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Mohan Invested as Hess Professor of Chemistry

Sept. 5, 2013

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Professor of Chemistry Ram Mohan was formally invested as the Wendell and Loretta Hess Professor of Chemistry on Sept. 4 during the annual **President's Convocation** at Illinois Wesleyan University. Mohan is the first to hold the Hess Professorship, which was established in 2012 through a gift to the Transforming Lives fundraising campaign by the University's provost emeritus Wendell Hess and his wife, Loretta.

In recognizing Mohan's appointment, President Richard F. Wilson noted that endowed professorships are reserved for faculty who have distinguished themselves through exemplary teaching and active engagement of students, outstanding scholarship and/or artistic achievement, and service at the highest levels of the University

Provost and Dean of the Faculty Jonathan Green introduced Mohan as "internationally recognized for his contributions to green chemistry." Mohan's research has received numerous grants from organizations such as the National Science Foundation, the American Chemical Society and the Research Corporation for Science Advancement.

His work, which has been widely published in scientific journals, focuses on developing environmentally friendly organic synthesis using bismuth and iron compounds. Bismuth and its compounds are non-toxic and attractive from a green chemistry perspective.

"A champion for the creation of meaningful undergraduate research opportunities and an advocate for the publication of that research, Dr. Mohan has supervised over 90 undergraduate research students and co-published over 50 articles with his students in peer-reviewed journals," Green said at the convocation. "He has become a true role model of a research-mentor and a teacher-scholar."

A 1985 graduate of Hansraj College in Delhi, India, Mohan earned a master's degree in organic chemistry from the University of Delhi in 1987 and a doctorate in chemistry from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), in 1992. Following that he conducted postdoctoral research at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

In 2011, the Illinois Heartland Section of the American Chemical Society named Mohan Chemist of the Year. He received the distinguished alumni award from UMBC in 2002 and the Henry Dreyfus Teacher Scholar award in 2001.

Ram Mohan poses with Wendell Hess after being invested as the
Wendell and Loretta Hess Professor of Chemistry.



Formal investitures are traditionally held as part of the University's Commencement ceremonies, but Mohan was on sabbatical this past academic year as a Fulbright-Nehru Teacher Scholar in India. Mohan previously held the Earl and Marian A. Beling Professorship of Natural Sciences.

Wendell Hess, himself a professor of chemistry, and his wife Loretta came to Illinois Wesleyan in 1963, when Wendell Hess joined the chemistry faculty. Hess served Wesleyan for 27 years in such roles as department chair, director of science programs, twice as associate dean, provost and as acting president in 1988. Wilson recognized the couple, who attended the President's Convocation on Wednesday.

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