1999 Award Recipient

Harvey D. Egan ’59

Harvey Egan, you have followed a path that few WPI graduates have traveled. As a researcher, a scholar and an accomplished teacher, you have distinguished yourself and your alma mater through your involvement in advancing the field of Christian mysticism, a branch of theology that deals with Christian prayer.

Regarded internationally as an expert on Karl Rahner, a Roman Catholic theologian who had significant influence on the 2nd Vatican Council, your accomplishments are many. Following your graduation from WPI in 1959 with a degree in electrical engineering, you worked as an engineer with Kaman Helicopter Company and Boeing Airplane Company before entering the Jesuit novitiate. You then began your study of philosophy and theology, receiving master of arts degrees from Weston College and Woodstock College. After being ordained a Roman Catholic priest in 1969, you traveled to Germany to pursue your doctoral studies in theology at the University of Muenster, under the guidance of Karl Rahner. Even today you credit the theology of Rahner, along with the readings of the Christian mystical classics, as the two significant influences for your own writing.

You joined the faculty of Boston College in 1973 as an assistant professor; today you serve as professor of systematic and mystical theology. You have chaired the Theology Department's Curriculum Committee and have been a member of the department's Executive Committee and Faculty Grievance Committee. Throughout your career you have contributed your expertise to numerous professional societies, including the Catholic Theological Association of America, the College Theological Society and the American Academy of Religion. Your research has allowed you to author and edit 25 books and numerous articles, as well as contribute to several theology journals.

A rare individual, you have had the opportunity to touch many lives through retreats, seminars and lectures. By looking at the lives of great saints and mystics, you frequently discover the meaning of full human life. Your writings define how mystics can be transposed for contemporary living. You have viewed your own writing as a vocation deeply in tune with the Jesuit priesthood.

Harvey Egan, it is with great pride and admiration that we present to you the Robert H. Goddard Alumni Award for Outstanding Professional Achievement.