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Excellence in Scholarship Award Citation for Bruce Pourciau

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Excellence in Scholarship Award

Bruce Pourciau, Professor of Mathematics

“Bruce Pourciau, your thoughtful and stimulating scholarly contributions have been an important part of the intellectual life of Lawrence for almost 35 years, starting with your appointment to the faculty in 1976. You came to Lawrence after receiving an undergraduate degree from Brown University in 1971 and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Mathematics from the University of California at San Diego in 1976. After joining the Lawrence faculty you were promoted to the rank of Associate Professor of Mathematics in 1983 and to Professor in 1993. You are known as a person whose precise and sophisticated thinking brings clarity to the most complex problems and situations. Your concern for the accurate use of language is a hallmark of your scholarship, as well as a source of frank commentary on the writings of others.

In your career, you have published more than 31 articles that span the areas of pure mathematics, the history of science, and the philosophy of mathematics. You have received both national and international recognition for your analyses of the work of Isaac Newton. Among other articles on Newton, you have published papers entitled, “The Importance of Being Equivalent: Two Models for One-Body Motion,” and “Newton’s Interpretation of Newton’s Second Law.” These papers have been described as “models of clarity and elegance” and you have been called “The authority on questions of rigor in Newton’s mathematics.” In addition to your work on Newton, you have published highly regarded works in pure mathematics, including “Global Properties of Proper Lipschitzian Maps.” The breadth and depth of your work are outstanding, and establish you as a person of great intellectual achievement.

In recognition of your many scholarly contributions, and in anticipation of many more to come, I am pleased to present you with the 2009 Award for Excellence in Scholarship.”

Citation read by President Jill Beck at Commencement, 2009