
Faculty Recognition 2004

William T. Kemper Fellowships
for Teaching Excellence

May 5, 4 p.m.
Donald W. Reynolds
Alumni and Visitor Center



University of Missouri
Columbia

William T. Kemper

Fellowships for Teaching Excellence

Welcome

Mr. Jim Schatz

Chairman

Central Missouri Region

Commerce Bank

Remarks and Video Presentation

“Share the Moment”

Dr. Richard Wallace

Chancellor

University of Missouri-Columbia

Introduction of the 2004 Fellows

Dr. Brady Deaton

Provost

University of Missouri-Columbia

Mr. Michael Fields

Executive Director

William T. Kemper Foundation

William T. Kemper

Fellowships for Teaching Excellence

The William T. Kemper Fellowships for Teaching Excellence were established by the William T. Kemper Foundation in 1991 with a \$500,000 gift to honor 10 outstanding teachers at the University of Missouri-Columbia each year for five consecutive years. In both 1995 and 2000, the Kemper Foundation extended the program for five additional years with gifts of \$500,000. This marks the program's 14th year, with a total of 140 recipients to date.

Every spring, the MU chancellor and executives from Commerce Bank, the trustee for the Kemper Foundation, interrupt the classes of new Kemper Fellows and surprise each of them with \$10,000 to spend as they wish. Last month, faculty kept a watchful eye out for the award presentation team of Chancellor Richard Wallace and Commerce Bank's central Missouri region Chairman Jim Schatz.

Kemper Fellows have commented on how the awards enhance faculty morale, reward the important role of teaching in higher education, and demonstrate the beneficial relationship between private gifts and the University.

Kemper, a 1926 MU graduate, was a well-known civic leader in Kansas City. His 52-year career in banking included top positions in Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma. The William T. Kemper Foundation, established in 1989 after his death, is dedicated to continuing Kemper's lifelong interest in improving the human condition and quality of life through education, health and human services, civic improvements and the arts.

MU is grateful to the William T. Kemper Foundation for its generosity and to Commerce Bank N.A. for hosting the William T. Kemper Fellows awards ceremony and reception.



Mary Kay Blakely

*Associate Professor
of Journalism*

School of Journalism

Mary Kay Blakely joined the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Journalism as an associate professor in 1997. With an impressive career as a freelance writer, contributing editor to *Ms.* and visiting lecturer, she has been called “one of the most dynamic additions over the past few years to a faculty that is known for its dynamism.”

As a teacher of intermediate and advanced writing classes, Blakely transfers her love of the craft of writing to others. One student said: “She keeps her finger on the pulse of the industry and then generously passes on her wisdom to her students. Mary Kay taught us how to write and, just as important, how to get published.”

Colleagues praise her teaching skills as being in a “different league.” One said: “There are good teachers, even excellent teachers, and then there is Mary Kay.”

Blakely received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Northern Illinois University. She has received the Exceptional Merit Media Award and the Sigma Delta Chi Award from the Society of Professional Journalists. Often sought as a commentator on women’s issues, she has appeared on numerous television programs, and the body of her published work has been licensed by Hallmark Inc. to excerpt for cards in its “American Voices” series.



Suzanne Burgoyne

Professor of Theatre

College of Arts and Science

Suzanne Burgoyne has been teaching and directing theatre at MU since 1989. Her camaraderie with students is often praised, and a colleague calls her an “exemplary scholar of teaching and learning.” Burgoyne says she doesn’t want her students to be “clones” of her or accept her words as “final truth.” She adds, “I do encourage my students to think critically and creatively in pursuit of their own goals.”

Former students and other professors laud the enthusiasm Burgoyne brings to her work. One student says the lessons she learned from Burgoyne changed her life: “Now that I’ve been teaching, I realize that so many of my triumphs were inspired by her high expectations, commitment to social justice and the personal connection she made with me.” A colleague from another university calls her “one of the most active and highly recognized teachers in our field,” and an MU professor says: “Dr. Burgoyne is, without question, among the most passionate, vital, innovative and fully committed teachers in higher education. I cannot emphasize enough that Dr. Burgoyne has made a tremendous and lasting impact on the learning environment at the University of Missouri.”

Burgoyne received her undergraduate degree from Michigan State University, her master’s degree from The Ohio State University and her doctorate in theatre from the University of Michigan. She is a Carnegie Scholar, was named 2003 Outstanding Teacher of Theatre in Higher Education by the Association for Theatre in Higher Education and has received the purple chalk award for outstanding teaching at MU.



Bryan Garton

*Associate Professor
of Agricultural Education*

*College of Agriculture, Food
and Natural Resources*

Bryan Garton joined the University of Missouri-Columbia staff in 1996. He has been dubbed a “teacher’s teacher” by one MU professor and “the most enthusiastic professor I have ever seen” by an MU student. Whether teaching courses in designing curriculum and instruction in agriculture or communicating about agriculture, Garton’s philosophy of placing his priority on his students and their learning needs always guides him.

