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Mark Allen : Distinguished Achievement Award - Education

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2005 Distinguished Achievement Award - Education

Mark Allen '74

Mark's "greatest thrill of teaching ... is the experience of seeing the light go on for my students." This master teacher should get an award from his local power company for all those lights going on!

A sampling of student comments attests to his "electricity" in the classroom: "You'll work your butt off, but the knowledge is worth it." "If you want to grow come early [to class] and come often." "Allen was my favorite prof. I don't remembering ever making an 'A,' but would take him again in a heartbeat." "... an excellent professor who is knowledgeable and passionate about his students" and is "very willing to help ... approachable and friendly."

Currently, Mark is a Professor of English at the University of Texas at San Antonio, primarily teaching in the area of early British literature and specializing in Chaucer and the literature of King Arthur. Mark began his teaching career immediately after completing his Ph.D. in 1982 at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. His teaching prowess has hardly gone unnoticed, as he was chosen for the Chancellor's Council Outstanding Teaching Award for the University of Texas System in 1990. And, again in 2000, Mark received the University of Texas at San Antonio President's Distinguished Teaching Award.

As important as teaching is to Mark, this consummate professional rightly takes his pride in his scholarly accomplishments. His peers recognized his scholarly research by choosing him to be president of the Texas Medieval Association for 1997-98 and, most recently, the Modern Language Association of America honored him with its Award for Distinguished Bibliography in 2003-04 (co-edited with Bege K. Bowers of Youngstown State University). To date, Mark has published three books, 24 scholarly articles and book chapters and 12 book reviews. He designed and maintains the Chaucer Bibliography Online. In addition, he has made 31 scholarly papers and presentations, and he has performed 19 acts of professional service, including chairing professional meetings; serving on various professional councils, boards and committees; and being a reader and reviewer for the Modern Language Association. He has also served his university for nearly 50 varied assignments, and he has contributed his time and expertise to many community groups, including high school classes and teachers.

Mark's career as a teacher and scholar really began, however, when "SNC helped me to realize that I wanted to be both a teacher and scholar." As a research assistant for the English

department, “I spent a good deal of time in the library as well as the classroom ... My teachers were great models.” Special kudos go to Bob Boyer and Ken Zahorski. They were such an influence and inspiration that Mark admits to teaching a course “in Fantasy Literature that I stole from them!”

Mark and his wife, Judith (a professor at Trinity University), spend their summers doing research and attending professorial conferences in England and Europe. For fun, they love to walk cross country in the British Isles, sometimes covering 30 or 40 miles in a weekend, stopping for the night at B&Bs (“near several pubs,” Mark adds). They also enjoy camping, especially in Wisconsin, while visiting friends and attending annual family reunions.

St. Norbert College

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