

NEWS RELEASE

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Two Leavenworth Professors Dedicate Careers to Education, Earn University of Saint Mary Top Honor

Dr. Terry Brungardt and Dr. George Steger to Retire, Conferred Professors Emeritus

(Leavenworth, Kan.)— While they each took a different path, the road that lead Dr. Terry Brungardt and Dr. George Steger to the University of Saint Mary has had at least one thing in common—a decorated career with honors and awards. The two, each retiring at the end of the school year, will receive one final distinction, being conferred professors emeritus. The life-long recognition is bestowed to tenured faculty upon their retirement with at least 15-years of service to the University of Saint Mary.

Brungardt and Steger were each officially given distinction at Spring Convocation, May 3, an annual awards ceremony built to honor students and faculty. Very few in the community, however, thought reaching the university's top honor was ever in question.

“Terry and George are two of our most beloved professors. For all their dedication, time and effort to the students and community at Saint Mary, it's the least we could do to give something back to both of them,” USM President Sister Diane Steele said. “They will, of course, be sorely missed by our community.”

Brungardt and Steger will also be honored on the university's biggest stage for graduates, alumni, family and friends to see—the 2005 commencement ceremony at 1 p.m. Saturday, May 14 in McGilley Field House. Commencement will be their last official function with Saint Mary.

Professor emeritus status is a life-long rank conferred to retiring professors by the Board of Trustees on recommendation of the academic vice president, president and academic affairs committee of the Board. Tenured faculty who have at least 15-years years of full-time distinguished service are considered for the honor.

Brungardt retires after 35 years of service to Saint Mary. He leaves as the chair of the psychology and sociology department. Brungardt received his bachelor's degree from Fort Hays State, and later a master's degree from the University of Kansas. He came to Saint Mary originally in 1965 as a sociology instructor, but left in 1967 to pursue a Ph.D. from KU. He returned to Saint Mary in 1972, where he has remained ever since. He still hopes to remain active as much as he can in the Saint Mary community.

“I would like to hear from all my former students, and their successes,” he said. “It's been a great ride.”

Brungardt was particularly fond of educating prison inmates at the federal penitentiary. Before funding for the program was cut, Saint Mary worked with the federal pen to educate inmates in hopes that an education would improve their ability to succeed upon being paroled.

“I remember one night there was a thunderstorm when we were at the pen,” he said. “The power went out and the back-up generator didn't kick-in. Somehow, in the dark without a flashlight, I was out of there in about 30 seconds,” he said. Looking back, Brungardt said the prison program was one of his most cherished career memories. “It was quite a challenge, but quite rewarding as well,” Brungardt said.

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A career highlight, Brungardt co-authored a textbook, "*Juvenile Misconduct and Delinquency*," in 1982. As his legacy to Saint Mary, Brungardt and his wife Karen, Leavenworth, have established the Dr. Terrance Brungardt Endowed Scholarship, which will be awarded annually to an upper-level student planning to work in the criminal justice field. Brungardt is also a Sullivan Award for Excellence in Teaching winner, the university's top distinction for full-time faculty.

Steger took a far different road to Saint Mary. Chair of the history and political science department, Steger's career at Saint Mary was the second of his life. He spent 26 years in the U.S. Army working primarily as a Russian intelligence specialist. A Vietnam War veteran, retired full-Colonel and former Battalion Commander, Steger looked for a completely different challenge. He found his calling at Saint Mary.

"After a career oriented toward war and defense, I wanted a new one aimed at making peace," Steger said. "When I retired, we decided to stay in the Leavenworth area because our kids were still in school. Saint Mary seemed like the perfect place for me. I've always liked history and international affairs, and I had some experience of the world to share."

Promised a position on the full-time history and political science department once he completed his doctorate, Steger worked as an adjunct instructor for seven years while finishing up his Ph.D. from KU. He also has a master's degree in Government from University of Indiana, and a bachelor's degree in English from Spring Hill College, Mobile, Ala. Upon completing his Ph.D., Steger spent the next 22 years as a full-time professor, and eventually took over as chair of the department. Steger, too, won the Sullivan Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1991.

"I've been involved in this school almost totally. It's never boring," Steger added. "I love this place and I love its people. It's a great memory."

Steger said he plans to head to the sandy beaches of Mexico after commencement, his last official day on duty with Saint Mary. He and his wife do plan to maintain their "post" in rural Leavenworth County, though.

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