As a teacher of prospective teachers, Garton models the qualities of a good teacher and demonstrates his love of his craft. One colleague said: “If I were in the 22nd century and human cloning was easy and I was asked to clone a model teaching professor, I would want to start with the genes of Bryan Garton. Bryan has so many qualities for a professor to have it is hard to know where to start a description.” A former student writes: “The ability of Dr. Garton to include us, his students, in several different ways made learning from him much more relevant.”

Garton received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from MU and his doctorate from The Ohio State University. In addition to his teaching duties, he currently serves as chair of the Department of Agricultural Education and, among other teaching awards, has received the Golden Apple Award from the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources.



Mary Ann Gowdy

*Resident Instruction Assistant
Professor of Horticulture*

*College of Agriculture, Food
and Natural Resources*

Mary Ann Gowdy came to the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1991 as the coordinator of its greenhouse facilities. She is now the primary instructor for three undergraduate- and two graduate-level courses in the plant sciences unit. She has been described as the “heart and soul” of the undergraduate degree program in plant sciences.

Gowdy’s concern for her students has been called her greatest asset. One colleague notes: “There is a marked difference between a teacher who simply makes knowledge available for learning and one who enables students to learn. Dr. Gowdy exemplifies the latter.” While her classes are labeled “rigorous and demanding,” students praise her for “engaging students rather than teaching down to them.” One said: “Much of the time we discuss relevant topics until the material is clear to us. She focuses on the information and experience that helps us excel in the real world.”

Gowdy earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Kentucky and her master’s and doctorate from Oklahoma State University. She has received the Golden Apple award and Outstanding Teacher of the Year award from the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources. She also has been named a 2000 Global Scholar — Costa Rica for MU.



Robin Hurst-March

*Resident Instruction Assistant
Professor of Biological Sciences*

College of Arts and Science

Since coming to MU as a graduate teaching assistant in 1992, Robin Hurst-March has demonstrated a love for biological sciences to colleagues and students alike. Her enthusiasm has made some confirmed science “haters” consider changing their majors. An MU professor says: “Robin is quite simply the kind of teacher we all want to be, and that every student dreams of having at least once in his or her career.”

March teaches basic environmental studies and general principles of biology courses. One student recalled a lesson on dominant and recessive hereditary genes that stuck with him long after class was over: “While waiting for the shuttle bus I found myself looking at the ear lobes of other students thinking definitely ‘dominant,’ or ‘that’s recessive.’ What a great way to learn without even knowing you’re being taught.”

When asked to write teachers’ guides to accompany *Mizzou Magic*, MU’s science magazine for middle school students, March drew on her own former experiences as a junior high and high school science teacher to make the guides practical and usable. They were a huge success.

March received her undergraduate degree, master’s and doctorate from MU as well as her Life Teaching Certificate. She has been honored for her work with the green and purple chalk awards for outstanding teaching and the Most Inspiring Professor Award from the MU athletic department.



Neil Minturn

*Associate Professor
of Music*

College of Arts and Science

Neil Minturn joined the faculty of the University of Missouri-Columbia in the fall of 1997. He consistently carries a heavy teaching load and has taught a total of nine different courses at MU. Whether it is aural training and sight singing, music theory, or 20th century composition techniques, Minturn is praised for presenting lessons that are highly organized and engaging. Two-thirds of his students rate him as one of their best teachers.

Minturn's teaching philosophy states "students must learn to think and to teach themselves. Students learn the most by applying knowledge." His teaching style has been described as "nothing short of brilliant" by one professor and was dubbed "a gifted communicator" by a student. Another student said: "Dr. Minturn has been the single greatest influence on my undergraduate career. The lessons I have learned from him about writing, scholarship, teaching and musicianship are invaluable."

Minturn received his undergraduate degree from Reed College in Portland, Ore. and his master's and doctoral degrees from Yale. He has written books on topics ranging from composer Sergei Prokofiev to the music of the rock group The Band. In 2002, he recorded original progressive jazz/rock with a trio, writing or arranging about half of the material. The CD was completed in January 2004 and is now being distributed.



Margaret *“Molly” Olsen*

*Assistant Professor of
Romance Languages and
Literatures (Spanish)*

College of Arts and Science

Molly Olsen comes from a family of teachers, and she considers herself both a learner and a teacher in all areas of her life. Since arriving at MU in 1998 she has been labeled “extraordinary” by colleagues and “inspiring” by students. Olsen says, “Teaching is a form of community service, and it is primarily for that reason that I value it.” It is for that philosophy that students value Molly Olsen.

Whether she’s teaching Spanish composition and conversation or introduction to Hispanic literature, Olsen has a powerful command of her subject and brings an enthusiasm to her teaching that engages all of her students. As one professor put it, Olsen is in demand: “Professor Olsen is one of the most sought-after teachers in our department, one with whom students always want to take other classes.” These classes are called “stimulating,” “interactive,” and place much “emphasis on student participation.” One student said: “Her style was relaxed, her charisma drew me into the class, and I remember distinctly thinking to myself, ‘this is the kind of person I always hoped I would have as a professor.’ ”

Olsen received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from The Ohio State University and her doctorate from Tulane University. She was nominated for the Anniversary Faculty Award at Tulane and was awarded the Tulane graduate school academic fellowship for five years. She makes many contributions outside the classroom, including working with the Freshman Interest Groups, the language residency hall and serving as director of MU’s Cuernavaca, Mexico Summer Program.



