

The person upon whom we confer the Society's highest honor this evening, the fourth of eight children, showed an interest in thinking about the Catholic faith from an early age; at the start of the Second Vatican Council he had already begun pursuing theological studies. With a knack, as well, for numbers, and an interest in social justice, a bachelor's degree in Mathematics was followed by a year of community service as a VISTA volunteer working with African-American migrant laborers and marginal farm families. This experience, and the questions it prompted, led our colleague to master's and doctoral studies in two disciplines (including classes with four Nobel Laureates), and a lifelong commitment to connecting principled and informed thinking, judicious policy analysis, and practical, community-based engagement for change.

After joining the CTSA as a newly-minted Ph.D. in 1977 and landing a joint, tenure-track appointment at a distinguished midwestern Catholic university that same year, our talented awardee was quickly recognized for leadership and administrative as well as academic skills, and was named, in succession, chair of the university's largest department, dean of its school of theology, and to a professorship in an endowed chair. Likewise, during over 45 years of CTSA membership, our colleague's gifts, generosity of spirit, and dedication to Catholic theology, the church, and our Society have led to service as chair or member of numerous major committees and task forces, as a board member, and as president—remarkably, while compiling equally impressive records of service and leadership in several other national learned societies.

Our awardee is an award-winning teacher and researcher, deeply respected and beloved by students, mentees and colleagues near and far. Disciplined labors over five decades have yielded an enviable resumé of scholarly publications, including over a dozen scholarly monographs, scores of peer reviewed articles and chapters, and many edited or co-edited volumes. Additionally, with prolific contributions to general-audience publications, and invitations to speak or consult in over 22 countries, and our honoree is truly a public and globally-engaged intellectual. Further, in a field that encourages solo careerism, and in a time prone to intellectual, and ecclesial acrimony and siloing, he has been a purveyor of patient and civil conversation, a resolute bridge builder and a skilled collaborator, bringing together scholars of different generations, disciplines, and intellectual and ecclesial sensibilities in many fora, and in a range of creative, multi-year research and writing projects.

A person of multitudinous accomplishments and recipient of many well-deserved accolades including the Monica Hellwig Award for Outstanding Contributions to Catholic Intellectual Life from the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, our esteemed colleague is a person of modesty, grace and gratitude, who leads, as he will often say, 'a blessed life' both academically and personally. A loving spouse, Dad to two grown children Jacob and Stephanie, with us here this evening, he enjoys woodworking, gardening, playing poker and bridge, and spending time with his two young grandsons during regular visits to Seattle.

In recognition of and gratitude for all of this, and for the ways his life and labors have blessed so many, it is abundantly fitting, and my great joy and honor to bestow, on behalf of the whole membership of the Catholic Theological Society of America, this year's John Courtney Murray Award for lifetime achievement and service to Professor of Theology and Clemens Professor of Economics at St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota, and our beloved colleague, Daniel K. Finn.