

the humboldt state university

Department of Mathematics
cordially invites you to attend the

40th
harry s. kieval lecture*

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2002

8:30 P.M.

NATURAL RESOURCES 101

ANN E. WATKINS

**PROFESSOR OF MATHEMATICS,
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY NORTHRIDGE,
AND PRESIDENT OF THE MAA**

"tasting soup, and how not to"

When you taste a spoonful of chicken soup and conclude that the whole pot needs salt, that's an inference. To know if your inference is valid, you have to know how your one spoonful—the data—got taken from the pot. If there's a lot of salt sitting on the bottom, soup from the surface won't be representative, and you'll end up with an incorrect inference. But if you stir the soup thoroughly before you taste, your spoonful of data can tell you about the whole pot. Obvious? Then why do surveys and polls sometimes go so wrong?

*** a lecture on some popular and/ or broad aspects of mathematics
attractive to undergraduates and the public.**