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# Honorary Degree Award Citation for Frederick Gaines

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## **Honorary Degree Awarded to Retiring Faculty**

### **Frederick E. Gaines, Professor of Theatre and Drama, holder of James G. and Ethel M. Barber Professorship in Theatre and Drama**

"Fred Gaines, since 1977--and for the past thirteen years as the James G. and Ethel M. Barber Professor of Theatre and Drama--you have served the students of Lawrence University and the greater Lawrence community with untiring commitment in the classroom and on the stage. As chair of the department and as director of numerous productions, you created countless memorable evenings of theatre for our collective edification and pleasure.

Whenever you are asked, you always describe yourself first as a playwright, and indeed you have been a prolific one. You have received numerous fellowships to support your efforts and your works have been produced at Lawrence and beyond, including at the Theatre of the First Amendment in Washington, the Center Stage Theatre in Baltimore, the Children's Theatre of Minneapolis, and the Outagamie Museum just down College Avenue. And you have also been an actor, at least on one occasion under the direction of your predecessor, Ted Cloak. But above all, you have been a teacher, mentor, and friend to the students under your tutelage.

Throughout your tenure here, you have sought not only to expose students to the rich history of theatre, but also to engage them in the dynamic and compelling theatrical world of the present. You have enabled them to participate in and feel connected to all facets of the theatrical arts and have given generations of Lawrentians a sense of both place and purpose in Stansbury and Cloak. The students and alumni who gathered a few months ago to celebrate your work at Lawrence and your influence on their lives gave the greatest and most telling testimony to what you have accomplished and what you mean to them. One of them wrote that you did not so much teach classes as exist within them and with your students and that the classes flew by 'because they didn't seem like classes, but [like] total immersion in a world where theatre mattered.' Another remembers the thrill of being involved with original works--some of your own creation--and a third recalls how you treated students as colleagues, and thus 'made us want to live up to that honor.' That you believed in your students and gave them your trust is perhaps your most lasting legacy.

You have said that you always felt that you did not work for an institution but with and for individuals, and their gratitude has surely repaid you in full measure for all that you have to them. Many have gone onto careers in the theatre, but your influence extends beyond those to the many others for whom theatre with you was a central part of their liberal education. You have given time and talent to other projects and programs at the college beyond the theatre, serving for more than ten years as the faculty advisor to the Black Organization of Students and for a time as assistant swim coach. Your receipt of the Babcock Award in 1981 is but one evidence of the appreciation students have had for your contributions to their lives.

Many students and alumni have voiced the hope and expectation that in retirement you will continue to be a presence at Lawrence and Lawrentians, sentiments I freely echo today. 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, 2000*