

Agendum
Oakland University
Board of Trustees Formal Session
April 4, 2007

APPOINTMENT OF DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR

A Recommendation

1. **Division and Department:** Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost

2. **Introduction:** In 1988 the Board of Trustees (Board) created the faculty rank of Distinguished Professor. Upon recommendation of the President and Provost, the Board may appoint individuals to the rank of Distinguished Professor for the duration of the individual's active service at Oakland University. Appointments to distinguished professorships are based on the candidate's efforts and accomplishments in the areas of teaching, intellectual contributions and service, giving consideration to the programmatic and institutional setting of the candidate's work at Oakland and the nature of the candidate's assignments and responsibilities, the quality of the candidates accomplishments and the relation of all the foregoing factors to the objectives of the area or departments, the goals of the college or school, and the mission and long range vision of the University.

A selection committee of his peers recommended Ronald C. Finucane, Professor of History, for approval to Dr. Virinder K. Moudgil, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, to the appointment of Distinguished Professor.

3. **Previous Board Action:** The Board has periodically appointed individuals to the rank of Distinguished Professor at Formal Sessions of the Board.

4. **Budget Implications:** A one-time salary stipend of \$2,500 plus an annual supplies and services allocation of \$1,500, up to five years, for the Distinguished Professor will be paid from the Provost's Discretionary Fund.

5. **Educational Implications:** Recognition of a distinguished faculty member's long-standing dedication to the mission of the institution reinforces a culture that is devoted to excellence in teaching, research, creative endeavor and service.

Appointment of Distinguished Professor
Oakland University
Board of Trustees Formal Session
April 4, 2007
Page 2

6. **Personnel Implications:** None.

7. **Recommendation:**

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees approves the appointment of Ronald C. Finucane, Professor of History, to the rank of Distinguished Professor, effective August 15, 2007.

8. **Attachments:** A. Biography of Ronald C. Finucane.

Submitted to the President
on _____, 2007 by

Virinder K. Moudgil
Vice President for
Academic Affairs and Provost

Recommended on _____, 2007
to the Board for Approval by

Gary D. Russi
President

Attachment A

Biography

Ronald C. Finucane, Professor of History, is an internationally recognized expert in medieval history. Regarded as an outstanding scholar by his colleagues at Oakland University, he has also been described as one of the foremost medieval historians of his generation. With four major book publications to date, and nearly two dozen articles and book chapters, he has established a reputation as a scholar that has brought distinction to Oakland University. His dedication to rigorous teaching and service to his department and the wider university community merit the rank of Distinguished Professor.

Dr. Finucane joined the Oakland University faculty in 1991, and served as Chair of the Department of History from 1991-2000. During the period of his leadership he rejuvenated a divided department and committed his energies to creating a more productive scholarly environment for faculty and students. Students benefited from his efforts to restructure departmental requirements by greater emphasis on multi-cultural understandings of historical development and by demanding more rigorous standards of research through the implementation of a senior capstone course. Professor Finucane's own teaching has been extensively praised by both undergraduate and graduate students, as evidenced by his nomination for the 2004-2005 Teaching Excellence Award.

Professor Finucane has contributed to the field of medieval history with four books: *Miracles and Pilgrims* (1977, republished in paperback 1995, 1996, 2004, History Book Selection); *Appearances of the Dead: A Cultural History of Ghosts* (1982, 1984) and republished in paperback as *Ghosts: Appearances of the Dead and Cultural Transformation* (1996) and translated into Italian; *Soldiers of the Faith: Crusaders and Moslems at War* (1983, audio book 1988/9, History Book Club selection); and *The Rescue of the Innocents: Endangered Children in Medieval Miracles* (1997, paperback 2000). The significance of Dr. Finucane's work has been officially recognized by some of the most prestigious scholarly entities in the world, including The American Council of Learned Societies, which featured his first book, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, in its "collection of important titles in the field of history." Appearing in its third reprint in 1994, *Miracles and Pilgrims* was also praised in the *Times Literary Supplement* as the "fullest, most thorough and intelligent study of medieval miracle stories to have appeared in any language." It is noteworthy that Professor Finucane's first book remains in print, after a quarter of a century, and that it is still considered the standard work in its field. Moreover, his books have appealed to a popular audience, rare for an academic writer, with two volumes having the distinction of being History Book Club selections.

Professor Finucane has been the recipient of many research awards, including a substantial award from the National Endowment for the Humanities in 2005. He

was also awarded an Oakland University Research Excellence Award in 1998. A particularly significant and rare honor for an American scholar was the election of Dr. Finucane as Fellow of the Royal Historical Society in London, the most distinguished historical organization in the U.K.

Professor Finucane's impressive scholarly contributions to his field of medieval history, as well as his excellent record as a teacher and departmental leader have contributed significantly to Oakland as a university of distinction.