

Remarks by Paul Engelking, 2013 Wayne Westling Award Recipient – Taken from minutes of the May 22, 2013 University Senate meeting

Professor Engelking approached the Senate floor and received the Wayne Westling Award. He delivered the following remarks:

“I find myself in a position not unlike that of the French gentleman who is used to speaking ordinary everyday language and then discovering that for forty years he had been speaking prose. I didn’t expect an award for doing what I thought was ordinary work. One thing that allows me to overcome my chagrin is that this award honors Wayne Westling. I knew Wayne Westling. I regarded him as a friend of mine, and he was a person you wanted to emulate but was impossible to imitate. I remember the time in the Senate Executive Committee, which I served on with Wayne many times. It was harder for me to remember which of us was President. Wayne was wise beyond his years and never pushed to devise. I do remember him correcting a potential faux pas for my bad French pronunciation with a short staccato interjection ‘Do you want to do that?’ or ‘Is that how you say it?’ and he would then silently give you time to think for yourself. His modus operandi was not to convince you of his opinion; he wanted you to convince him. Back and forth, Wayne covered a lot of ground fast.

You may be expecting an explanation of how I became a Senate President and all that followed. I have a simple excuse; I was framed. I received a phone call from Wayne stating that the Senate Nominating Committee needed two names on the ballot. Would I mind lending mine? The other Senator was a natural orator and a shoe-in for a win. The election came, and my opponent wasn’t there, so the vote was postponed. Fifteen minutes later, my opponent arrived expecting to be too late. The election was called. My opponent removed his name from the ballot. The election was held.

I am reminded of Wayne often. Last summer in the jury assembly room, prospective jurors were instructed in the jury selection process. As I heard the old French word for the procedure pronounced ‘vadere’ with the V sounding as W as in classical Latin, I thought of Wayne. ‘Is that how you say it?’ Wayne would know, he wrote the book.

I’d personally like to thank some people who helped me on the Curriculum Committee; the committee members themselves and the administrative assistants on the committee. Looking back I remember especially Liz Zitron and Linda Adkins (Sponsored Projects Services). This list is not exhaustive. I’d also like to thank Kathy Warden (Project Manager, Senior VP and Provosts Office) who is currently assisting the Committee on Courses. I’d also like to thank Lexy Wellman (CAS) in the College of Arts and Sciences for being a great partner in getting their courses through the committee work, and I’d like to thank all the committee members on the Committee on Courses over all the years. They’ve been wonderful colleagues and I’m proud to have worked with them.

Thank you very much for this award. I didn’t expect it, so it’s a double surprise. Thank you.”