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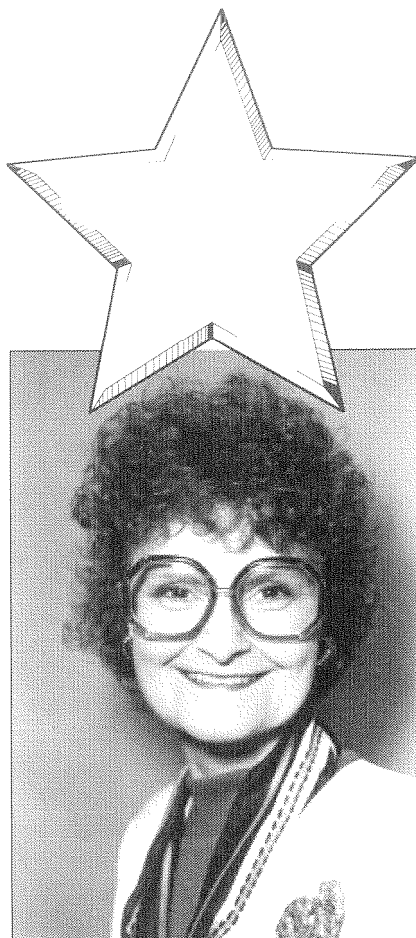
# DR. JO ALLEN BRADHAM

## 1992 DISTINGUISHED TEACHING AWARD RECIPIENT

**Kenneth P. Gilliam, Ph.D.**  
Associate Professor of Economics

**F**ollowing the tradition established in 1982, we have again chosen to honor a faculty member for outstanding performance as a classroom teacher. Criteria for the recipient continue to emphasize the importance of creativity, the nurturing of individuality, and the presence of a model in both teaching and scholarship for students to emulate. This year's honoree, Dr. Jo Allen Bradham, follows a proud line of recipients by receiving the eleventh annual award for distinguished teaching.

Dr. Bradham has a rich history of classroom experience in her specialties which include English literature, poetry, and the execution of the written and spoken word. She is described by colleagues as being enthusiastic, well-prepared, and highly organized. However, there are also elements of her teaching that transcend these characteristics of all good teachers. These are the qualities which leave lasting legacies of inspiration for both students and colleagues. Many would covet her ability to energize a classroom through the advocacy of her beloved subject. She has the ability to maintain a linkage between herself, the subject, and her students. This is a personal and spiritual bonding between student and teacher that results in nothing less than synergetic responsiveness. She has the ability to empower words both visually and musically in a way that communicates the dynamics of the written word



and the expressive quality of the poetic verse, while preserving the interpretive freedom of each new group of scholars who engage in dialogue over the classics.

To try to hear the inner voice of teachers and their teaching, the committee charged with selecting the finalists for the Distinguished Teaching Award asks each of the semi-final-

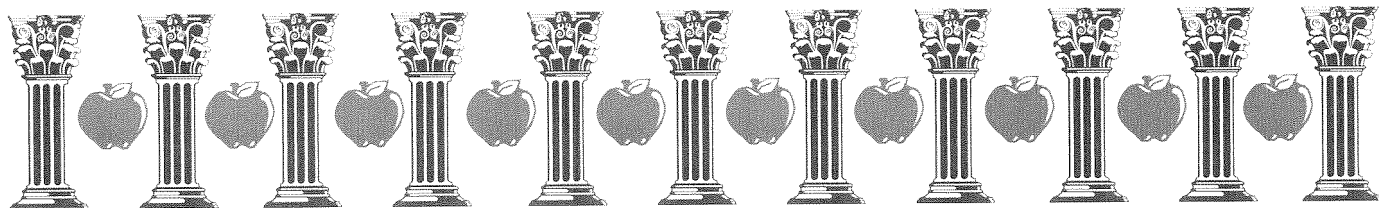
ists to submit a narrative on teaching effectiveness. I have chosen to reproduce much of the statement Dr. Bradham presented to the committee because I believe it conveys a potpourri of communication skills, narrative art, and experience in teaching. Dr. Bradham wrote:

