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## Excellence in Teaching Award Citation for J. Michael Hittle

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## University Award for Excellence in Teaching

### **J. Michael Hittle, David G. Ormsby Professor of History and Political Economy**

"Michael Hittle, for 27 years you have led Lawrentians to explore the complex contours of the Byzantine Empire, the tortuous trajectory of Russian history, and the subtle strategies of historiography. From the first year of your appointment, you have been hailed for the 'command of material, capacity for incisive analysis, [and] imagination and wit' that make you the model of the engaged and effective teacher. Through your articles and book on the Russian city, you have also taught your fellow historians at home and abroad, and taught them well.

Your pedagogical prowess is widely regarded by undergraduates, especially your superior talent as a teacher of writing, which is valued too by the presenter of this award, who profited from an eight-year tutorial in that subject during your tenure in Sampson House. Your contributions as dean to the teaching mission of the college are many and varied, among them the Wriston Art Center, on which we collaborated some years ago. The service you rendered in the construction of that building you render still: I accept willingly the plaudits of those who love it, and refer to you the complaints of those who do not.

That your colleagues encouraged and embraced your return to Main Hall reflects the esteem in which you are held as a teacher and a scholar by those who know your true professional commitments. It is a sign of your prescience that in 1988 you anticipated your return to the seminar room and lecture hall by devoting your sabbatical year to investigations of ethnic rivalries and the role of women in the then Soviet Union, issues that have since become salient as Russia and the several Slavic states have been sundered by the most recent and unexpected revolution. And you have extended your teaching repertoire in new and exciting directions this year with your course in Contemporary History, which is but your most recent effort to help us make sense of and pay heed to our world and the patterns that have shaped it.

While your sartorial splendor in the neckwear department may provoke rude remarks from the college president, your contributions to the common cause of the college provide reasons for celebration and congratulations from grateful students and colleagues. It is on their behalf as well as my own that I am delighted to honor you with the 1993 Excellent Teaching Award."

*Citation read by President Richard Warch at Commencement, 1993*