

## 1997 Board of Trustees' Award for Outstanding Teaching Recipient

### Professor Susan Vick

Professor Susan Vick has dedicated herself to the goal of educating WPI students in the Humanities, an activity of fundamental importance to the WPI Plan. Professor Vick teaches students the theory, history, facts, and craft of theatre as well as involving them in application of these to dramatic productions. The Plan emphasized the importance of oral presentations; Professor Vick's students routinely demonstrate their efforts in the public presentation of high quality dramatic presentations.



Faculty who have extensive project work experience with our students know the difficulty of obtaining publishable results from undergraduate projects. Professor Vick has succeeded in producing a continuous stream of outstanding student publications through her efforts in the New Voices program. The opportunities she provides for her students to act, direct, write, and design for the theatre are found almost nowhere else, as, through the annual New Voices festival, she provides a venue for student playwrights and directors to showcase their works. It is her contagious level of commitment that keeps Masque alumni coming back to be involved in productions year after year.

In the classroom she maintains an energy level of such intensity that students can't help but be invigorated. This energy level is a result of her passion for theatre and a need to "spread the word" and enlighten. Students report that Susan encourages them to seek theatre in their personal lives, not only for a grade, and cite her as an advisor who guides her students to make discoveries on their own. She teaches them how to teach themselves. She encourages dreams and more; she provides ways to help her students realize their dreams through her willingness to advise the many projects her students propose. It is not surprising that her classes are nearly always over-enrolled.

A faculty nominator wrote that, in his judgment, the most important of Susan's contributions is her tough love impact on the inner lives of her students. "Time after time, I have seen confused, alienated young men and women grow in confidence and ability under her tutelage. What a wonderful gift she has given these young adults; setting them on a path of confident fulfillment, helping them to intellectual and emotional maturity by achieving independent demonstrations of learning." A student wrote that, after two years at WPI, she realized that she was not meant to be an engineer, and that her interests lay in the arts. Despite her transfer acceptance at a number of schools with outstanding Humanities programs, she chose to stay at WPI. It had a number of things that appealed to her, things that no other college had; the most important of these was Professor Susan Vick. The student continues; " While I knew

that there were plenty of schools with highly acclaimed Humanities Departments out there, I also knew I would never find a more outstanding individual to teach me. The classes she taught were thoroughly engaging. The methods she used were refreshingly innovative. And although I am not certain creativity can be taught, Professor Vick certainly inspired creativity in her students."

For her tireless dedication to the lives and learning of her students and to the Humanities and Arts, for her excellence in teaching and advising, for her encouragement and nurturing of creativity, we proudly present the 1997 Board of Trustees' Award for Outstanding Teaching to Professor Susan Vick.