (1940-) was born in Taipei, Taiwan, son of Chi Lin, a businessman, and Hao Liu, a housewife.

Lin attended National Taiwan University (1959-1963), where he obtained a BS in mathematics, before pursuing graduate studies at Purdue University. There, he received a PhD (1968) for a thesis entitled “A Discussion on Brownian Motion of 1-Dimensional, Continuous Mechanical System in a Viscous Medium”, under the supervision of mathematician Glen E. Baxter. He was then recruited as a postdoctoral scholar to work with Mark Kac at The Rockefeller University (1968-1970). In 1977, he obtained a faculty position in the mathematics department at Soochow University, in Taiwan, where he climbed through the faculty ranks, before retiring as professor in 2011. Over the years, he served as chair of the department (1988-1991) and dean of the School of Sciences (1991-1994). He also served as editor in chief of the Soochow Journal of Mathematics (1985-2007), and published a first-year calculus textbook, 大學微積分 (台北華泰書局, 1989).

Lin discovered statistical mechanics while working with Kac, whose preliminary work on the chain of harmonic oscillators with random masses he completed. This early use of the replica trick was not, however, followed up by either author.