4-19-2007

UNH Professor Wins Prestigious Guggenheim, Radcliffe Fellowships

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DURHAM, N.H. -- David Frankfurter, professor of history and religious studies at the University of New Hampshire, has been named a 2007 Guggenheim Fellow, an honor that puts him the company of scores of Nobel, Pulitzer and other prize winners.

Frankfurter will use his $39,000 Guggenheim Fellowship prize to research and write a book on Christianization in late antique Egypt. He also has won a 2007-2008 Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study Fellowship prize in the amount of $60,000, which also will support his research and book.

“I am delighted but not at all surprised that Professor Frankfurter has been awarded these prestigious fellowships. Guggenheim represents the highest standards of American recognition of scholarship, and the Radcliffe Fellowship allows him to follow in the fine tradition of research in the Humanities. This happy combination of awards will support the outstanding research he is doing, building on a very impressive foundation in the roots of religious history. I am very proud that he is part of our community,” said Marilyn Hoskin, dean of the College of Liberal Arts.

Frankfurter’s research will follow classic studies of Christianization in Africa and Central and South America and will build on the historical/thematic approach to Egyptian religion that Frankfurter took in his 1998 book “Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance” (Princeton University Press).

“I want to take a new approach to the Christianization of Egypt -- how its cultural traditions were transformed in the late antique period to assimilate Christianity. I am especially interested in redefining the phenomena once called ‘pagan survivals’ -- when Egyptian symbols and themes from the time of the Pharaohs reemerge in Christian guise. The Egyptian ankh symbol becomes a popular form for the cross; Jesus appears as the captain of a boat manned by saints; and ancient procedures for getting written responses from the gods become redeployed for shrines of Christian saints,” Frankfurter said.

Guggenheim Fellows are appointed on the basis of distinguished achievement in the past and exceptional promise for future accomplishment. The 2007 Fellowship winners include 189 artists, scholars and scientists selected from almost 2,800 applicants for awards totaling $7,600,000. Decisions are based on recommendations from hundreds of expert advisors and are approved by the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation’s Board of Trustees.

What distinguishes the Guggenheim Fellowship program from all others is the wide range in interest, age, geography, and institution of those it selects as it considers applications in 78 different fields, from the natural sciences to the creative arts. The new Fellows include writers, playwrights, painters, sculptors, photographers, film makers, choreographers, physical and biological scientists, social scientists, and scholars in the humanities.
Since 1925, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation has granted more than $256 million in fellowships to more than 16,250 individuals. Past fellows include Ansel Adams, W. H. Auden, Aaron Copland, Martha Graham, Langston Hughes, Henry Kissinger, Vladimir Nabokov, Isamu Noguchi, Linus Pauling, Philip Roth, Paul Samuelson, Wendy Wasserstein, Derek Walcott, James Watson, and Eudora Welty.

The Radcliffe Institute Fellowship Program is a highly competitive program that provides yearlong residencies to award-winning writers, artists, scientists and other scholars. Past fellows include Pulitzer Prize-winning writers Geraldine Brooks and Caroline Elkins; geophysicist and planetary scientist Maria Zuber; historian Darlene Clark Hine; anthropologist husband-and-wife team Jean and John L. Comaroff; and philosopher Sari Nusseibeh.