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## Terkla Named Winner of Kemp Teaching Award

April 14, 2010

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Illinois Wesleyan University Professor of English Dan Terkla has been named the 2011 winner of the Kemp Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence on Wednesday, April 14, at the annual Honors Convocation in Westbrook Auditorium of Presser Hall. The award, the University's highest teaching honor, is bestowed annually to a faculty member.

Provost Beth Cunningham said of this year's winner that when he was hired in 1995, Illinois Wesleyan English Department members were betting Terkla would be "an active scholar, the finest teacher and a valued colleague. There is no doubt they won that bet," she said.

Cunningham added many students have commented on Terkla for his knowledge, his meaningful classroom discussions, and the quality of his instruction. "He teaches for life," Cunningham said, recounting one student's assessment of Terkla that he "does not just pass on knowledge, but instills passion."

As a professor of English, Terkla's classes have ranged from Chaucer and the study of King Arthur to Buddha and the Beat Generation. He is known internationally for his work on medieval maps – such as the Hereford Map and the *Mappaemundi* – and for his scholarly contributions to the study of The Bayeux Tapestry. He is the author of dozens of articles, and co-editor of two books on the subject, *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Interpretations* (The Boydell Press, 2009) and *New Research on the Bayeux Tapestry: The Proceedings of a Conference at the British Museum* (Oxbow Books, 2010). He has chaired several international conferences, including those at the British Museum and at the University of Leeds in England. He has given presentations and lectures across the United States, from the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C. to the International Conference on the History of Cartography at Harvard University.

Terkla's work has been honored with the J.B. Harley Fellowship in the History of Cartography, the British Academy/Newberry Library Fellowship, and he was elected into the Council of the Society for the History of Discovery. He has been named to *Who's Who Among America's Teachers* seven times, and was inducted into Phi Kappa Phi national scholastic honorary society.

Terkla earned his bachelor's degree in liberal studies and comparative literature in 1979 from California State University (CSU) at Long Beach, where he stayed to earn his teaching credentials for K-12 students in 1980. He was a visiting scholar to Balliol College of Oxford University from 1985-1986, before returning to CSU to earn his master's degree in medieval studies in 1986. Terkla then continued on to the University of Southern California, where he graduated in 1992 with his doctorate in comparative literature and medieval studies. Before coming to Illinois Wesleyan, he was an assistant professor of English at Dickinson College in Pennsylvania.

Active on campus, Terkla was the founding advisor of the Illinois Wesleyan chapter of the English honorary society Sigma Tau Delta, which was named the Outstanding Chapter Award in

2007. He has served as the director of the University's London Program in 2003, as the chair of the Humanities Series from 2001-2005, and as the Humanities Coordinator since 2002.

Throughout his tenure, Terkla has served on many University committees, including the Council on University Programs and Policy Procedures, the Library Advisory Board, the University Speakers Committee, the Programming Board, the Teacher Education Committee, and was a Faculty Visitor to the Board of Trustees. He has devoted numerous years to the John Wesley Powell Undergraduate Research Conference, and was the chair of the committee in 2007.

This is the second year University's highest teaching award has carried the Kemp name. The Kemp family has a long tradition with Illinois Wesleyan. Parker Kemp is an emeritus member of the University's Board of Trustees. His brother, John Jackson Kemp III, was a member of the class of 1950. Kemp's parents are graduates of Illinois Wesleyan – Glen Kemp in 1922, and Rozanne Parker Kemp in 1927. Parker Kemp's uncle, George "Hub" Parker, is an alumnus, as were two other uncles, John T. and Robert J. Parker.

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.

Five retiring faculty members were awarded the status of faculty emeritus on Wednesday, including Professor of Computer Science Susan Anderson-Freed, Professor of English Barb Bowman, former Director of the School of Nursing and the Caroline F. Rupert Professor of Nursing Donna Hartweg, Professor of Sociology Christopher Prendergast, and former Associate Provost and Professor of Psychology Roger Schnaitter.

The speaker for the Convocation was Professor of English Wes Chapman, who was the 2010 teaching award winner. In his speech, titled "Happiness and the Liberal Arts in Three Movements," Chapman voiced his curiosity about why the word "happiness" rarely appears in the mission statement of universities. "Is it that the idea of happiness is too abstract?" he wondered. "We all strive for happiness. Is it really no part of a liberal arts education?"

▷ [Read or hear Chapman's remarks](#)

In his search for an answer, Chapman explored the philosophical, psychological and intellectual nature of happiness itself, always returning to the question of whether it should be stated that "a collective we" of the University wants happiness for its students. "Whether happiness is achievable, whether happiness is important, whether it furthers striving or hinders it, whether it is in league with truth or opposed to it – these are all questions, important, intellectual life questions," he said.

In response, Chapman composed a fictitious letter to a former student (which he titled "Dear Fictional Student"), in which he ruminates on the assignments he gave, often filled with unhappy endings. "It is true that I have asked you to read many books that have been depressing – books in which the main character is reduced to madness, books in which everyone dies... I can scarcely think of a narrative I've ever taught that did not have some tragedy in it," he said,

making sure to call the assignments “a gift” for students. “I’ve offered it to you to make happiness, when it comes, to mean something,” Chapman said. “This is the human condition. You can lose everything, love, pride, health, sanity, life. But if you know that, you can feel a kinship with all human beings vulnerable to human beings just like you, then you can also feel the joy that surrounds the sounds of the song or symphony.”

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