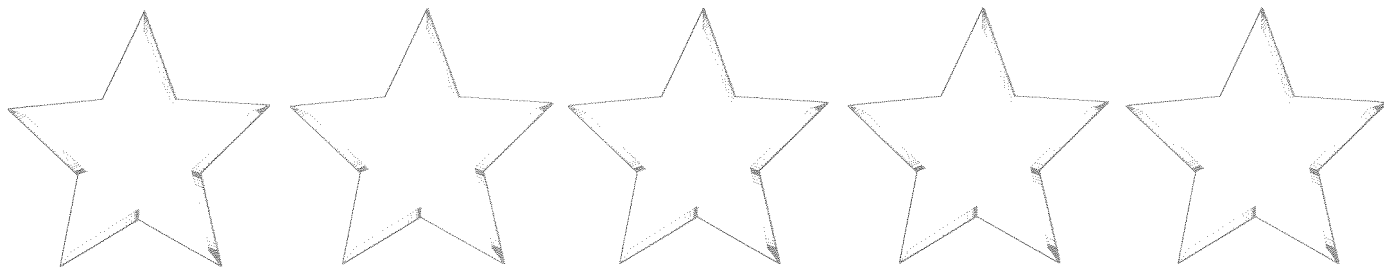
"A narrative on teaching effectiveness is like an ad in the personals: a quick proclamation of one's unmatched and highly desirable virtues. The test for truth in the personals is time; similarly, the test for truth in narratives on teaching is time.

"The only measure of teaching effectiveness is the retrospective, not the Scantronic. How do you measure accomplishments in teaching? You look at people's eyes and know something is happening. On campus or on the streets beyond it, you meet a person who says, because of your course X number of years ago, I can do so and so. Or because of your course, I realized I had a mind. Or you helped me when I needed it. Only things like this measure effectiveness in teaching, and no form accommodates such material.

"But for the occasion I will write a personal (in the jargon of the personals): 'ADPTT seeks class. Objective: growing, enjoying, learning.' Since the code of this personal is less well known than that of the amorous personal, here is the key: Articulate, Dedicated Professional Tends Talent (ADPTT).

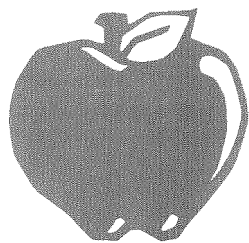
"I work at discovering and cultivating talent. It surfaces in papers, in questions, in the body language of the person who stays after class to chat, in eyes. The





talent takes many forms. In a few cases, genuine brilliance declares itself. But many have a talent for hard work, the application of which reaffirms the triumph of the race-winning tortoise. Talents are as various as their possessors, and I try in all interactions—in class and out—to keep my antennae poised to pick up the signals. Since a long-range investment strategy, not sweating the short, pays in the talent market, I keep investing in talent—year after year, class after class, person after person. Eventually the phone rings, the letter comes, the off-print arrives, the comment surfaces; in all is the common thesis: thanks for finding and nudging me. Many times, from the least expected source, has come the dividend: 'I want to be to someone what you have been to me.' I think of the letters and the comments as the visible harvest, for to mix my metaphors in a most unprofessional way, I see teaching effectiveness not just as the long-term investment of the economist but as the timeless task of the gardener. I plant and, if necessary, stake and tie up. The harvest takes care of itself.

"Tending talent translates into effective teaching, and I have seen a good harvest which is now doubling. Students whom I taught when I was starting out are now college professors. They send me their students and endorse me by their experience and performance. When three generations of us are together, I have the long view of effectiveness in action—that's better than a dozen impetuous marks on a machine-graded form.



**“ ‘Keep the flame’ may sound like a truism, but there is nothing wrong with the truth that learning is a light.”**

"To cultivate talent, I witness in class that what I am doing matters greatly, and I attempt in all classes to model a striking use of language and ideas so that students will see in action the material they read on paper. In abbreviated form, my philosophy of teaching comes from the following: Keep the faith, the fury, the flair, the flame, the facts, the friendship. The first of these, keeping the faith, sounds my belief in what I am doing, in the content itself, and in the connection with the great community of time and minds with which letters and learning connect us. The second, fury, reminds me that a passionate intensity—as long as it stops short of zeal—creates interest and invites participation. Flair matters because with undergraduates, the medium is the message, a statement that does not devalue the message. Since it is my privilege to teach the great works, I am obligated to work on a high level. 'Keep the flame' may sound like a truism, but there is nothing wrong with the truth that learning is a light. I have to say so in manner, example, and tone, not just in words and not just in class. Keeping facts demands solid preparation for every class. The product is too valuable to breakdown in delivery; therefore, I have to have my facts in place and ready. Keeping friendship means simply that teaching goes on in the office and in extracurricular affairs; it goes on after a class is over.

"I depend on this pattern of faith, fury, flair, flame, facts, and friendship to shape me up as ADPTT (a portfolio personal) and to inspire others." 