
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

NEWS RELEASE

4400 UNIVERSITY DRIVE, FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA 22030

Office of News and Information (703)323-2138

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For More Information:
Helen Ackerman, 323-2138

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY APPOINTS FIRST ROBINSON SCHOLARS

FAIRFAX, VA., MAY, 1985---A \$5 million bequest from a Northern Virginia businessman has enabled George Mason University to appoint its first three Robinson Professors. The selection of these eminent scholars, the first of approximately 20, begins a five-year plan to build the University's third area of program emphasis--the humanities.

Thelma Lavine, Elton Professor of Philosophy at George Washington University, Roberto Marquez, Johnson Professor of Hispanic American and Caribbean Literatures at Hampshire College, Amherst, and Shaul Bakhash, Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, were selected for significant scholarship, their interdisciplinary interests and their commitment to undergraduate liberal arts education. Kenneth Eble, professor of English at the University of Utah, has accepted a Visiting Robinson Professorship for spring 1986. Both Lavine and Bakhash will join George Mason in fall 1985; Marquez will begin in fall 1986.

The professorships were established with a bequest made to George Mason University by the late Clarence Robinson. The Northern Virginia businessman and philanthropist, one of the University's founding fathers, wished to make a significant contribution to the University's future development and academic

GMU APPOINTS FIRST ROBINSON SCHOLARS
Add 1

strength. The interest from the bequest will be matched by the Virginia's Eminent Scholars program.

"George Mason University is determined to become a university of regional-- and national--significance," says University president George W. Johnson. "We are committed to excellence in four areas--undergraduate education, public policy studies, high technology and the arts and humanities. Our high technology and public policy programs are already emerging, and, through Clarence Robinson's generosity and forethought, we can now attract the scholars to build our strength in the humanities."

Nationally known philosopher Thelma Lavine first achieved recognition with her essay on the sociology of knowledge that appeared in *Naturalism and the Human Spirit*, published in 1944 by Columbia University Press. Lavine has lectured widely on the works of Kant, Durkheim, Dewey, Fichte and Nietzsche, and has written and produced a television series for PBS titled "From Socrates to Sartre." She is cochairman of the GWU Dilthey Society for Interdisciplinary Teaching and Research, with a primary emphasis on the humanities. A prolific writer, Lavine is currently engaged in co-editing a volume of critical essays on the present state of the history of philosophy. She continues to research the transformation of American culture during 1895-1917 into a culture of modernism, for which she received an NEH senior research fellowship in 1980. Lavine has been named outstanding professor of the year by the University of Maryland and GWU.

Robert Marquez, highly regarded for his translations of the writings of Cuban poet Nicolas Guillen, is recognized as both writer and translator. He is a former post-doctoral fellow in Atlantic history, culture and society at Johns Hopkins University, and the founder-editor of *Caliban*, a pan-Caribbean review known for its provocative essays featuring the works of poets, critics,

GMU APPOINTS FIRST ROBINSON SCHOLARS
Add 2

sociologists and cultural commentators. He received the first Harold F. Johnson Professorship at Hampshire College for exceptional contributions to teaching and the life of the college.

Known for his profound knowledge of the history, culture and mores of the Middle East, Shaul Bakhash was born in Tehran, Iran, and received his M.A. in Middle Eastern studies from Harvard and his Ph.D. in modern Iranian history from Oxford University in 1972. Currently a Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, he was a visiting associate professor in the Department of Eastern Studies at Princeton in 1980 and 1982. Bakhash's articles appear regularly in *The New York Times*, *The New Republic*, *The New York Review of Books*, and *The Economist*. He is the author of several books on Iran, including *The Politics of Oil and Revolution in Iran* (Brookings Institution, 1982) and *The Reign of the Ayatollahs: Iran and the Islamic Revolution* (Basic Books, 1984).

Kenneth Eble specializes in contemporary American literature and the history of ideas. He has written frequently on American higher education issues, and has taught courses on teaching and faculty development. His books include *The Profane Comedy: American Higher Education in the Sixties* (MacMillan, 1962); *F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Collection of Criticism* (McGraw-Hill, 1973); and *The Craft of Teaching* (Jossey-Bass, 1978).