

## **Distinguished Professor Awards 1999-2001**

*In recognition of their sustained excellence in  
teaching effectiveness and service.*

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**Cynthia Cornell**, Professor of English, received her A.B. from Vassar, her M.A. University of California Berkeley, and her Ph.D. from the University of Missouri, Columbia.

First appointed to DePauw in English in 1975. Appointed the Jane Cooling Brady Professor of English in 1994.

She has won teaching excellence awards since her days as a graduate student at the University of Missouri, and she has frequently been honored for her teaching by her students at DePauw.

She has dedicated herself with local and national distinction as a leader of the DePauw writing program, including long years of service as the Associate Faculty Development Coordinator for the W Program. She has also turned this contribution to writing across the curriculum and to writing pedagogy into a nationally and internationally recognized scholarship on the teaching of writing.

Among her colleagues from outside DePauw are those who have written: "what has impressed me most is the Study Guide she prepared for the Norton Anthology of English Literature...As an indication of the kind of questions and approaches she ... takes in her own teaching, the guide is also further indication of her judicious and balanced habits."

Another wrote: "I have served on a number of standing committees that choose the winners of similar awards at a major research university. Professor Cornell would compare favorably with the typical winners of these awards, particularly in the areas of service and teaching."

And yet another: "Her work on Basic Writing is thoughtful, important, and, to put it plainly, brave" in that it challenges many assumptions and anecdotes with clear analysis and evidence.

Her service has spanned most committees, and she has been elected by her faculty peers to the most challenging and demanding committees, a sign of her colleagues' deep respect. She also helped to provide the seminal push for the creation of the current Women's Studies Program. She served with distinction as chair of the English Department.

Her service to the University community drew plaudits from her peers: "Even among a fine group of fellow committee members, Cynthia always stood out. She is consistently able to bring up relevant points that most or none of us others have thought of, and to cast brilliant new light on matters already before us. [Her] contributions were always eloquently expressed and logically sound; when she speaks there is never a wasted word. I have been impressed by the range and depth of her learning in her own and other fields, her really lively personality, and her sense of humor and lack of self-importance or self-aggrandizement."

Her colleagues also note that she is devoted to her teaching: "she has devoted her life to her profession, making sure that she remains a resource and support to many of the students she comes in contact with. She is interested in the concerns of her students, willing to adjust her approach to learning and her courses to fulfill as many of their needs and interests as she can without compromising her commitment to education."

Another writes: "I cannot conceive how a college teacher could be more committed to students' intellectual and personal development than Cynthia. She has always advised between twenty and thirty students each year, including freshmen, and she builds in to every course that she teaches some one-on-one time with her students in her office. And in addition to her own students, one often sees her counseling others: students who need help with papers for other classes, with applications, resumes, or contest entries; or students uncertain of what to major in or what courses to take in the summer or overseas.... The best evidence for Cynthia's consistent treatment of students as being of worth and dignity is the way she makes 'space' for them in her professional life and the way she invites them into space of her home."

And yet another: "I always know when the first days of British Writers I are in effect, because Cynthia's students are outside her door muttering to themselves in old English, in preparation for her oral review of their skills. It is a heartening sight, to see so many students taking on such a wickedly hard process with such a capable guide.

"That her work in the classroom is so dovetailed with her scholarship is testament to Cynthia's quality of completeness as a Professor. She has bridged the differences between departments and the gaps in our curriculum to produce an effective and well-regarded program."

Her students write: "Not only was she my friend and someone I could go to for help; she was a wonderful writing teacher. She helped me to overcome my weaknesses and strengthen my strengths."

"She has taught me more about writing than any other teacher I have ever had. Instead of just putting a grade on your paper, [she] asks you to come have a meeting with her and then she goes over all your mistakes and ...how to improve next time"

"I worked hard in this class, harder than some ... classes. But I wanted to work hard for Prof. Cornell."

**James Rambo**, Professor of Modern Languages, earned his B.A. in Latin American Studies at the University of Kansas (including study abroad in Costa Rica), and his M.A. and Ph.D. in Spanish at the University of New Mexico.

His long and varied service has included often teaching Portuguese as an unpaid overload in order to prepare students for study or travel.

His students write: "He knows how to get his point across in Spanish" and "he's willing to make sound effects and perform actions to help convey what he's saying." I don't know which led more to his refined performance skills (teaching Spanish and Portuguese or the Putnam County Playhouse productions).

From his teaching philosophy we learn: "I believe that a vital function of faculty members at a liberal arts institution is to 'model' liberal arts type behavior -- an openness to all areas of knowledge and an ability to synthesize among them."

Committed to the liberal arts philosophy of DePauw, he earned his W, S and Q certifications in rapid succession in the early 1980's.

