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Paul E. Bushnell Receives 1994 DuPont Award for Teaching Excellence

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FOR RELEASE, MAY 11, 11 A.M. (CDT)

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--Paul E. Bushnell, associate professor of history and a 28-year veteran of the Illinois Wesleyan University faculty, today received the 1994 DuPont Award for Teaching Excellence, IWU's top teaching honor.

The teacher-scholar award, presented to Bushnell at an 11 a.m. Honors Day convocation in IWU's Westbrook Auditorium, Presser Hall, is sponsored by DuPont Agricultural Products, Inc., of El Paso, Ill., a subsidiary of the Delaware-based chemical industry leader, E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Co. Robalee M. Deike, human resources manager of DuPont Agricultural Products, made the award presentation.

The Honors Day convocation is open to the public; there is no admission fee.

Bushnell delivered an address, entitled, "The University and the Rage of the Middle Class."

IWU President Minor Myers, jr., said, "The great philosopher George Santayana is remembered for his observation that those who don't understand history are condemned to repeat it. That's why the teaching of history is so important--our past truly is prologue. For almost three decades, Paul Bushnell has taught generations of IWU students about the complexities and contradictions of history--opening their minds to the past and their eyes to the future. All of us at IWU are proud that he is being honored today for his scholarship, humanity, and contributions to the IWU community."

Myers also thanked DuPont for underwriting the award, noting that it "represents a strong partnership between business and higher education aimed at promoting excellence in teaching."

Bushnell said, "I have no illusion that I have reached the pinnacle of the teaching art. I work at it all the time." However, he viewed the award as "an affirmation of my career at IWU," adding, "It's very satisfying and a vote of confidence from the institution."

Commenting on his philosophy of education, Bushnell said, "A really good teacher holds up standards of scholarship and achievement. They supply tools for students to achieve and elevate students' sights in terms of what they think they can achieve. Achievement doesn't come overnight, it's a lifelong enterprise."

Provost Janet McNew announced that James Matthews, chair of IWU's foreign languages department, will be the 1995 recipient of the teaching excellence award.

IWU's Tenure and Advancement Committee selected Bushnell and Matthews from among a group nominated by the faculty on the basis of their accomplishments in teaching, scholarship, and service.

Mona J. Gardner, Adlai H. Rust Professor of Insurance/Finance and director of IWU's Division of Business and Economics, received the award last year.

Previously, IWU's top teaching honor was known as the Century Club award.

The Honors Day convocation recognizes IWU students who have earned scholastic and activity honors. IWU students are recognized for membership in about 20 scholastic honorary societies, representing disciplines ranging from marketing, foreign languages, and nursing to biology, education, and history.

Bushnell Background

Growing up on a college campus in Ohio, Paul Bushnell heard tales of his father's adventures teaching English in China in the 1920s. When clashes between communists and nationalists brought civil war to the ancient Middle Kingdom, his father escaped Hunan Province aboard a Yangtze River junk, finally reaching safety in the Philippines, where he taught English at the Silliman Institute.

A dynamic junior high school teacher--a woman with a degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University--sparked Bushnell's interest in history as an eighth grader, an interest that became a career.

Eileen Dunham, a history professor at the College of Wooster and a Canadian with a doctorate from the University of London, nurtured his interest in history. "She was the kind of person who was so excited by history," Bushnell recalled, "she hardly could get it all in in an hour lecture. She never used the same notes, year-to-year. She was a voracious reader. That was her life. She was a very unusual woman and teacher."

As a teenager, Bushnell saw first-hand the challenges of trying to build a western-style education system in a developing nation, when he spent a year in post-World War II Afghanistan. His father was nominated by the U.S. State Department and hired by the Afghan government to head a new American-style secondary school project, Habibia College, a lycee-level school, which went beyond the typical U.S. high school of the period.

It's this rich background in education that Bushnell has brought to IWU classrooms for 28 years--a background shaped by many great teachers.

Intellectual Tradition

Bushnell grew up in a household where everything from Chinese culture, to Freud and the emerging field of psychoanalysis, to the problems of the Great Depression and World War II were grist for discussion. His college professor father, Paul Palmer Bushnell, also was a writer, who published articles in the *American Scholar*.

"We had an intellectual tradition," Bushnell said of his family.

Bushnell's grandparents lived with the family in Wooster, Ohio, when they retired.

Paul's grandfather, John Edward Bushnell, was a Presbyterian minister, who spent a portion of his retirement years writing a history of his Minneapolis church. His grandmother was a member of the Ellsworth family, Revolutionary War leaders in Connecticut. One of her ancestors was Oliver Ellsworth, Chief Justice of the United States from 1796-1800.

