

## PREFACE

This issue is the first of three that are dedicated to Eduard Looijenga on the occasion of his 69th birthday.

Eduard Looijenga was born on September 30, 1948 in Zaandam, the Netherlands, and studied mathematics at the University of Amsterdam. He wrote his Ph.D. thesis under the guidance of Nico Kuiper and after a post-doc position at the University of Liverpool he returned to the Netherlands as professor at the University of Nijmegen, and later changed to the University of Amsterdam. After a year in the USA he became a professor at the University of Utrecht. He has been a guest professor at many foreign institutes. After his retirement at the University of Utrecht he accepted a position as professor at the Yau Mathematical Sciences Center of Tsinghua University in Beijing.

He is known for his outstanding and original contributions to algebraic geometry. His first research dealt with singularity theory. It led to beautiful papers like ‘On root systems and elliptic curves,’ where he worked out a new invariant theory for root systems, and his paper on rational surfaces with an anti-canonical cycle. He became famous for his proof of the conjecture of Zucker that intersection cohomology of the Baily-Borel compactification coincides with  $L^2$  cohomology for arithmetic quotients of locally symmetric varieties. Other important contributions concern compactifications of arithmetic quotients defined by arrangements and his outstanding results on the cohomology of the moduli space of curves. They all show his deep insights and originality. His work has been an inspiration for many.

Eduard Looijenga has served the mathematical community in many ways, for example as an editor of several journals and president of the Dutch mathematical society Wiskundig Genootschap.

It is a great pleasure to dedicate the present issue to him.

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