

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
INAUGURAL HONORS COLLEGE CONVOCATION
OCTOBER SECOND ~ TWO THOUSAND ONE

A World of Honors: Celebrating Excellence



KEYNOTE ADDRESS:

“For the Long Haul”

PROF. STEPHEN M. FJELLMAN, PH.D.



Convocation Keynote Speaker

Dr. Stephen M. Fjellman is Professor of Anthropology and Associate Dean of the Honors College, of which he is one of the founding parents. He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree at Yale University and his Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees at Stanford University. After seven years on the faculty of Harvard University, he came to FIU in 1978.

While he considers every day to be a day in the field, Dr. Fjellman has conducted formal anthropological fieldwork in Mexico, Kenya, Cameroon, and Walt Disney World. He has published in eleven fields and subfields, among them mathematical anthropology, psychological anthropology, social theory, culture studies, African studies, American studies, and science fiction studies. His book *Vinyl Leaves: Walt Disney World and America*, now translated into Korean, is one of the central documents of Disney Studies.

The Anthropology Biography Web at Minnesota State University at Mankato's E-Museum lists Professor Fjellman as one of the 476 anthropologists and other scientists who have most influenced anthropology. His theoretical work has been the subject of a series of publications in tourism and culture studies by a group of Australian and New Zealand scholars who at one time called themselves Fjellmaniacs.

Dr. Fjellman has won numerous teaching awards at FIU. He is a former Chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and a former member of the Faculty Senate. His abiding life interest is in undergraduate education.

For the Long Haul

-- Stephen M. Fjellman

We are gathered this week in convocation, called together to celebrate our community here -- our local portion of the Academy. We join a long tradition of ceremony, reaching back through the years. In what we do today, we add a bit to that tradition.

But we are also, in these days, living through a larger convocation -- a gathering of voices across the deeply wounded land in which we live -- an extraordinary joining of communities that has brought together those in our nation and reached across those border lines on the globe to draw in much of the world. The flags of 52 nations and 19 states that we see here tell us that a piece of that global convocation is taking place at Florida International University. The world has received a call that it did not want and is crafting an answer that we all hope will stand for the long haul.

It is this idea of the long haul that interests us in the Honors College. Our students come to us with wondrous skills and talents, with hopes and plans for their futures. They come to us with a strong sense of what it is that they can do. It is our work to help them find out what **else** they can do. The displays around this gathering place show some examples of what else they can do. Speaking now to our students on behalf of the faculty, administration, and staff, let me tell you what we are up to.

I begin with a metaphor borrowed from Kentucky farmer and writer, Wendell Berry. Berry makes a distinction between field crops and tree crops. By tree crops he means, "not just those orchard trees of comparatively early bearing and short life, but also the fruit and nut and timber trees that bear late and live long." [1] Field crops, on the other hand, exist within biological and economic cycles that are complete within one year. An anxious and unsettled population "-- a population that feels itself, because of economic threat or the degradation of cultural value, to be ephemeral," tends to farm almost exclusively with field crops. "Stable, settled populations, assured both of an economic sufficiency in return for their work and of the cultural value of their work, tend to have attitudes of a much longer range. Although they have generally also farmed with field crops, established farm populations have always been farmers of trees."

"Good teaching," Berry goes on to say, "is an investment in the minds of the young, as obscure in result, as remote from immediate proof as planting a chestnut seedling. But we have come to prefer ends that are entirely foreseeable, even though that requires us to shorten our vision. Education is coming to be, not a long-term investment in young minds and in the life of the community, but a short-term investment in the economy."

Calculating the immediate payoff may be possible for field crops, but not for tree crops. And our students are **not** customers. You are **not** clients. You are **not** stakeholders. You are like a kind of tree crop. We in the Honors College tend our students, our wards, our apprentices, our novices for the long haul. For many of us, to shift a metaphor, ours is a pastoral calling. You can not imagine how seriously we take our work.