His University service is equally impressive: acting director of off campus study for three semesters; twice he served as resident director for the DePauw Mediterranean Studies Program; on campus liaison for GLCA Latin American Programs; WTIS leader of 13 trips, including 5 of the last 6 years. He has often made summer site visits to plan the trips, indeed each has been nearly a year-long responsibility. He has served also on the Winter Term Evaluation Committee and the Hartman Center Steering Committee, and the Bonner Scholar Selection Committee. He has earned the Hartman Center's "Outstanding Faculty Volunteer" awarded three times, most recently for the 98-99 academic year. He has served as chair of Romance Languages and as coordinator of the Spanish section in the new Modern Languages Department, also coordinator for Latin American and Caribbean Studies. He served as Coordinator for Special Academic Programs (S, Q, W, Honor Scholar, Winter Term, Academic Integrity, academic advising, and much more). He has served on all major committees, including the advisory committees for both the Media and Management Fellows programs.

**Andrea Sununu**, Professor of English, earned her A.B. (magna cum laude) at Mount Holyoke College, and her A.M. and Ph.D. in English Literature at Brown University. Her graduate specialties were in Renaissance Literature and Medieval Literature.

She was previously recognized for her Exemplary Teaching by DePauw and the United Methodist Church in 1993.

In conversations about her teaching there is a uniform excellence: she is simultaneously beloved, dedicated, devoted to her students, challenging, demanding, critical, and patient. She is said by many to walk on water.

From her teaching philosophy we learn: "I aim to validate in students a sense of their own intellectual worth. While promoting their ability to respond -- critically, imaginatively, and humanely -- to literature, I try to show that ideas and language can contribute immeasurably to living values and can even justify an equation between thinking and living. I hope to persuade even the most reluctant students that poetry, no less than roses, and medieval and Renaissance literature no less than modern, can evoke a thoughtful response from them -- and even, with luck, move them deeply.

Renown for her teaching, she works closely with students over their writing, through individual conferences and detailed comments on their drafts. "To spur students into intellectual independence, I try to turn facts into discoveries, answers into questions -- and to encourage students to develop their own lively, concise and elegant prose..."

Her students respond in kind: "My first paper ... came back with more corrections, suggestions, and comments about my writing than actual writing by me. While this was quite unsettling, it was welcome relief from my entire first semester of papers that came back with a grade and little indication of what that grade meant and no hope of improving on that first effort. After a lengthy conference with Dr. Sununu at some ridiculously late hour of the evening, I slaved over my second draft, with notably improved results. The revised draft (with her comments), and second conference, ...." [well you get the drift]

"I don't think anyone at DePauw could deny her tireless dedication to her career, and I personally find it inspiring. I could write pages about her as a library of knowledge, her dedication in and out of the classroom, and as a good friend with numerous examples to support each claim, but I think I can sum it up in a few words. One of DePauw's greatest strengths is its ability to offer a personalized education that relies on an accessible, yet talented and devoted faculty. Andrea Sununu is the epitome of this, and professors like her make DePauw's tuition seem like a bargain.

She is equally appreciated by her colleagues: "In an institution that places teaching excellence above all else in importance for its faculty, Andrea epitomizes one paradigm of that excellence -- complete dedication to her subject and her students, setting the highest standards for them and for herself, relating to students and colleagues with generosity and gentleness and not the slightest touch of egoism."

"Andrea Sununu is rapidly joining Raymond W. Pence as one of DePauw's legendary teachers. Pence was described in "Depauw: A Pictorial History" (Clifton Phillips and John Baughman) as a tireless and demanding perfectionist.

In her decade at DePauw, she has completed a wide range of service including work on a number of committees and participation in the PossePlus retreat. She has waited on tables at the staff recognition dinner, and she contributes to and participates regularly in faculty forum, teaching forum, and Women's studies discussion groups.

Listen to her voice once again: from The DePauw, February 1998: "Call it magic or miracle, or simply compassion and commitment, but on the evening of 21 February, DePauw students brought down the Berlin Wall of this often divided campus. I would urge skeptics who may scoff at such ostensible hyperbole to seek out any of the thirty-four students who participated in the PossePlus Retreat this past weekend at Bradford Woods, fifty minutes south of Greencastle. Listen to the story these students can tell you -- the ten enthusiastic Posse members with their eight months of training before their arrival at DePauw in August, and their twenty-four guests, who arrived for the weekend in a variety of moods, uncertain about what would lie ahead of them.

The answer? An epiphany for everyone -- an epiphany that helped to make Sunday's closing circle an unforgettable experience. By then, we all had glimpsed a new possibility for healing on this campus. We had seen mutual respect, empathy, and solicitude demolish artificial barriers as students listened to one another and reached out to those in pain."