



School of Social and Behavioral Sciences
UAM Box 3619
Monticello, AR 71656
(870) 460-1047
FAX: (870) 460-1087

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT MONTICELLO

August 20, 2015

Chair
Distinguished Scholar Award Committee
Arkansas Political Science Association

Re: Nomination Letter for Dr. Charles Dunn, Distinguished Scholar Award

Dear Distinguished Scholar Award Committee:

I, Dr. Carol Strong, member of the Executive Board of the Arkansas Political Science Association, formally nominate Dr. Charles Dewitt Dunn to be considered for the 2015-16 Distinguished Scholar Award. He easily fulfills the award criteria, in that he was a member of the Arkansas Political Science Association from 1974 to 1996 (and again from 2009 to his death in 2013); he moreover served as President from 1976-77.

After graduating in 1973 with his Ph.D. in Political Science from Southern Illinois University, Dr. Dunn returned to Arkansas (he graduated with his B.A. from Southern Arkansas University in 1967) to pursue a very lucrative career in higher education. From 1986 to 2008, he was the beloved President and Professor of Political Science at Henderson State University - HSU, Arkadelphia, Arkansas. He subsequently served there as a President Emeritus/Distinguished Professor of Political Science until his death in 2013. While HSU President, Dr. Dunn engaged in strategic planning efforts that produced a stronger academic program, more selective admission standards and an excellent statewide reputation for the university. He was also concomitantly engaged in government relations and fund-raising.

Before serving the HSU academic community for 22 years, he was Director of Government Relations and Professor of Political Science at the University of Central Arkansas- UCA (1982-86) and a visiting professor at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock - UALR (1995), where he taught governance and policy making in higher education. From 1975 to 1986, he began his career at UCA as a Professor of Political Science, during which time he served a six-year term as Chairperson of the Department of Political Science. Between 1972 and 1986, Dr. Dunn published and spoke widely on issues involving lobbying at the state level, institutional accountability, state governmental/constitutional reform, political parties and political leadership. He also served as part of the editorial board of the Midsouth Political Science Journal (1981-94) and was a member of the Southern Political Science Association towards the end of his career.

In addition to his academic success, Dr. Dunn was a member of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities from 1986 until his death, during which time he served on the organization's Council of State Representatives, Council of Liberal Arts Colleges, Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics and Committee on the Undergraduate Experience. Additionally he was involved in the Arkansas State Council on Economic Education and the Arkansas Council for Public Affairs; he was also on the Board of Directors for the Arkansas Community Foundation. He moreover volunteered widely for Rotary International, the Boy Scouts of America, the Wesley Foundation, United Way of Arkadelphia, the Arkansas Methodist Children's Home and the Arkansas Gift Foundation, Inc.

Dr. Dunn did not stop there, however. He also advocated widely for higher education in Arkansas throughout his career, including serving as: 1- a member of a Task Force associated with the State Committee to improve the quality of higher education in Arkansas (1987-88), 2- Chairman of the Governor's Task Force for the Recruitment of Minorities to the Education Professor in Arkansas (1988-89), 3- a member of an advisory group from the Science Information Liaison Office, which served the Arkansas General Assembly (1982-1999), 4- Chairman for the Commission for Arkansas' Future, an initiative spearheaded by Bill Clinton to develop a strategic plan for education in Arkansas (1989-1993),

5- Chairman of the Arkansas Higher Education Council (1992-96), 6- Chair of the Strategic Planning General Education Committee for the Arkansas Board of Higher Education (1996-97), 7- a member of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education Steering Council for Higher Education Priorities (2000-01), and 8- a member of the Arkansas Blue Ribbon Commission on Public Education between (2001-02).

There is, however, an even more personal reason for my nomination. Over and above everything else mentioned in this letter, Dr. Dunn was an Instructor/Assistant Professor of Political Science here at the University of Arkansas – Monticello (1969-75), where I now teach; indeed, he established the UAM political science department. I was also incredibly honored to be the one he asked to help him teach his final upper-division course (Political Behavior) at HSU in 2013, only months before his death. He did this because he had met me at a preceding ArkPSA conference in Russellville, where he had just heard one of my first students present; at this time, he approached me to encourage me as a new faculty member, but also to show my student that he could be an up-and-coming scholar. I never forgot his support and encouragement and was honored to be asked to teach with him at the end of his career. Through this service opportunity, I moreover had the chance to see that he was not only a long-time professor at HSU, rather he was a beloved part of the HSU family. Indeed, his students and colleagues adored him. What a testament to a person's career. I hope that one day I will have even half of the success that he had in his lifetime. He was indeed a very special individual and extremely dedicated to the state of Arkansas and the people that populate it.

In his educational philosophy, Dr. Dunn argued that "education provides persons of even the most humble background an opportunity to prepare for ...[and] seize the opportunities encountered in a complex world." He moreover saw educators as "vitally important" and as the ones positioned to provide the state's "citizenry with the tools for success. With everything I witnessed in the short eight-year span that I was fortunate enough to know him, Dr. Charles Dewitt Dunn genuinely believed these words, as demonstrated by the education he gave his students, the role model he provided for his colleagues and the agitation he caused at the governmental level, all in the name of improving higher education in Arkansas.

In closing, I ask you to very seriously consider this nomination. After all, given that UAM is hosting the 2016 Arkansas Political Science Association's annual conference, *and* Dr. Dunn fulfills all of the criteria set out for this award (he was indeed an exemplar teacher, was published and had an ongoing distinguished service record in Arkansas almost entirely dedicated to higher education/political science since 1969), this would be a perfect time to award him a Distinguished Scholar Award. Equally important, this posthumous award would not preclude giving another award to someone about to retire from the field, as I believe the two awards could complement each other.

Truly, I cannot think of a better candidate than Dr. Dunn. I'm just sorry that we didn't get a chance to honor him while he was still alive. The recognition would nevertheless mean the world to his family and former students/colleagues. I personally could not feel more strongly about this nomination. Feel free to contact me, if further information or elaboration would be helpful. I can be reached by email at strong@uamont.edu, or by phone at 1-870-460-1687.

Sincerely,

Carol Strong, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Political Science
University of Arkansas at Monticello