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Excellence in Teaching Award Citation for Karen Carr

Lawrence University

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University Award for Excellence in Teaching

Karen Carr, Professor of Religious Studies

"Karen Carr, you came to Lawrence from Stanford University, where you earned a Ph.D. in religious studies. You quickly established yourself as an extremely talented scholar and teacher, helping students to understand the history of Christian thought and modern Western religious traditions. Your success at teaching students the nature of early Christianity and the complexities of such thinkers as Nietzsche and Kierkegaard made it clear that you have a special ability to take the most difficult ideas and make them come alive, without ever oversimplifying them. You quickly moved through the faculty ranks at Lawrence, becoming in short order an associate professor and then a professor. At each stage of your career your progress has been marked by a close connection between careful scholarship and inspired teaching.

Your teaching success has led to high praise from both students and faculty. Your classes are described as well-organized, interesting, and fun. Students state that you are extremely skilled at making difficult concepts seem so clear that they create both excitement and understanding. You are skilled at asking interesting questions that lead to deep and sophisticated analysis. Students also say that you spend good class time relating concepts in your courses to larger themes. This is critically important; if the mark of a good liberal education is being able to use knowledge to understand what is vital for the human experience, you have clearly been successful with your students. Finally, your students take great comfort in knowing that you care deeply about them, and about what they learn. They know that you will spend time both inside and outside of class making sure that they understand and that they become individuals with the opportunity for lives of intellectual vitality and fulfillment.

For your intelligence, clarity, and ability to contribute so richly to the liberal education of Lawrence's students, we are pleased to honor you today with the 2006 Award for Excellent Teaching."

Citation read by President Jill Beck at Commencement, 2006