Charlotte Phillips

*Associate Professor
of Biochemistry and
Child Health*

School of Medicine

Charlotte Phillips joined the University of Missouri-Columbia faculty in 1994. An associate professor of biochemistry, she teaches courses in the medical school and mentors graduate students studying molecular biology. Colleagues say she teaches by example and that her lab is teeming with enthusiastic and hard-working undergraduate researchers. With a national shortage of physician-scientists, Phillips' efforts are helping MU meet that need.

When students evaluate Phillips' work, one theme is consistent: "Inspired excellence." One student said: "Dr. Phillips is a great teacher, effectively communicating the concepts of genotype to phenotype and how this correlates to clinicians and eukaryotic cells." Another said simply: "Kind of hard not to enjoy a maternal figure who projects a non-stop caring attitude and passion for what she is doing."

Colleagues agree, saying her insights are "refreshing." One professor wrote: "She presents the current scientific literature to the class, using material at a very sophisticated level, but one the students comprehend and appreciate."

Phillips received her undergraduate degree from the University of Central Florida and her doctorate from North Carolina State University. She has been recognized at MU with the Jane Hickman Teacher of the Year award and the Excellence in Education award from the Medical Student Affairs Council.



Lawrence Ries

*Resident Instruction Assistant
Professor of Statistics*

College of Arts and Science

Since joining MU as a graduate instructor in 1990, Lawrence Ries has taught 14 different statistics courses. He has lectured to an average of 300 students per semester in one course and this year is teaching two sections of the same course each semester with about 600 students per semester.

As a teacher of many “non-math” students, Ries has earned respect and admiration for his classroom skills. One journalism student said: “I am not a math person. Before long, I noticed I was looking forward to lecture classes. To my sheer amazement, I began to understand random samples and margins of error.” Another said: “I went into his class with a firmly closed mind, prepared to hate it. But after his first lecture, he’d won me over, and by the end of the semester, I was bringing friends with me to class, friends who weren’t even enrolled in the class.”

Ries’ colleagues agree. One professor said: “Dr. Ries is an extremely talented educator. He has a compelling yet unassuming presence in front of the classroom, and his effectiveness as a lecturer is unparalleled.”

Ries received his undergraduate, master’s and doctoral degrees from MU. Honored in *Who’s Who in American Colleges and Universities*, he also has received five teaching awards from various student organizations on the MU campus.



Nancy West

*Associate Professor
of English*

College of Arts and Science

Nancy West has been on the MU faculty since 1995. She has taught 17 courses on subjects ranging from Dickens to photography and literature. Her classes are called “creative and intellectually challenging” and have been cross-listed by the Honors College and the Campus Writing Program. It has been said her engagement with students “brings her innovative courses to life.”

West’s teaching style is infectious. One colleague, herself a former Kemper Fellow, writes: “What a joy it is to be in the same room with Nancy West. Her energy and genuine love of life and literature fill the space and add new potential for all our lives.” A student said: “I believe that she genuinely cared about my work, my performance, and my development as a student. This was obvious in her overall teaching style and in the feedback she provided me.”

Nancy West received her bachelor’s in English from Rutgers University and her master’s and doctoral degrees from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her book *Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia* was published in 2000, and she has authored numerous chapters for books as well as encyclopedia entries.

The Kemper Influence

The William T. Kemper Fellowships for Teaching Excellence are among the most innovative teaching awards in the country. They represent a significant honor for gifted teachers, but they also represent a special opportunity for faculty to grow both professionally and personally.

A look at several Kemper Fellowship award winners from previous years shows the impact the awards have had in their lives and in the lives of others through their generosity.

Steven Keller, an associate professor of chemistry and a 2003 Kemper winner, has dedicated a major portion of his \$10,000 award to provide a professional boost for his graduate students by paying travel expenses for them to attend professional meetings.

“One of the things that propelled me into academia was that my professor was very generous in having me attend professional meetings,” Keller says. “The interactions that you can have at those meetings with leaders in the field, the constructive criticism and the compliments, really are inspiring.”

Attending a scientific conference or professional meeting also can give graduate students a little different perspective in their research and scholarship, Keller says. “Learning about the community of scientists, that really is important.”

Carol Ward, associate professor of anthropology and a 2001 winner, used some of her award to take students to renowned museums to see the fossil collections that are vital resources for scientists in her field.

Kemper Fellowships also can have an impact outside the award winner’s academic field. For instance, Thomas Crowe, associate professor of industrial and manufacturing systems engineering, donated a majority of his award from 2003 for Alzheimer’s disease and cancer research, to honor family members who died of those diseases last year.



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