

Appendix A: 2016 Thomas Jefferson Award citation: S. Elizabeth Gibson

Each year the faculty presents the Thomas Jefferson Award to that one of our number who thorough personal influence and performance of duty in teaching, scholarship, and service to the academic community best exemplifies the ideals we all strive to achieve. This year, we accord that high honor to Elizabeth Gibson, Burton Craige Professor of Law. Professor Gibson has been a star from the beginning. She grew up in Raleigh and was valedictorian of her class at Broughton High School. She then earned her undergraduate degree *cum laude* from Duke and her law degree with high honors from Carolina. In the world of legal scholarship, the best and brightest begin as law clerks to federal judges. Professor Gibson landed two of the highest prizes: clerkships to Judge J. Braxton Craven of the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals and Justice Byron R. White of the United States Supreme Court. After five years of private practice, she joined Carolina's Law Faculty in 1983. It took her only ten short years to become a chaired professor. Professor Gibson's scholarship focuses on the federal bankruptcy courts. As reporter for the Bankruptcy Rules Committee and participation in the educational programs of the Federal Judicial Center and the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges she is nationally recognized as an eminent authority in her field. Her reputation as an outstanding scholar and her judicial temperament led President Clinton to nominate her for appointment as a judge of the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in 2000. Unfortunately, the United States Senate failed to act on the nomination for the same reasons now being given for its refusal to act on President Obama's nomination of Judge Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court. As a teacher, Professor Gibson has few equals. Her law faculty colleagues have honored her with the Robert G. Byrd Award for Excellence and Creativity in Teaching (2012) and students of the third-year class have twice honored her with the McCall Award for Teaching Excellence (1991, 1988). The University honored her with the Mentor Award for Lifetime Teaching Beyond the Classroom (2010). Professor Gibson's record of service to the academic community is possibly without parallel in modern times. She has served on search committees for Dean of the Law School on four occasions; on search committees for Chancellor twice; she has served on the Committee on University Government continuously since 1997 and chaired the committee for three years while overseeing a comprehensive revision of the Faculty Code; she has chaired the Faculty Hearings Committee, the Chancellor's Advisory Committee, and the Educational Policy Committee; and she served two terms on the Faculty Council. I have mentioned only a few. The full list covers two pages of her curriculum vitae.

For her personal influence and exemplary performance of duty in teaching, scholarship and service, the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is pleased to confer on Elizabeth Gibson the 2016 Thomas Jefferson Award.

Appendix B: S. Elizabeth Gibson's remarks on receipt of 2016 Thomas Jefferson Award

Thank you Chancellor Folt, Professor Ferrell, and members of the Honorary Degrees and Special Awards Committee. I am truly touched and deeply honored to receive this award. Indeed, I was shocked when Joe informed me that I had been selected to receive it. I was shocked because the prior recipients of the award are my University heroes. Some people have a bucket list of things they want to do before they die. I have a list of people I want to be when I grow up, and many of them are on the list of Thomas Jefferson Award winners.

Although I could mention many, both from the Law School and from other parts of the University, I'd like to mention two of those award recipients in particular: Bill Aycock and Dickson Phillips. Chancellor Aycock received the award in 1967, and Dean, and later Judge, Phillips in 1977. Both of them inspired me and—in ways they didn't know—helped me achieve many of the things I've done in my career.

Bill Aycock returned to the Law School faculty in 1964 after serving as chancellor, and there he was a multi-year award-winning professor. I had the good fortune to be a student in his Federal Jurisdiction class during my last year of law school, and he showed me what it meant to be an excellent professor. He treated students with respect and affection, and with his knowledge and good humor, he made the course interesting, challenging, and understandable. Indeed, it was my favorite class in law school. When I became a law professor, Bill Aycock served as my role model, and I ended up teaching Federal Jurisdiction for almost 30 years.

Dickson Phillips was my dean in law school. He encouraged me to apply for a federal judicial clerkship following graduation, and he supported my application for a Supreme Court clerkship. Those experiences shaped my life and my career in ways I couldn't have imagined, including introducing me to the man who has been my husband for almost 39 years and is now the J. Dickson Phillips, Jr. Professor of Law. The first judge I clerked for—Braxton Craven—died at the end of my clerkship year, and Dickson Phillips replaced him on the Fourth Circuit. He served on that court with great distinction and was a role model for what a wise, caring, principled judge should be. (Unfortunately, I never got to put those lessons to use as a judge, but through his work here, he also taught me what it means to be a good citizen of the University.)

So I have some connection with prior recipients of this award. But when I learned that I was to receive it, I was totally perplexed about what Thomas Jefferson and I might have in common. The cat kinda got out of the bag at the Law School about this award, and a colleague sent me a list of Thomas Jefferson's top 10 achievements and contributions. "Let me read that," I thought, "and maybe I'll see a connection." Here's the list:

1. Wrote The Declaration of Independence (1776)
2. Wrote The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom (1777)
3. Advocated for free public education (1779)
4. Served as the first U.S. Secretary of State (1790–1793)
5. Made the Louisiana Purchase (1803)
6. Launched the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804)
7. Participated in the founding of the Library of Congress (1815)
8. Founded the University of Virginia (1819)
9. Revolutionized gardening and advanced sustainable agriculture
10. Popularized macaroni and cheese in the United States

"Aha," I first thought, "that last entry might be it. I eat macaroni and cheese and like it." But the truth is that I have done little to popularize it, since my mac and cheese isn't especially good.

But then it took only a few moments of reflection to realize that the common bond between Thomas Jefferson and me—and indeed all of us—is the belief in and support of public education, including public higher education. Jefferson believed that education of the public was necessary for good government and the preservation of freedom and happiness. He wrote: "Laws will be wisely formed, and honestly administered, in proportion as those who form and administer them are wise and honest; [thus] it becomes expedient for promoting the public happiness that those persons, whom nature has endowed with genius and virtue should be rendered by liberal education worthy to receive and able to guard the sacred deposit of the rights and liberties of their fellow citizens; and that they should be called to that charge without regard to wealth, birth, or other accidental condition or circumstance."

Whether through education in the law or sciences or liberal arts, Jefferson believed that "the diffusion of light and education [was] the resource most to be relied on for ameliorating the condition, promoting the virtue and advancing the happiness of [humankind]."

I'm grateful that the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill remains committed to the mission of educating students without regard to wealth, birth, or other accidental condition or circumstance, and that it truly is a public university. Indeed, I think that it does a better job of that today than Mr. Jefferson's own university. And today I'm especially grateful that I've been selected to join the list of University citizens who have been dedicated to that mission over the last 75 years or more.

Finally, I'd like to thank my Law School colleagues, some of whom are here today, for the support, encouragement, friendship, and simple kindnesses they provide to me on a daily basis. And most especially, I'd like to thank my husband, Professor Robert Mosteller, who joined our faculty seven years ago after serving with distinction on the Duke Law School faculty for 25 years. Not only was his hiring of great gift to the Law School and University, but he has been invaluable to me in assisting me in so many ways and allowing me to continue teaching longer than I probably otherwise would have been able. Thank you.