In doing what we do, we ourselves are guided by, and hope to pass on, some of the deepest teachings of our collective traditions. Some would call them clichés, bobbing along lightly like balloons on the surface of the sea. But there are those with stalks deeper than kelp, those that resonate, that “ring bells” because they **do** carry enormous truths about the human condition. These clichés -- some aphorisms, some questions -- endure when they can leave the places of their birth and, to borrow an image from Pablo Neruda, settle down among other words, in other places, at other times. These clichés are part of the wealth of civilization that we hope to bring alive. They are teachings for the long haul, water for trees.

Let me suggest a few.

Perhaps the most important one is twenty-four hundred years old. In his *Apologia*, his trial defense in 399 BCE, Socrates is reported to have said, “**the unexamined life is not worth living.**” This may be the hardest teaching of all, for, to many, “ignorance is bliss.” Most of us live in a world that we take for granted, surrounded by people who share the same general beliefs, the same general values, the same ideas about how the world works, and what kinds of people and things are in it. To ask whether the truths that we hold to be self-evident are, in fact, so, is to ask a truly difficult question. When we teach *The Origin of Ideas and the Idea of Origins* in your first year course, we are suggesting that there are other ways to think about things. When a sociologist or philosopher tells of other possible systems of ideas, or a biologist tells you about other forms of life, we are asking you to take a deep, but life-affirming, risk -- to examine your life, your way of life, and the world in which your life finds its place.

And what kind of life might that be? When his God asks for the whereabouts of Abel in *Genesis*, Chapter 4: Verse 9, Cain responds, “**Am I my brother’s keeper?**” The answer we would give is, “**Yes, you are!**” And your sister’s, and your friend’s, and your neighbor’s, and your co-worker’s, and, perhaps, the keeper of strangers, like the men in the World Trade Tower who carried a disabled woman, a stranger, down seventy-one flights to safety. And perhaps you might act as a keeper of the earth for unborn generations. These things do not require heroism, but they **do** ask for day-to-day attention.

Why? Because John Donne was right. “**No man is an island.**” The abridged refrain -- an inspiration for Ernest Hemingway’s novel about the Spanish Civil War, is,

... no man is an island, entire of itself;
every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. .
... any man’s death diminishes me,
for I am involved in mankind,
and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls,
it tolls for thee.

With poetic license, we would expand Donne’s continent to include women, children, and other living things. We have recently seen the force of this message.

Care for your brother, your family, your community, and then expand the boundaries of that community as widely as you can. Act to keep them well. Include people who are not like you. Meet them in Spain and Italy on Study Abroad. You have a fine opportunity to expand the boundaries of our communities here in southeast Florida, one of the world's great gathering places. We ask you in your second year in the Honors College to try *Inhabiting Other Lives*. We learn about others. And in the mirror they hold up to us, we learn about ourselves.

But what are we to do? We must first remember that humans are the beings that think. The ability to reason is at the core of what we are as a species. Perhaps René Descartes said it most clearly. “**Cogito ergo sum!**” “**Je pense, donc je suis!**” “**I think, therefore I am!**” I, you, he, she, we, you, they can think and that is most important. Severe and painful struggles have been fought in many places, over the last millenium at least, to build a world in which this truth might become a guiding principle for the common weal. These struggles continue today.

We hope that, if nothing else, we can help you to think clearly and often.

This does not mean that we don't feel things in our very depths; for the feelings of joy, of loss, of anger, of love, and all the other kinds of emotions that come sit down with us make us human as well. But as you live with these feelings, we would ask you to listen to the poet William Blake when he writes, “**A tear is an intellectual thing.**” Cross the boundaries between reason and feeling. Don't separate them and then build a life based on such difference. A life lived for the long haul ought not go up in flames. As we tell you in our different ways in Aesthetics, Values, and Authority, be mindful. Be thoughtful. Here is your chance to think about the stories you have been told, the ways they have been told, and the force of those stories in your lives and in the world. Here is your chance to think about why those stories are told, and not other ones.

