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Gearhart Mafazy Receives Exemplary Teacher Award

Nov. 16, 2016

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Illinois Wesleyan University's Rebecca Gearhart Mafazy has received the Exemplary Teacher Award for the 2016-2017 academic year. The award is given through the Division of Higher Education of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of The United Methodist Church. Illinois Wesleyan Provost and Dean of the Faculty Jonathan Green presented Gearhart Mafazy with the award.

Recipients of the Exemplary Teaching Award exemplify excellence in teaching; civility and concern for students and colleagues; commitment to valued-centered education; and service to students, the institution, and the community.

Gearhart Mafazy is a professor of [anthropology](#) at Illinois Wesleyan. She was also named the 2017 recipient of the Kemp Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence. This Illinois Wesleyan award honors one faculty member who brings spirit, passion, and scholarship to the art of teaching.

She received a Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Florida and joined the faculty at Illinois Wesleyan in 1999. Gearhart Mafazy takes an interdisciplinary approach (visual anthropology, history and performance studies) to her research on non-Western music and dance performance traditions. Her area of interest is East Africa, which she first visited as an undergraduate student in 1987. She has frequently lived in East Africa, primarily among the Swahili people of the Kenyan coast. She is co-editor of the book *Contesting Identities: The Mijikenda and Their Neighbors in Kenyan Coastal Society* (Africa World Press, 2013) and the author of numerous scholarly papers.



Rebecca Gearhart Mafazy

By Reilly Kasprak '17

