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# Folse Named 2018 Kemp Award Winner

April 12, 2017

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Victoria Folse has been named the 2018 recipient of the Kemp Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence at Illinois Wesleyan University. The award recipient, announced April 12 at the annual Honors Convocation, is selected by the faculty Promotion and Tenure Committee. Provost and Dean of the Faculty Jonathan Green announced Folse as the recipient.

The Caroline F. Rupert Endowed Chair of Nursing, Folse was named director of the School of [Nursing](#) in 2009. She joined the faculty at IWU in 2002, the same year she earned a Ph.D. in nursing with a concentration in research from Saint Louis University. Prior to joining the faculty at IWU, Folse taught at Bradley University and provided 15 years of full-time eating disorder treatment with 10 years of nursing management practice at OSF Saint Francis Medical Center in Peoria. She is also a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor, a Clinical Nurse Specialist in Adult Psychiatric Nursing, and is an Advanced Practice Nurse with prescriptive authority in the State of Illinois.

Folse has an extensive publication record, an ongoing program of research, including inclusion of her students whenever possible, and lectures nationally and internationally. She is an American Association of Colleges of Nursing Leadership for Academic Nursing Program 2008 Fellow and received an Illinois Board of Higher Education Nurse Educator Fellowship in 2009. She was an American Association of Colleges of Nursing and Wharton Executive Leadership Fellow in 2016.

René Shaffer, representing the Kemp Foundation, made the presentation to the 2017 recipient, Professor of [Anthropology](#) Rebecca Gearhart Mafazy. The Kemp Award honors one faculty member who brings spirit, passion and scholarship to the art of teaching. The Kemp Family Foundation began funding the award in the 2009-2010 academic year.

In her presentation, entitled “Curiosity and What To Make of It,” Mafazy used examples of several cultures and societies around the globe to illustrate the insatiable curiosity with which humans are born. Raised in the Minnesota town of Anoka, Mafazy went to college at Mount Holyoke in Massachusetts, where, she said, “my big Minnesota smile was received with quite a bit of suspicion.”

Interacting with fellow students who were more cosmopolitan, better educated, and who considered her Scandinavian heritage exotic, Mafazy said those experiences were part of learning to navigate the terrain of a new place among new people.



In addition to presenting the address, Mafazy joined her students and I Ketut Gede Asnawa in performing on the University's gamelan.

unhealthiest settlements in the world, where no one should have to live, she said.

“What I learned on that trip was that the strength of the human spirit is intricately tied to the strength of the bonds people have with their families and communities, and that deep happiness and contentment is found playing gin rummy with friends, especially by kerosene lantern, which is how I spent many evenings with my host family, Zainab and Saidi, on Lamu Island, Kenya,” she said.

Their conversations – which ranged from Swahili cultural practices and African reggae to ice fishing in Minnesota and the American Latin rock band Santana – taught Mafazy that explaining ordinary things to people who live very differently is a chance to see oneself from another perspective. “These kinds of interactions, when people from different backgrounds listen and ask, are openings for understanding – both about others and about ourselves,” she said. “This give and take, cross-cultural exchange, forms the basis of how we cultural anthropologists do our work. But you don’t have to be an anthropologist to let your curiosity about different ways of being in the world take you on little journeys of discovery.”



2018 and 2017 Kemp Award winners Victoria Folse (left) and Rebecca Gearhart Mafazy.

► [Watch a video of the Convocation](#)

Mafazy’s first roommate was a young woman named Loyce from the West African country of Ghana. “We helped each other get over homesickness and culture shock by listening to each other’s stories about our families and the friends we left behind, what our neighborhoods looked like, and how the food we missed tasted,” Mafazy recalled. She said Loyce and several Mount Holyoke professors in a variety of disciplines “nurtured my fascination with the magnificent peoples of Africa, whose histories and cultures led me on a journey of inquiry and discovery that included traveling to East Africa as a junior. And that was a big leap for me.”

