

**William Albert Graham, Jr.**  
**Doctor of Humane Letters**

William A. Graham is Murray A. Albertson Professor of Middle Eastern Studies in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University, and John Lord O'Brian Professor of Divinity and Dean of the Harvard Divinity School. He was a Morehead Scholar at Carolina where he earned his A.B. degree *summa cum laude* (1966) and was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa and the Order of the Golden Fleece and served as Delegata of the Order of the Grail. Graham earned his M.A. (1970) and Ph.D. (1973) degrees from Harvard and pursued non-degree studies at the Universities of Göttingen, London, and Tübingen. He has been a member of Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences since 1973, and became dean of the Divinity School in 2002.

Dean Graham has long been recognized as one of the world's intellectual leaders in the study of religion. In announcing Graham's appointment as dean of the Divinity School, Harvard President Lawrence Summers emphasized the school's role in bringing energy and insight to the public on issues involving morality and ethics and William Graham's exceptional intellectual breadth and profound integrity. "Religion is a powerful force in the world and an important focus of scholarly inquiry," he said.

Graham's scholarly work has focused on early Islamic religious history and textual traditions and problems in the history of world religion. In October 2000 he received the quinquennial Award for Excellence in Research in Islamic History and Culture from the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture. He has held John Simon Guggenheim and Alexander von Humboldt research fellowships. His books include *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion* (1987, 1993), and *Divine Word and Prophetic Word in Early Islam* (1977), which earned for him the American Council of Learned Societies History of Religions Prize (1978). He is co-author of *The Heritage of World Civilizations* (6<sup>th</sup> rev. ed. 2002) and *Three Faiths, One God* (2002).

In addition to his splendid record of scholarship, Professor Graham has been deeply engaged in undergraduate education throughout his career. He is well known at Harvard as an outstanding teacher who displays deep concern for his students. He was for many years Master of Currier House, having served early in his career as Allston Burr Senior Tutor in Winthrop House. He has taught a wide range of courses to both undergraduate and graduate students.

Graham was born in Raleigh, North Carolina, and grew up in Chapel Hill. He is still remembered by long-time members of our faculty as one of the most talented students ever to have completed undergraduate studies here. He has maintained ties with his alma mater throughout this career and currently serves on the Board of the Institute for the Arts and Humanities.