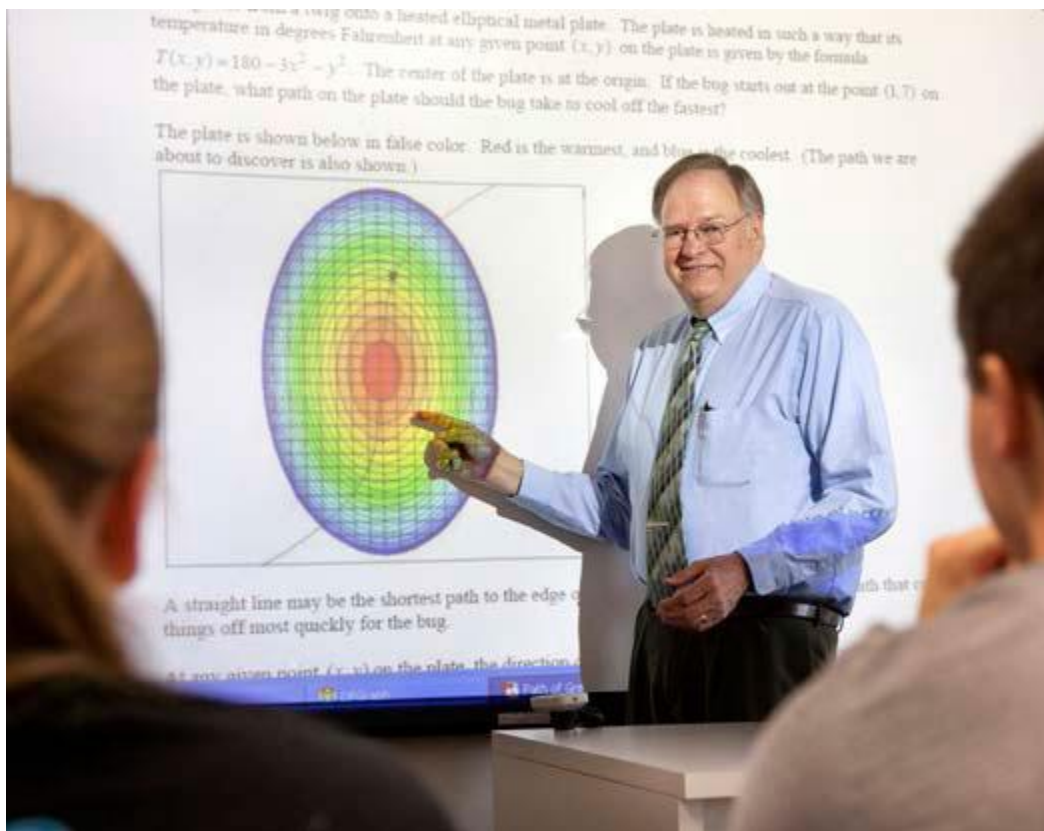


Retiring Math Professor Receives Distinguished Service Award

May 9 2013 10:32 AM



GODFREY – Retiring Lewis and Clark Math Professor Karl Zilm was honored this past April with an Illinois Mathematics Association of Community Colleges (IMACC) Distinguished Service Award, as well as a Lifetime Member Award.

Zilm, originally from Carlinville but now of Godfrey, was commended for his years of dedication, leadership and service to the IMACC at the organization's 38th Annual Conference, held at Allerton Park near Monticello, Ill. on Friday, April 5. The IMACC Life Membership Award is reserved for IMACC members who are retiring and who have been active in IMACC throughout their career. Zilm is retiring

from Lewis and Clark Community College this spring, after 40 years of teaching in the math department.

Zilm's interest in teaching was sparked during his senior year at Blackburn College in Carlinville, where he enjoyed working with students as a math department assistant. While at Purdue University on a teaching assistantship, he fell in love with teaching.

"As a teaching assistant in graduate school, I noted that freshmen and sophomores needed and appreciated attention to their learning needs as students who are beginning their college-level learning experiences," he said. "Teaching at a community college seemed to be a natural fit for me."

Zilm began his teaching career at L&C in 1973. He made it one of his goals throughout his career to make sure that students in all his math classes knew they were being taught by a teacher who cared about their academic successes.

"The most rewarding part of being a teacher at the college level is helping students finally 'get' mathematics," he said. "Often, students come to college scared to death of having to take a mathematics class because they weren't successful in mathematics in the past, or perhaps because they had some other bad experience with mathematics learning."

Co-workers have nothing but nice things to say about Zilm as well.

"Karl Zilm is the anchor of the math department, and his retirement is a huge loss for us," said L&C Professor Randy Gallaher, Zilm's co-worker. "We are all very happy for him and we wish him the best in retirement, but we selfishly know that replacing him will be very difficult, if not impossible, and for that reason we truly are sad that this day has come. For me personally, Karl has been a great mentor. When I have a question or need advice, he is the one I go to. More than that, Karl is a great teacher and a generous colleague. Even in his final days at the college, he is here past the time when most others have gone, working as hard as ever to prepare for his classes, and doing whatever it takes to ensure that his students learn mathematics."

Outside of the classroom, Zilm has served as a member and chair of L&C's Curriculum and Instruction Committee, Mathematics Department Coordinator, and a member of the Health, Life and Safety Committee. Outside of Lewis and Clark, Zilm served as president of the Illinois Mathematics Association of Community Colleges from 1996-97.

Throughout his career, Zilm has been honored with awards, including the Emerson Excellence in Teaching Award, which he received twice.

“This most recent honor is something that they don’t give out every year,” Zilm said. “They give it out to someone who has been active in the organization, so I was quite surprised and humbled to be receiving the award.”

After 40 years of teaching, Zilm is getting ready to embark on a new chapter in his life. He envisions traveling in his future, along with possibly even more mathematics, but he will miss teaching.

“I will miss the challenge of helping my students go from where they are in mathematics to where they need to be,” Zilm said. “Being with the students is just very enjoyable.”