Bushnell's paternal grandparents were from New England, the cradle of the American Revolution, making July 4th a special occasion for them.

"My grandfather," Bushnell recalled, "once startled me completely one Fourth of July morning, when he called me to the front porch and proceeded to throw torpedoes [fireworks] that

exploded on the walk in front of me. Frightened at first, I soon learned that he was serious about celebrating American independence."

As Bushnell and his grandfather were setting off firecrackers, his grandmother would call from a window, "Haven't you got anything louder than that?"

Paul's mother, Mildred Shackleton Bushnell, was born and raised in Canada. Her father, John Shackleton, was a contractor and builder in Toronto. Bushnell's mother was trained as a public health nurse at Sick Children's Hospital in Toronto, worked on a demonstration project in Oregon, and studied at Columbia University in New York City, where she met Bushnell's father, who was working on a doctorate.

A Year in Afghanistan

Bushnell's view of the world broadened considerably in the early 1950s, when he joined his family in Afghanistan, taking a year off from his history and economics studies at the College of Wooster.

"From this experience," he recalled, "I got the idea of joining the Foreign Service. I got to know a lot of diplomats and we even had Thanksgiving dinner with the U.S. ambassador to Iran. But my father cautioned against a diplomatic career, saying that diplomats had to be independently wealthy since the pay was inadequate."

Bushnell, age 20, trekked across much of the Middle East and Europe--sometimes by mail bus--working his way back to the United States from Afghanistan. His itinerary included stops in many historic cities, including Baghdad, Damascus, Beirut, Jerusalem, Cairo, Athens, Naples, Rome, Paris, and London.

However, his odyssey ended in tragedy, when word came that his father had died heading for home, after a shipboard leg injury in the Mediterranean triggered an embolism that traveled to his lung.

After college, Bushnell flirted with a career blending economics and Middle Eastern development, especially while he was doing graduate work at the University of Michigan.

However, he scuttled that notion, turned next to the study of religion, then the history of religion, and finally to the teaching of history in a liberal arts college, observing: "My father taught education at the College of Wooster. He was a big influence on my career choice, although I didn't realize it at the time."

Teaching Philosophy and Influences

For Bushnell, textbooks are just the jumping off point for historical study. Effective teachers, he believes, "have to know where their students are coming from."

"Teaching is essentially communication," Bushnell points out. "Teaching is a mutual enterprise between teachers and students--it's a mutual exploration of historical texts and collaboration between teacher and student. The great teachers I had saw that. They helped students develop critical perspectives on both the texts and events of the period under study."

Among those great teachers was Hans Jenny, a Swiss economist at the College of Wooster, who Bushnell described as "a good, tough-minded, and demanding teacher."

Another College of Wooster influence on Bushnell was Howard Lowry, an English professor, who was named the institution's president. Lowry is credited with revitalizing liberal education at the campus. While Bushnell never took a course from Lowry, he shaped Bushnell's concept of a liberal education.

"There was an emphasis on independent research and writing, a distinctive feature of a Wooster education," Bushnell said. "Students in history usually wrote three major papers in their junior and senior years. Mine were on Pre-Islamic Iran, the Islamic period, and modern Iranian history. This approach influenced my style of teaching and thinking.

"Lowry believed," Bushnell added, "that students were the backbone of a college--and he expected a lot of them. He looked at students' motivations and interests--not just their ability. He wanted students to develop an intellectual agenda--to look at a field of possibilities and choose something of compelling interest."

Bushnell earned a bachelor of arts degree from the College of Wooster in 1953.

Moral Questions

As a graduate student at the University of Michigan, two faculty members greatly influenced Bushnell: Palmer Throop and Wolfgang Stolper.

Throop, who taught medieval intellectual history, helped shape the way Bushnell understood the historian's craft.

"Throop was a careful student of the history of ideas," Bushnell explained. "He utilized modern interpretative concepts from the social sciences, whether investigating the history of the crusades or the classical origins of many western ideas.

"Most of all," Bushnell added, "Throop convinced me that we must study conflicts if we are truly to understand cultures. Collisions among interests and values reveal what a society cares most deeply about. I also became interested in how values and ideas change over time, particularly the ideas a culture may think of as unchanging. Throop sent us to the primary sources, but wanted papers that did more than quote the sources--papers needed to be analytical and succinct."

Recalling Stolper, Bushnell said: "He didn't look at economics narrowly, he raised very challenging moral questions--questions students would explore if they were studying the Christian ethics."