But why bring Descartes to the places in our hearts? Because, as Dorothy said to Toto, “**I don't think we're in Kansas anymore.**” Our metaphorical Kansas -- an uncomplicated, black and white, local place, our fantasy for simpler times -- is gone. We often feel like “Strangers in a Strange Land,” as Robert A. Heinlein put it. For our generation, it was $e=mc^2$. For yours, **what-ever**. As we try to get our hearts and minds around current events, we know that our communities, our country, the world all need building and rebuilding. We ask you in our Service Learning programs to help in this work. But whether in these programs or not, we ask you to engage the world, to commit yourself with some fortitude and reliability, to use your minds and backs, if possible and necessary, to make the world a better place. We will help others in the University to give you the skills, the knowledge, and the experience to do so.

Rabbi Tarphon, one of the five great second century sages of Judaism, taught, “**You are not required to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it.**” As we *Look to the Future*, don't be frozen by the possibility that you might not finish the task -- or that you might not yet know **how** to finish it. As perhaps the wisest Yogi of them all said, “**It ain't over 'til it's over.**” (Although he did also say, “When you come to a fork in the road, take it,”) This is where patience and fortitude and commitment enter in.

“**I have a dream today!**” Dr. Martin Luther King, Junior, told us. His dream was that his children, and by extension all of us, would “one day live in a nation where they will not be judged

by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.” That is a fine dream, and we would wish you all to share it.

And there are other dreams, good and fine ones, that you might have. We urge you to dream those dreams. Build them with grace and dignity. Make them larger than yourself. Put your shoulders into it and push them up the hill.

At the Honors College we ask you to examine your lives, to think deeply about the teachings in these so-called clichés, to make the world a better place for yourselves, and for us all. We hope that you, our students, might be in for the long haul, as trees that transcend the seasons. **At the end of the day, when all is said and done, when we get to the bottom** line, we hope that you can **walk the walk**. Find your dream, and as Captain Jean-Luc Picard of the Starship Enterprise would say, “**Make it So!**”

For there will come a time, in a season hard for trees, when you will ask the question posed by Sandy Denny and sung by Judy Collins.

**Who knows where the time goes?
Who knows where the time goes?**

[1]. Wendell Berry, “Discipline and Hope,” *Recollected Essays, 1965-1980* (San Francisco: North Point, 1981) 191-3. I found this in Jackson Lears, “The Radicalism of Tradition,” *The Hedgehog Review*, Fall 2000, 22-3.

The Benefits of The Honors College:

The Best of Two Worlds

The Honors College at Florida International University in Miami offers the best of two worlds. It is a small community of outstanding students, dedicated scholars, and committed teachers who work together in an atmosphere usually associated with small private colleges. Yet, they do so with all the resources of a major state university, which is one of the nation's top doctoral / research extensive universities. Only 152 universities in the United States hold this superior rank.

The Honors College provides a broad foundation for dedicated students who want to get the most out of their undergraduate education. The undergraduate experience it provides is significantly enhanced by the broad transdisciplinary nature of the curriculum and opportunities to work closely with expert faculty and in the community. The opportunities for graduate or professional study and for employment are greatly expanded because of the range of unique activities and academic experiences made available to students in the College. Additional Opportunities in The Honors College include mentoring, The Honors College Society, National Student Exchange, and the Pre-Collegiate Summer Institute.

The Honors Curriculum

You may pursue almost any major available in the University and at the same time complete the honors curriculum. The curriculum emphasizes the following activities: Critical, integrative, and creative thinking; Group and independent research; Oral presentation; Close contact between students and faculty; Integration of class work with the broader community.

Admissions

Admissions: Deadline for Priority Consideration - February 15

Freshmen: Since admission to the freshman class of the College is limited and competitive, students should complete the application process as early as possible in their senior year of high school. Students should have a minimum high school GPA of 3.5 (weighted) and commensurate test scores on the SAT or ACT. Students who have been named National Merit, Achievement or Hispanic Finalists and Presidential Scholars will be automatically admitted to the Honors College.

