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Young Teacher Award Citation for Timothy Spurgin

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Young Teacher Award

Timothy A. Spurgin, Assistant Professor of English

"Timothy A. Spurgin, you are a teacher whose love for your subject is as palpable as your commitment to your students. For you, literature is inescapably personal, layered and nuanced in its conveyance of the authors' special messages. And learning is equally personal, and enterprise, whether undertaken singly or in a full classroom, demanding absolute dedication of the student to the hard work of discovery.

That dedication is what you have instilled in those who have explored with you the riches of English literature. Your rigorous standards and high expectations are no secret to them; and you have not only inspired them to welcome the challenge, you have taught them to relish it. Your students are drawn into the works they read and discuss, but even more, they are grateful that you have raised their own expectations of themselves. Not every professor is compared to musical theater, but one student said you were 'better than *Cats*.' Another wrote perhaps the ultimate tribute: 'he has shown me what type of teacher I would like to be.' Who else would have the courage to offer a two-hour session on the poetry of Yeats to a group of high school seniors? Who else would have had those prospective Lawrentians clamoring for more?

John Ruskin observed that 'education is leading human souls to what is best, and making what is best out of them; and these two objects are always attainable together, and by the same means.' Tim Spurgin, you have thus helped your students develop not only as scholars, but also as citizens, in the best tradition of liberal education. We are pleased to recognize you today as an outstanding young teacher on the Lawrence faculty."

Citation read by President Richard Warch at Commencement, 1993