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Professor Munro Named Kemp Award Winner

April 13, 2011

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. -- Illinois Wesleyan University Professor of Political Science William Munro has been named the 2012 winner of the Kemp Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence on Wednesday, April 13, at the annual Honors Convocation in Westbrook Auditorium of Presser Hall.

One of the highlights of the academic year, the Convocation is a chance to celebrate the scholastic achievements of the students and faculty on campus. The Kemp teaching award, which is the University's highest teaching honor, is bestowed annually to a faculty member at the Convocation. Rene Shaffer attended the ceremony to represent the Kemp family, which has a long history of supporting Illinois Wesleyan.

The Convocation, which also honors students and faculty of national and international honors societies, included reminiscences from Class of 2011 Vice President Melissa Solis '11, and an invocation from student Hillel member Amanda Packman '11.

Announcing the Kemp award winner was Interim University Provost Frank Boyd, who lauded Munro's internationally renowned scholarship, campus leadership and high standards in the classroom. Students know that with Munro they will "embark on a joint effort of learning," said Boyd, who declared Munro a personable mentor to many, saying he is "known for his immediately recognizable sense of humor, his formidable intellect and a modesty that attempts to hide his impressive academic pedigree."



Professor of Political Science
William Munro

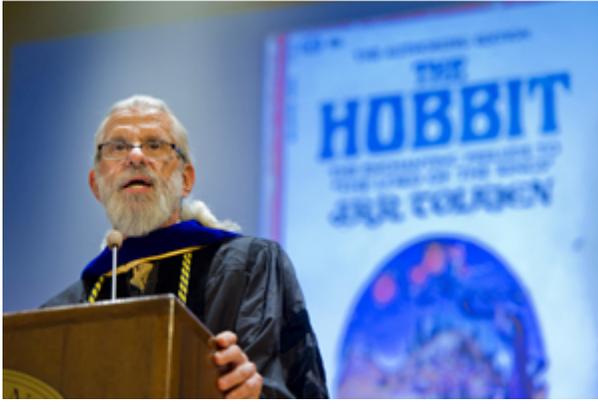
Munro, who is the director of Illinois Wesleyan's International Studies Program, teaches courses in international politics at Illinois Wesleyan with emphasis on African social movements. A scholar of the politics of state formation and development in the global south, as well as the international food economy, Munro is the author of *The Moral Economy of the State: Conservation, Community Development, and State-Making in Zimbabwe* (Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1998), and co-author of *Fighting for the Future of Food: Activists versus Agribusiness in the Struggle over Biotechnology* (University of Minnesota Press, 2010), which explores the debate over genetically modified seeds. His scholarly works have been published in academic journals such as the *American Journal of Sociology*, *Comparative Politics* and *African Rural and Urban Studies*, and he has contributed book chapters to texts such as *Reconstructing Biotechnologies: Critical Social Analysis* (Wageningen Academic Press, 2008) and *Frontiers of Commodity Chain Research* (Stanford University Press, 2008).

Munro joined the Illinois Wesleyan faculty in 2000. He earned a doctorate in political science from Yale University, a bachelor's and master's degree from Cambridge University, and a bachelor's from Natal University in South Africa. He is an honorary research fellow at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, and a research scholar at the Center for African Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Active in his service to Illinois Wesleyan, Munro has served as a co-coordinator of the Development Studies Team, and as a faculty advisor to the IWU chapter of Amnesty International and to the International House on campus. He was a member of the Committee for a Sustainable Campus, and the first-year advisory board. He also served as chair for the Technos Award Selection Committee. Currently, along with his duties for the International Studies Program, Munro is a member of the African Studies Team, the International Studies Steering Committee, and works with the John and Erma Stutzman Peace Fellows Program.

Munro is a past winner of a Fulbright Placement Fellowship, and is a member of the Phi Kappa Phi national honorary society and Phi Beta Delta international honorary society.

In addition to the announcement of the Kemp Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence winner, the Convocation was an occasion to recognize numerous student scholastic honors and retiring faculty. The afternoon event also recognized four retiring faculty members who were awarded the status of faculty emeritus -- Associate Professor of Music and Head of the Voice and Choral Department Sammy G. Scifres with 44 years, Professor of Music Tom Streeter with 40 years, Professor of Nursing Connie Dennis with 38 years, and Professor of Nursing Sharie Metcalfe with 32 years.



*Professor of English Dan Terkla described "Intertwinglement"
in his Convocation address.*

The speaker for the Convocation was Professor of English Dan Terkla, who was the 2011 Kemp teaching award winner. Shaffer presented Terkla with the teaching award, along with the Kemp family's appreciation for his achievements.

In Terkla's speech for the Convocation, titled "Intertwinglement; or a Request by Way of a Story," he encouraged students to see the connections and building of narrative networks throughout their academic lives.

Detailing his own journey into teaching and scholarly studies, Terkla spoke of his youth in southern California, traveling along the Pacific Coast Highway, sharing stories with people he met along the way. "As we wanna-be mad ones traveled - questing would be an overstatement - had conversations and heard tales that induced in us perspectival shifts," said Terkla. "We wove into the texts of our lives the stories of others, and they wove our stories into theirs."

The drive for social networks pulled him to teaching, which he regarded as an opportunity to share accumulated experiences through art. "Each time we read or study an artwork, we chart an alternate route through or over it, discovering and linking different centers of attention," he said. "Our relationships with these works deepen and mature as we superimpose these knowledge grids atop one another and connect them to others we have made."

Terkla, a professor of English with emphasis on medieval literature and maps, admitted he fell into his chosen vocation through the pages of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit: Or There and Back Again*. "While traversing Middle Earth, I met the medievalist I have become," he said. Searching for the "real-world underpinning" of the book, Terkla discovered the medieval tales the likes of *Beowulf*, and authors such as Chaucer. The book also led him to the study of **medieval maps**. He noted these artistic works were not created to be followed as a set of directions toward a destination, but instead acted as a "mindmap," representing a human's place in relation to heaven and earth. "Each time the reader pondered the map's vignettes, he would weave new strands into his knowledge web and be one step farther along his Road to the Golden Eternity," said Terkla.

This effort toward making connections in the "ages-old tradition of self-weaving," or finding our place in the network, can be found online through Facebook, said Terkla. "The page owner invites friends into the network and can see them at that level, as medieval mapmakers and authors virtually invited source-friends to their networks and held them in pre-digital memory arrays," he said, encouraging students to "visualize the web of knowledge" they accumulate during college.

Connections help create the essence of a liberal arts education, Terkla said. "I think you'll see how what you learned in psych courses enriches discussions of characters in a novel, how what you learned about light in physics allows you see a Vermeer painting in a new way, or even a Jorie Graham poem; how reading Plato in a humanities course raised provocative questions about the Book of Genesis; how . . . Well, I hope you get the idea," he said.

Speeches of past teaching award recipients can be found at IWU's Digital Commons, digitalcommons.iwu.edu/teaching_excellence/.

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