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## Professor Receives National Grant

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## **Professor Receives National Grant**

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Illinois Wesleyan University Professor of Russian Studies and recently appointed Isaac A. Funk Professorship Marina Balina has received a research fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to continue her pioneering work with Soviet and post-Soviet children's literature.

The \$20,000 fellowship is jointly sponsored by the NEH, the American Councils for International Education and the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research. The NEH, an independent grant-making agency of the United States government, is dedicated to supporting research, education, preservation and public programs in the humanities.

Balina has earned an international reputation for her work with Soviet literature, yet she is one of the first to study children's literature. "Soviet children's literature has been dismissed as propaganda by Western scholars," said Balina. "It is a new field to speak about Soviet and post-Soviet children's works, and that is very exciting."

A native of Russia who earned her doctorate at Leningrad State University (now St. Petersburg), Balina joined IWU's faculty in 1989 and is now a member of the University's Department of the Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures. A former chair for her department at Illinois Wesleyan, Balina has helped shape the department's curriculum. An author of 23 articles and five books, her work is known by scholars worldwide. She was recently the invited speaker at an international symposium at Lund University, Sweden.

Balina has been the recipient of grants from the U.S. Department of Education, the Austrian Ministry of Culture, the American Association of Learned Societies, the National Endowment of Humanities and the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies of the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars.

Known for her dedication to her students, Balina was recently named winner of the 2008 *Pantagraph* Award for Teaching Excellence. She was named the Funk Professorship earlier this month.

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