Bushnell, who received a master of arts degree from the University of Michigan in 1954, remembered Stolper as much for his keen mind as his wardrobe, noting that the economist dressed the same every day--gray flannel pants, a khaki belt, a white shirt, and a bow tie. He also remembered get togethers that attracted an eclectic group of people to Stolper's house, which was filled with original paintings and two grand pianos.

"This was an educated man," Bushnell said of Stolper. "He was an extraordinary and impressive man with intellectual vitality and social awareness."

Divinity School and Civil Rights

After Michigan, Bushnell continued his education at the Yale Divinity School, where he earned a bachelor of divinity degree in 1957.

Three faculty members at Yale strongly influenced Bushnell.

Roland Bainton, a renowned professor, who had written a widely acclaimed biography of theologian Martin Luther (1483-1546), leader of the Protestant Reformation and founder of the Lutheran church. Bushnell took a year-long course from Bainton, *Social Teachings of the Christian Church*. Recalling Bainton, Bushnell said, "He was a really impressive scholar, capable of learning an eastern European language in a few months in order to better translate and understand a source."

Describing Bainton as a compassionate and gentle man, Bushnell said: "I remember well when Vanderbilt University was convulsed with controversy over the civil-rights movement, Professor Bainton gave a talk in which he drew from the history of the Church elements of prophetic challenge and compassionate concern for troubled consciences that helped to keep the controversy from destroying the community."

Bainton, according to Bushnell, provided a splendid model of how a historian could contribute to the resolution of a bitter controversy by drawing skillfully on his faith and historical knowledge.

Robert Calhoun, a professor of the history of Christian doctrine at Yale, was the type of scholar, Bushnell said, who could easily spend an hour or more exploring the implications of changes in meaning of three or four Greek words in various contexts.

"Calhoun was not the sort of teacher who could have filled a stadium," Bushnell recalled, "but his example inspired us and his students strove frantically to get his every word down in our notebooks."

Sydney E. Ahlstrom was a young addition to the faculty when Bushnell was a student at Yale. He was an incisive questioner, Bushnell recalled, and a teacher who brought a fresh focus to the study of religion in the United States by placing it more firmly in the context of American society and culture.

"Ahlstrom expected a lot out of his students and in turn he was interested to learn what our research turned up," Bushnell recalled. "Much of my work in the study of American society has been shaped by the kind of critical inquiry Ahlstrom demonstrated in the classroom and in his own writing."

Bushnell and the Civil-Rights Movement

Bushnell's involvement in the civil-rights movement is linked to the ethical and historical issues he wrestled with as a student at Yale. He also was moved as a youngster by the plight of African-Americans in his hometown.

"Yale was a big influence on me in terms of civil-rights issues," Bushnell said. As a divinity student at Yale, Bushnell recalled, "we all had to have fieldwork jobs and one of mine was in New Haven's ghetto area. I worked with fifth graders at a YMCA boys' club--most of the kids were black. We met in their homes and it was quite a revelation. They were very poor. I had seen rural poverty before, but not urban poverty."

"I saw a lot of good kids," Bushnell added, "and well-meaning parents, but they had no resources. Yet, they put a lot into their children. I learned a lot from this."

Sit-in Movement

As a doctoral student at Vanderbilt University, Bushnell became involved in the 1960 sit-in movement, a landmark event in the history of the U.S. civil-rights movement.

The Nashville movement was strong, disciplined, and well-schooled in non-violence, Bushnell recalled. It supplied key leaders for later campaigns, including Marion Barry, former mayor of Washington, D.C., and John Lewis, now a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Atlanta.

Bushnell was one of two white members of the Student Central Committee in Nashville, a group that made decisions about demonstrations and negotiations with merchants and community leaders.

"Those were great days of shared purpose, shared experience, and shared danger," Bushnell remembered. "What people at a greater distance sometimes failed to realize was that this was not just a movement among largely middle class black students to secure a place at a lunch counter stool, but part of a larger movement to secure freedom and racial justice in America."

"As a teacher who has devoted a major portion of my professional life to raising these issues and teaching this history in the classroom," Bushnell added, "I have been gratified to discover at reunions in recent years how many of my former students have retained insights from this study and gone on to make their contributions to solving this persistent and serious problem."

Joins IWU Faculty

Bushnell joined IWU's faculty in 1966 after serving for four years as an assistant professor of history at Arkansas State Teachers College. IWU was attracted to Bushnell because of his generalist and interdisciplinary approach to teaching history.