Transfer & Current FIU Students: Students with at least a 3.3 in prior college work also can apply to the College at the second or third level. Students transferring from Florida community colleges may compete for transfer scholarships. Minimum requirements: Associate in Arts Degree and GPA of at least 3.5. Membership in the Honors College is required for all transfer scholarship recipients.

The Honors Faculty

“Knowledgeable, caring, enthusiastic, and approachable”. These are some of the characteristics students use to describe the diverse honors faculty. Carefully selected from the more than 1,400 faculty members at the University for their accomplishments as both teachers and scholars, members of the honors faculty take great pride in their close association with their students and are committed to excellence.

Honors Place @ Panther Hall

“Honors Place is remarkable. It’s like home and everyone there is family. We work hard and play hard, driven by our friendship and common pursuit of excellence” - Damion Dunn, Honors Place resident.

The Honors Place at Florida International University is on-campus residence living. As an Honors College student, you will have the opportunity to participate in this special campus housing program.

Study Abroad Opportunities

The Honors College currently offers three study abroad programs to its students in the summer; one to Spain, one to Italy, and a new program to the Caribbean.

Additional Opportunities in The Honors College

Student Mentoring
The Honors College Society
National Student Exchange
Pre-Collegiate Summer Institute

The Honors College Administration and Faculty

Administration

Ivelaw L. Griffith, Ph.D. (City University of New York), Dean
Stephen M. Fjellman, Ph.D. (Stanford University), Associate Dean
Caryl Myers Grof, M.A. (Florida International University), Assistant Dean
John Kneski, M.Arch II (Syracuse University), Assistant Dean
Sharon Placide, M.A. (Florida International University), Coordinator of Student Services

Office Staff

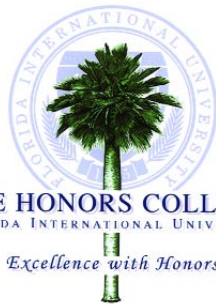
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Faculty

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Associate Professor, Landscape Architecture
Regina Bailey, M.F.A. (Pratt Institute),
The Honors College and The Wolfsonian Museum
William Beesting, Ph.D. (Florida State University), Assistant Dean, Undergraduate Studies
Manuel Carvajal, Ph.D. (University of Florida), Professor, Economics
Ricardo Castells, Ph.D. (Duke University), Associate Professor, Modern Languages
Yesim Darici, Ph.D. (University of Missouri), Associate Professor, Physics
Charmaine DeFrancesco, Ph.D. (Florida State University) Associate Professor,
Movement Science, Health, Physical Education & Recreation
Kevin Hall, B.A. (Fordham University), Editor-in-Residence, Journalism and Mass Communication
Bruce Harvey, Ph.D. (Stanford University), Associate Professor, English
Bruce Hauptli, Ph.D. (Washington University), Professor, Philosophy
Marilyn Hoder-Salmon, Ph.D. (University of New Mexico), Associate Professor, English
Robert Hogner, Ph.D. (University of Pittsburgh), Associate Professor, Marketing and Business Environment,
Director of Service Learning, The Honors College
William Keppler, Ph.D. (University of Illinois), Professor, Public Health
Barry Levine, Ph.D. (New School for Social Research), Professor, Sociology & Anthropology
Peter Machonis, Ph.D. (Pennsylvania State University), Associate Professor, Modern Languages
Florentin Maurrasse, Ph.D. (Columbia University), Professor, Earth Sciences
Meri-Jane Rochelson, Ph.D. (University of Chicago), Associate Professor, English
Richard Schwartz, Ph.D. (University of Chicago), Professor, English
Caroline Simpson, Ph.D. (University of Florida), Associate Professor, Physics
Richard Tardanico, Ph.D. (Johns Hopkins University), Associate Professor, Sociology & Anthropology
Martin L. Tracey Jr., Ph.D. (Brown University), Professor, Biology

"Feelings and opinion
are recruited, the heart
is enlarged, and the human
mind is developed only by
the reciprocal influence of
men upon one another."

Alexis De Tocqueville
Democracy in America



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