

May 26-27, 2021

ITEM 194-2004-R0521

Request for Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emerita of Political Science upon Dr. Franke Wilmer; Montana State University

THAT

Upon the occasion of the retirement of Dr. Franke Wilmer from the College of Letters and Science at Montana State University, the Board of Regents wishes to express its appreciation for her service to the University, the Montana University System, and the people of the State of Montana.

EXPLANATION

Franke Wilmer received a B.S. from Shephard University and doctorate in Government and Politics from the University of Maryland in College Park in 1990. She became the first female tenure-track appointment in the Department of Political Science at Montana State University in 1991, beginning a prolific career combining teaching, scholarship, and academic and political leadership. In 1993 she published her first book *The Indigenous Voice in World Politics: Since Time Immemorial*, setting the stage for her continued research on indigenous people, human rights, identity, and conflict.

Professor Wilmer was promoted to Associate Professor in 1996—and full Professor in 2001—before serving as head of the department from 2001-2005. Dr. Wilmer left that role to become actively involved in Montana politics, serving in the Montana Legislature between 2007-14 and as Speaker Pro Tempore Montana House of Representatives in 2009-2010. Prior to that, Wilmer chaired the Montana Human Rights Commission and co-founded the Gallatin Valley Human Rights Task Force in 1992. She also served as the first female chair-elect of the Faculty Senate at Montana State University before returning for a second stint as department head at a critical moment in the department's history.

Professor Wilmer's broad repertoire of International Relations classes reflects her agility moving between fields of political science. In her teaching, Professor Wilmer combined theory and personal observation based on her research in diverse, and frequently dangerous, parts of the world, creating a rich learning environment for her students. She has received both the President's Award for Excellence in Teaching and the Wiley Award for Meritorious Research and Creativity. She has published numerous articles, book chapters, and four books on issues related to human rights, political violence and identity, including one on the political activism and rights of indigenous peoples, another on identity in the political violence in former Yugoslavia, a textbook on international human rights, and most recently, just in print this January, a book on her research in Israel and Palestine.

This most recent book *Breaking the Cycles of Violence in Israel and Palestine, Empathy and Peacemaking in the Middle East*, examines the role of Israeli and Palestinian peace activists in challenging or disrupting narratives of conflict through empathic engagement. She has traveled to Israel and Palestine (the West Bank) five times between 2016-2019 and has interviewed over 60 peace activists and members of both the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority. Professor Wilmer also currently serves on the board of the Canadian Peace Research Association and the Academic Advisory Board for the Combatants for Peace, one of the binational peace organizations included in her study.

Throughout all these activities, Professor Wilmer strengthened the department, advocated for new hires from diverse perspectives, expanded the curriculum, and provided enriching experiences for Political Science students. She is much beloved and will be sorely missed. Dr. Wilmer has clearly earned the rank of

Emeritus Professor of Political Science at Montana State University with all the rights and responsibilities such rank carries.

For these and other contributions, the Board of Regents of Higher Education is pleased to confer on Professor Franke Wilmer Professor Emerita of Political Science at Montana State University and wishes her well for many years in the future.

ATTACHMENTS

None