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## Raybin Named 2011 Illinois Professor of the Year

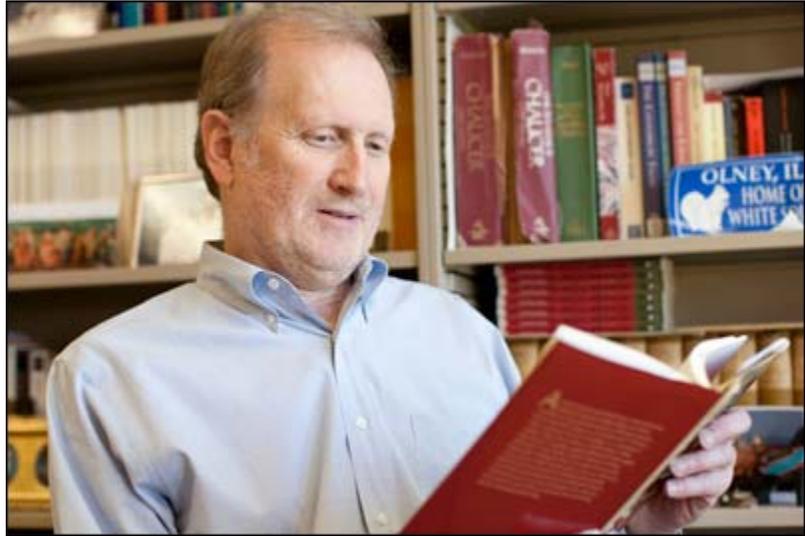
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Eastern Illinois University's David Raybin has been named the 2011 Illinois Professor of the Year by The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education.

The U.S. Professors of the Year program is the only national program to recognize excellence in undergraduate teaching and mentoring. This year, 27 state winners were selected from nearly 300 top professors in the United States.

Raybin was honored at an awards luncheon today at the Newseum in Washington, D.C. A ceremony will be held on the EIU campus in January.

Raybin, who joined the EIU Department of English in 1981, teaches courses at all levels. He has received numerous EIU awards, including nine Faculty Excellence Awards, the Dean's Award for Service to Continuing Education, and the Distinguished Honors Faculty Award. He has also served as the Faculty Laureate, and in 2011, he was named EIU's Distinguished Professor, the university's highest award of excellence.



David Raybin, an EIU English professor, has been named Illinois Professor of the Year.

"My guiding philosophy is to strive to engage every student in the room and to assume the best in each one," Raybin said. "I have never wavered from my commitment to treating each class as a group of individual learners. It is because I try to motivate each student that I am able to be successful. It is why I love to teach."

Since 2001, he and his wife, fellow medievalist Susanna Fein, have served as co-editors of *The Chaucer Review*, the leading journal in the field.

In 2008 and 2010, Raybin and Fein were awarded major grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities to direct four-week Summer Seminars for School Teachers on Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" in England. The grant has been awarded again for 2012.

Raybin's collaboration with the Illinois Humanities Council has spanned two decades, during which he has organized the annual EIU Literature Conference, in which 50-100 teachers discuss great books and writers; directed two intensive weekend seminars on Chaucer, one for school teachers and the other for librarians; and served as a consultant at external reviews of IHC educational activities.



David Raybin

"There are those who call college an escape from the 'real world,'" Raybin said. "I disagree, ardently. I protest against a definition of the real that sees the only practical life as entailing a deadening job from which one comes home to slouch before a screen.

"I embrace an alternative vision of a reality in which one's mind is active and engaged: absorbed in a freely chosen task, devoted passionately to a cause, fascinated by an idea, bewitched by a good book.

"My students' four years of college may well engender the most real experiences of their lives, from the deliciously intoxicating to the horrendously depressing, with all the shades in between. The value in a collegiate experience lies in how one approaches these years. My classroom instructs students to approach education with intensity and joy."

A current student, Katelyn R. Pfaff, praised Raybin "as not only an outstanding professor but as a warm, charismatic, intelligent human being who has made an irreversible impact on my life."

"Everything is subject to discussion and question, and the positive, creative attitude with which he encourages his students to approach literature is life-changing," Pfaff said. "His excitement for the material we read and discuss is overwhelming and we cannot help but get sucked into his whirlwind of passion and fun. It is in this whirlwind that I have learned to be scholarly yet passionate, professional yet open minded."

Amanda Veale, a former student who graduated with an English degree from EIU in 2009, said Raybin "offers his knowledge through lively discussions, the kind of electric discourse that extends beyond the classroom, into the life of the hallways and dormitories, and into the passions and pursuits of students long after the semester's end."

Ruth Hoberman, a colleague of Raybin's for two decades, said he is "quite simply, the most talented, dynamic, and challenging teacher I know."

"They (students) love him because he is challenging, and because he'll go to amazing lengths to involve students in the learning process," Hoberman said. "Just a few months ago one told me she wasn't all that crazy about medieval literature, but she just had to take another class with Dr. Raybin."

"As chair of the Department Personnel Committee for five years, I frequently saw Dr. Raybin's student evaluations: they are invariably at the very top of the scale. Students repeatedly use words like 'growth,' 'stretching,' and 'challenging' to describe their experiences in his classes."

For more information on Raybin's accomplishments, please see <http://www.eiu.edu/english/faculty.php?id=draybin>.