

Martin Gardner = Mint! Grand! Rare!

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I was not surprised to discover the wonderful equation in the title (that so aptly describes the person) since logology and numerology are – according to Dr. Matrix – two faces of the same coin. It was Mr. Gardner who introduced me to the wily doctor over ten years ago. Since then Matrix and I have marveled over the inevitability of Gardner’s career choice. His brilliant future as the world’s premiere mathematical wordsmith had been fated since the day he was christened. For instance:

- (1) There are 13 letters in MARTIN GARDNER. Dr. Matrix notes that 13 is an emirp since its reversal is also prime. The first and last names have six and seven letters. Six is the first perfect number, while seven is the only odd prime that on removal of one letter becomes EVEN. (It can be no coincidence that the even number SIX, upon subtraction of the same letter becomes the odd number IX.)
- (2) I had remarked in an issue of *Word Ways* (May, 1981, page 88) that the 3×3 word square in Figure 1 spells out with chess king moves the laudatory phrase “Martin Gardner, an enigma.” Not to be outdone (as usual), Matrix has informed me that a better statement is “Martin Gardner: a man and rarer enigma.” (He also found that the square had contained a prediction for the 1980 presidential election: “Reagan ran. In!”)

I	T	D
G	N	R
M	A	E

Figure 1.

G	A	D
M	E	N
R	I	T

Figure 2.

- (3) A different arrangement of the nine letters produces the square shown in Figure 2. Choose three letters, exactly one from each row and one from each column. A common English word will be the result. Dr. Matrix claims this to be an unusual property, not often found in squares composed from names.

This tribute could be continued, but the point is clear. Martin Gardner is indeed Mint! Grand! Rare! He has my love.