"When I came to IWU," Bushnell remembered, "it was the time of student rebellions. The school was looking for provocative teachers--teachers who could deal with contemporary issues. I had been a member of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and I had been involved in the desegregation movement. They said that was fine. I also had a good academic pedigree: Michigan, Vanderbilt, and Yale."

Initially, Bushnell taught eight courses a year at IWU, including a Western Civilization course--1500 to the present--that sometimes attracted about 55 students. Over the years, however, Bushnell has taught a wide range of courses, probing American history, history of religion, intellectual history, and other topics.

Bushnell has been an innovator, introducing Afro-American history into the IWU curriculum. He also instituted seminars in the department, exploring topics such as methodology in historical research, the theory and writing of history, and a senior-level semester-long research project.

With Robert Bray, IWU's R. Forest Colwell Professor of English, Bushnell edited, *Diary of a Common Soldier in the American Revolution, 1775-1783*, which was published in 1978 by Northern Illinois University Press. The book, which took four years to research and write, is an annotated edition of the military journal of Jeremiah Greenman, a Rhode Islander. The book relates the soldier's war experiences, his business ventures, and brief career as a sea captain.

Reflections on Teaching

Teaching at the college level has changed greatly since Bushnell was a student.

"In those days," he reflected, "there seemed to be more time, less intensity, and perhaps more fun. And, in some places, there was a kind of formal social life expected of faculty that we can be glad did not survive the forces of modernization and democratization that came with the era of World War II."

When Bushnell came to Illinois Wesleyan, his greatest demands were in the classroom, with the university being primarily a teaching institution, particularly in the social sciences.

"The problem was that it was awfully hard to add fresh research like fresh water to the well," Bushnell said. "One had to draw heavily and continually on what one had stored up in graduate school. But such a view of teaching is outdated. We are not just storing up data or information. What has changed for historians most significantly is the kinds of questions we ask, the extent to which we have departed from a pedagogy that is primarily based on lectures, and the kinds of data that we must take into account."

The teaching of history has changed, Bushnell explains, with the arrival of issues of social class, gender, and race, putting pressure on university resources like libraries, as well as faculty and students.

"For students," Bushnell said, "there has been the pressure of trying to prepare adequately for a changing world and a need, at higher costs, to take advantage of all that higher education can offer.

"For faculty, there are the dual pressures of a more competitive professional world and greater accountability to one's students and one's institution.

"What I have been most anxious to see is an educational context where teaching is better balanced with growing professional support that allows faculty to bring more of the fruits of research and professional performance into the classroom. As this develops, it will mark IWU's increasing maturity as a liberal arts university."

Family Life

Bushnell met his wife, Dotty (Dorothy M. Lyon), an art major, when they were undergraduate students at the College of Wooster. They took a class in modern literature together and shared an interest in the arts and India.

"Dotty's parents, Wilbur and Mary Kirby Lyon," Bushnell recalled, "were Presbyterian missionaries in India, south of Bombay, for more than 30 years. Dotty was born in India and graduated from the Woodstock School, a high school my brother attended during our Afghan adventure. I visited him there, when I was in India. So, Dotty and I shared an India-Woodstock-Wooster connection--and much more--when we married shortly after graduation in 1953.

"As a consequence of our early marriage," Bushnell added, "Dotty shared most of my graduate school experience, and in the first few years of our marriage had campus jobs, which brought our academic experience even closer together. For example, at Yale she was secretary to the head librarian of the Yale Divinity School. She got to know the scholars I worked with and admired, their research interests and idiosyncrasies."

The Bushnells have four children, their birth certificates reflecting the family's academic travels: Tim was born in New Haven, Anne and Sarah were born in Nashville, and John in Arkansas. The Bushnell children are graduates of Oberlin, Macalester, Illinois Wesleyan, and the College of Wooster.

Matthews' Background

Matthews, the 1995 DuPont Award for Teaching Excellence honoree, earned a bachelor of arts degree from Albion College in 1974, a master of arts degree and doctorate from the University of Michigan in 1978 and 1985, respectively.

Prior to joining the IWU faculty in 1986, Matthews was an assistant professor at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind.

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 1,800 students in a College of Liberal Arts, College of Fine Arts, and a four-year professional School of Nursing. For five consecutive years, *U.S. News & World Report* has ranked IWU No. 1 in the Midwest among regional colleges and universities in its annual "America's Best Colleges" edition. *U.S. News* also rated IWU as a "best buy" in higher education in its first survey, "Paying for College," published in October, 1993.