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Beloved Professor Emeritus William Chaney Remembered in May 18 Memorial Service

Posted on: May 15th, 2013 by Rick Peterson

A memorial service celebrating the life and distinguished career of Lawrence University Professor Emeritus of History William A. Chaney will be held Saturday, May 18 at 11 a.m. in the Lawrence Memorial Chapel.



President Jill Beck, 1985 graduate Jon Vanden Heuvel, Provost David Burrows, Professor of History Jerald Podair and Professor Emeritus of Government Minoo Adenwalla are scheduled to speak at the service.

In addition, Lawrence Conservatory of Music faculty members Kenneth Bozeman, John Daniel, Katherine Handford, Samantha George, Steven Spears, Jeffrey Stannard and sophomore Brandon Kreuder will perform during the service.

An iconic figure in the history of the college, Chaney died at his Appleton home March 15 at the age of 90.

A scholar of the Middle Ages, Chaney joined the Lawrence faculty in 1952 and was appointed the George McKendree Steele Professor of Western Culture in 1966. After officially retiring in 1999 after 47 years, he continued teaching one class First and Third Terms, including one last fall. His 61-years of teaching is the second-longest tenure in Lawrence's history.

He was honored in 1973 as the first recipient of Lawrence's Uhrig Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1973.



A legendary lecturer, Chaney captivated his audience, whether in the classroom, a Bjorklunden seminar room or at an alumni event.

For many years, he hosted “salons” at his home, inviting small groups of students for intellectual discussions accompanied by classical music.

He earned his bachelor’s and doctorate degrees at the University of California-Berkeley and was a Fellow of the Society of Fellows at Harvard University. He was the author of the book “The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England and contributed dozens of articles and reviews to professional journals.

Funds are being collected to bolster the William A. Chaney Fund for Excellence in History, an endowment that was established in 2011 to honor Professor Chaney. Funds from the endowment will be awarded for the first time to support Senior Experience projects, trips to archives, original research and other activities that immerse students in the real world of history.

Those who wish to contribute to this endowed fund may do so online or by calling 920-832-6557.