

## 2013 Board of Trustees' Award for Outstanding Research & Creative Scholarship Recipient

### Roger Gottlieb

Professor Roger Gottlieb is internationally recognized for his works in political philosophy, religious and social environmental studies. Prestigious nominators characterize him as a prolific, highly influential, innovating scholar of stunning intellectual range. During his 30-year tenure at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, he has made great contributions to the intellectual life of our Institution, influencing colleagues and students alike.

Dr. Gottlieb's initial work focused in areas of political philosophy and social justice. In the 1980's and 1990's, he was influential in recasting Marxist thought, radical philosophy, and interpretations of the Holocaust. His works have been frequent subjects of round table discussions at national conferences. More recently he has tackled topics of religion, environmentalism, and political action, opening the wholly original field of religious environmentalism.

He has expressed his ideas and disseminated his work through an array of publications including various highly-read books of his essays, more than a hundred scholarly articles, numerous academic presentations, and a prolific journalistic production that ranges from *Tikkun* to *The Wall Street Journal* and the *Buffington Post*. In addition, he has edited a number of series, compilations, and anthologies that include the work of prestigious scholars and were published by renowned academic presses, such as the *The Oxford Handbook of Religions and Ecology* by Oxford University Press, or the four volumes of the series *Religion and the Environment* from Routledge. His work is well cited in the field.

Regarding his books one nominator wrote:

*"He dedicated his books to multiple facets of the phrase now famously associated with him, "sacred earth". From questions of morality and activity engagement to issues of peace-making and justice, he has crafted a scholarly pathway toward a greener future that communicates to sophisticated scholars as well as general readers. "*

Another nominator pointed out:

*"His books were among the first to explore the relationship between our sacred texts and the earth, and they remain among the best. He has never succumbed to woo-*

*hippie spiritualism, always retaining rigor and perspective; at the same time, his work has been committed, and highly useful in the most important fights of our time. "*

It is remarkable that Dr. Gottlieb ventured crossing boundaries in many cases through multidisciplinary work. For instance, members of the committee noted that *"he has made particularly creative and valuable contributions in a place and time where religion is often caricatured as a discourse of the right, and environmentalism is often caricatured as a discourse of the left."*

One of his most recent books, *Engaging Voices*, is a great example of his multidimensional approach to the subject matter. A nominator describes this collection of short fictions by pointing out:

*"Professor Gottlieb fuses philosophical discourse with literary narrative ... the narrative energy fully embraces, swallows, and then deploys the philosophical discourse."*

The nominator further praises Gottlieb's work:

*"I know few books like Engaging Voices; closest to it is The Lives of Animals by the celebrated South African writer J M Coetzee. Both of these texts are remarkable for their aesthetic achievement as for their philosophic weight. "*

In short, Professor Gottlieb has strongly exemplified the qualities of scholar, researcher, and teacher for which we honor him with this award and by which he has brought enduring recognition and acclaim to this university.

In recognition of his significant contributions to the humanities, arts, and social sciences particularly in the fields of political philosophy and religious environmentalism, it is with great pride that we honor Professor Roger Gottlieb as recipient of the 2013 Board of Trustees' Award for Outstanding Research and Creative Scholarship.