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# Honorary Degree Award Citation for William Chaney

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## Honorary Degree Awarded to Retiring Faculty

### William A. Chaney, Professor of History

"William A. Chaney, you have served Lawrence since the mind of man runneth not to the contrary, and this morning we celebrate and commemorate your long and illustrious career on, as you would want us to know, the Feast Day of St. Anthony of Padua, known to his contemporaries as 'the hammer of the heretics.' In the nearly half century that you have taught here, you have garnered many honors and distinguished titles: Faculty Marshal, George McKendree Steele Professor of Western Culture, Outstanding Educator of America, Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, London, and Fellow of the Harvard Society of Fellows, to name a few. Colleagues and students, however, remember you best by the epithet *Lawrence Today* conferred upon you some years back: 'pillar of Main Hall.' For indeed, you, who have been a mainstay of the History Department and the Humanities, have become as integral a part of the architecture of the college as that venerable building you inhabit. Like the Chaney Oak planted in your honor by its side, you will long shade this campus.

Indeed your name and legacy are already legendary. The length of your career at Lawrence exceeds that of any other full-time member of the faculty in the history of the institution, but it is the impact of your teaching, not its span, that is most memorable. Over your years on the faculty and at the lectern, your courses in ancient and medieval European history became a staple of the Lawrence curriculum, and it was a rare Lawrentian who failed to take at least one 'Chaney' course. It could be said of you, as it was of George McKendree Steele, Lawrence's third president and namesake of your chair: 'His classroom was a place of large horizons.' For in imparting to generations of Lawrentians your vision of the 'grandeur' and 'glory' of Western Civilization, you have excited them with a set of ideals as much as facts, giving them a high measure toward which to reach. Those who have enjoyed the company of your hospitality have, in turn, learned to relish the stimulation and joy of good conversation and great music.

Scholarship too has been a hallmark of your Lawrence years. In addition to your many articles and reviews, your book on the *Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England* remains a major interpretive work--listed even in that most contemporary of venues, Amazon.com. Many of your students have gone on to the best of graduate schools and produced outstanding works of scholarship on their own. In them your ideals as well as your fame endure. You count yourself as the intellectual heir of the fifteenth-century scholar Marsilio Ficura; in future centuries, there will be those who count themselves your intellectual progeny. Like King Arthur, whose feats you have so often recounted in class, you now depart your Camelot, but like Arthur, *rex quandam, rex futurus*, you will never really be gone, merely transformed from he who was our teacher to he who will be our teacher.

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, 1999*