She told the audience her first trip to East Africa included observations of extreme opposites. People who faced economic challenges beyond her comprehension were more generous than she could fathom, she said. Landscapes filled with plants, birds and other wildlife more beautiful than she could imagine, stood in stark contrast to some of the largest,



Nurturing our curiosity about how other people see the world and live in it can begin just by having the courage to start a conversation with someone you don't know, she said. Mafazy helps her students begin those conversations by assigning projects where the students must integrate themselves into a group to which they don't already belong — perhaps a registered student organization, a faith-based group, or an athletic team.

"These interactions with people the students might not naturally gravitate toward helps them get used to the initial discomfort of being around people with whom they are unfamiliar, and build up their confidence integrating into a new group," she said. And with success, students can be ready to venture even farther — on a May Term travel course, an international summer internship, or a semester abroad. "These experiences help students replace stereotypes with meaningful personal interactions that often lead to friendships like those that set me on my path to becoming an Africanist scholar 30 years ago," she said.

As an anthropology professor, Mafazy introduces her students to local cultural experts, who in turn, introduce students to new ways of understanding the world and our relationship to it. She spoke of Carol and Eliida Lakota, sisters of Native American heritage, who share Lakota Medicine Wheel teachings, and of Peter Magai Bul, one of the thousands of 'Lost Boys' of Sudan who were displaced or orphaned in the late 1980s.

"Peter's willingness to tell of the near-death experiences he had as a child, and how he took on the adult role of parenting hundreds of orphaned children [in a Kenyan refugee camp] barely younger than himself, helps students grasp the horror we are capable of unleashing and enduring, and the long-lasting impacts of war and destruction," she said.

Now living in the U.S., Bul has maintained his Dinka sensibility while integrating fully into American society, Mafazy said. In his ongoing effort to resist surrendering to frustration and despair over civil war in the new country of South Sudan, "Peter focuses on maintaining the school he built in his hometown, where an equal number of girls and boys are being educated. Peter's hope is that knowledge and understanding will ultimately win over ignorance and fear, and that the neighbors who fought so long and hard together to win their independence, will again unite as one," Mafazy said.



"We owe it to ourselves and to each other to go out on a limb every now and then, and build bridges of understanding over the walls of fear and ignorance that separate us," Mafazy said.



Putu Oka Mardiani performed the heroic Baris Dance from Bali, accompanied by students in anthropology and music classes.

During the convocation, special music was provided by students in Mafazy's "Theatre, Performance & Spectacle" class, and those enrolled in Associate Professor of Music Adriana Ponce's course "Exploring Musics From Around the World." Students performed on the University's gamelan, an orchestra comprised primarily of metallophones, xylophones, gongs and a hand drum played by the conductor, I Ketut Gede Asnawa. Indigenous to Bali, the gamelan plays a central role in almost all sacred and secular events. At the Honors Convocation concert, Asnawa's wife, Putu Oka Mardiani, performed the heroic Baris Dance, which features gestures and facial expressions that communicate the emotions of Balinese warriors.

Each of these societies – from the Swahili, to the Dinka, to Bali – in fact, each society on earth, has unique and creative answers to our common human problems and insights into the great mysteries that elude us all,

Mafazy said.

In closing, Mafazy told the sweetly humorous story of introducing her Kenyan husband, Munib, to her great-grandmother, who'd spent the bulk of her life in northwestern Minnesota, and how Mafazy's husband and great-grandmother had marveled at the texture of each other's hair. "In that moment, when Munib and Grannie let down their guard to reveal their curiosity about one another, and allowed themselves to be vulnerable in the same way, they created a space to build a lasting friendship," she said.

"We owe it to ourselves and to each other to go out on a limb every now and then, and build bridges of understanding over the walls of fear and ignorance that separate us," she added. "Following our human instinct to reach out instead of close off, and letting our innate curiosity lead us to the courage and creativity necessary for true compassion, will enable us to create a campus, a community, and a country, where no one is an outsider, and everyone is at home."

Honors Convocation is dedicated to the Class of 2017 and to students who have earned scholastic and activity honors. At the ceremony, colleagues paid tribute to retiring members of the faculty: Outreach Librarian and Professor Sue Anderson, Fine Arts Librarian Robert Delvin, and Professor of Sociology Jim Sikora. Each faculty member was awarded the status of faculty emeritus.