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# UNH English Professor To Deliver Lindberg Lecture On Work Of Donald Graves April 21

April 5, 2011



Tom Newkirk, professor of English at the University of New Hampshire Photo Credit: UNH Photographic Services Photographer: Perry A. Smith

DURHAM, N.H. – Tom Newkirk, professor of English at the University of New Hampshire and recipient of the 2010 Lindberg Award, will deliver the Lindberg Lecture Thursday, April 21, 2011. The highest award of the College of Liberal Arts, the Lindberg Award is given annually to an outstanding teacher and scholar in the college.

The 2010 Lindberg Award winner, Newkirk's lecture, "Tale of the Tape: Donald Graves and the Revolution in Children's Writing," begins at 1 p.m. in 110 Murkland Hall. The lecture is free and open to the public.

Newkirk's lecture will focus on the seminal work of Don Graves, UNH professor emeritus of early childhood education and former director of the UNH Writing Laboratory who passed away in 2010. Graves is a pioneer in literacy education and changed the way writing is taught across the United States and the English-speaking world. In 1983, Graves published "Writing: Teachers & Children at Work," based on a two-year study of elementary school children in Atkinson. His research revealed writing as a natural human need for self-expression and a way to develop and hone critical thinking skills.



UNH recently has uncovered the video recordings that Graves made from 1978 to 1980 during his historic Atkinson study of children's writing. "By any measure this has been one of the most influential studies in writing done in this country -- hugely influential in Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. I will show clips from the study to illuminate what I believe are the lasting contributions from his work," Newkirk says.


Newkirk's scholarly pursuits focus on literacy, composition, and the teaching of writing. He has authored four books, including the recent "Holding on to Good Ideas in a Time of Bad Ones: Six Literacy Principles Worth Fighting For" (Heinemann, 2009), in which he defends the skills and judgment of teachers against the "cult of efficiency" represented by top-down mandates and prescribed testing.


While interested in literacy at all levels, Newkirk has shown a particular interest over the last decade in boys and literacy. He has published multiple journal articles on the subject as well as "Misreading Masculinity: Boys, Literacy, and Popular Culture" (Heinemann, 2002), a book that advocates harnessing popular culture's influence to positive effect in boys' learning. In addition to his authored works, Newkirk has co-authored, edited, or co-edited another 11 books and published scores of journal articles and book chapters. His most recent co-edited volume is a homage to the late Donald Murray, the former UNH faculty member who was himself dedicated to the teaching of writing.


His scholarly focus has resulted in significant contributions to programmatic offerings at the university. Newkirk designed the Ph.D. program in composition, and developed and administers three innovative programs that seek to advance literacy.

At both the undergraduate and graduate levels, students consistently praise Newkirk for his enthusiasm, knowledge, expertly led class discussions, and respect for his students. At the undergraduate level, such comments as "Professor Newkirk did an amazing job," "We have the best discussions," and "He's pretty much the man" are not uncommon. At the graduate level, "Tom Newkirk is an amazing professor" and "Professor Newkirk is one of the nicest, most interested, and dedicated professors I have ever had" are the sentiments one typically finds.



  
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"Professor Newkirk is an equally committed and accomplished teacher. His courses are integral to the graduate composition program, and he keeps his connections to undergraduate students alive by regularly teaching first-year and other writing courses, and instructing senior English teaching majors in composition pedagogy. He has demonstrated that he is most deserving of the Lindberg Award. The college is proud to count him as one of its own," Fuld said.

Newkirk holds a bachelor's degree from Oberlin College, a master's from Boston State College, and a Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin. He was appointed to the UNH faculty in 1977.

In keeping with tradition, the Lindberg Award celebration will include the announcement of the 2011 winner, who is Charlotte Witt, professor of philosophy and humanities. Witt holds a bachelor's degree from Swarthmore College and a Ph.D. from Georgetown University. She was appointed to the UNH faculty in 1987.

"Professor Witt has demonstrated that she possesses the highest qualities of scholarship and teaching, and is most deserving of the Lindberg Award. She has proved to be a consistently productive scholar with wide-ranging interests and a dedicated teacher praised for her dynamism and command of subject," said Kenneth Fuld, dean of the UNH College of Liberal Arts.

An internationally known specialist on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Witt has published two books in the field, "Ways of Being: Potentiality and Actuality in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*" (Cornell University Press, 2003) and "Substance and Essence in Aristotle" (Cornell University Press, 1994). Witt also is a recognized feminist theorist with an important voice in contemporary feminist conversation. Her book "The *Metaphysics of Gender*," will be published later this year by Oxford University Press.

Students have recognized her excellent teaching, praising her enthusiasm, command of material, ability to explain complex ideas and lead discussions, and stimulating nature of her courses.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling more than 12,200 undergraduate and 2,200 graduate students.

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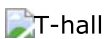
A photograph can be download at: <http://www.unh.edu/news/img/newkirk.jpg>

Caption: Tom Newkirk, professor of English at the University of New Hampshire

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