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Honorary Degree Award Citation for George Smalley

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Honorary Degree Awarded to Retiring Faculty

George W. Smalley, Professor of Slavic Languages and Literature

"George Smalley, you came to Lawrence in 1964 from south Chicago and the U.S. Army, fiercely determined to teach the enemy: suburbia. You were equipped with Prague School linguistics, the Russian language, and an experience of practical work. Chosen to deliver the graduation address in 1969, you flayed the suburbanite-hippie culture of the sixties Lawrentians, then laid out the basics: 'Don't expect life to provide you with perpetual fun. If you're full, have a warm place to go in the winter, someone to love, something interesting to work on and are not in pain, then consider yourself blessed.'

Your legacy to us, however, is not purely critical. Like that nineteenth-century Dartmouth teacher of German, whose professorial title included the phrase 'and any other languages he chooses to teach,' you have ranged widely in your linguistic reach. In the main, however, your levers were the single stem linguistic system, all Eastern Europe as a language lab on eleven Slavic trips, the whole tradition of grand opera and a stunning gift for emotional blackmail. Applying these more successfully than Sisyphus you have rolled, pushed, and bludgeoned three generations of students from the vacuum of Levittown to careers on Alaska's Seward Peninsula, in Nepal, Baku, Burundi, and even Milwaukee.

For anyone foolish enough to follow in your track, carry the shovel after the camel charge, experience the woes of the henchman, your greatest charm was an absolute passion for your work; and your work was the awakening of the bored to beauty. An elegant grammatical solution, the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, Mimi's cold hand, or the icy peak of Kazbek in the Caucasus: all of this you discovered, gave, produced before our very eyes as a magician produces silver coins from an otherwise tin ear. You offered your students the whole round world--not to play with but to work at. You kissed the Russian earth when the Lawrence trip first came there, in 1969, and made us realize an earth worth tenderness. You waved your hand and demonstrated, most palatably, the force of utter commitment to culture, to many cultures. A legend to those who have been moved and changed by you, and in appreciation for your voracious love of learning, you have our best wishes as you tackle your retirement project to master the Turkish languages.

By the authority vested in me, I now confer upon you the degree of Master of Arts, *ad eundem*, and admit you to its rights, its privileges, and its obligations."

Citation read by President Richard Warch at Commencement, 1996