Faculty Promotion and Tenure Reception, 2010

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Preface

This brochure profiles faculty members at the University of Arkansas who have achieved tenure and/or promotion in 2010. I am pleased that Provost Sharon Gaber has asked the University Libraries to host this inaugural celebration honoring these faculty who have attained a personal milestone in their academic careers. It is Provost Gaber’s initiative to mark these milestones through this special reception in the Helen Robson Walton Reading Room of Mullins Library, and it is to become an annual event.

To help spotlight these faculty members and their achievements, they were invited to name a book that is special to them. A copy of the books they identified, each with a commemorative bookplate including the faculty member’s name and the year of tenure and/or promotion, is featured in a special exhibit in the Walton Reading Room. These books will be added to the Libraries’ permanent collection, if not already owned. Each faculty member is highlighted with their photograph, the name of their department, their new title, the name of the book they selected, and their personal statement about the book.

The personal descriptions of the books, proudly chosen by these faculty members, range from appreciations of the scholarly book that was most crucial to their research, to a description of a self-authored book of which the faculty member is most proud, to distant memories of a book read—or heard—during childhood, to expressions of gratefulness for a book that articulated ultimate truths, to a statement about a book that most inspired or encouraged its reader. I am grateful to the faculty who took the time to provide these book selections and descriptions. I think this brochure is testament to the fact that the book, thoughtfully and quietly read over a period of days or weeks, is very much alive, often holding great transformative powers, not only with relation to one’s vocation and career but in shaping one’s life and values.

Thanks are due to Chancellor G. David Gearhart and Provost Sharon Gaber, who are the sponsors of this event, and to the planners: Linda Dizney of the Provost’s Office, Roy Cordell of University Relations, and Molly Boyd, Anne Marie Candido, Sheri Gallaher, Martha Guirl-Phillips, and Dawn Lingelbach of the University Libraries.

Carolyn Henderson Allen

Dean of Libraries

September 8, 2010
**Distinguished Professors**

**Mr. Marlon M. Blackwell**
Fay Jones School of Architecture
Department of Architecture
Appointment to Distinguished Professor

*Seeing is Forgetting the Name of the Thing One Sees*
by Lawrence Weschler (1982)

“A living biography of the great artist; Robert Irwin opened my eyes to the power of art to intensify and enrich one’s perceptual experience of the world. The book also demonstrated to me the poignancy of a life dedicated to the questioning, teaching, and making of things that operate in the realm of qualities.”

**Dr. Peter S. Ungar**
J. William Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences
Department of Anthropology
Appointment to Distinguished Professor

*Mammal Teeth: Origins, Evolution, and Diversity*
by Peter S. Ungar (2010)

“This book represents the culmination of my work since my last promotion.”
The Mahabharata (4th Century)

“The Mahabharata is one of the two great Hindu epics. The complete translation is in twelve volumes. Even though this is a famous Indian work, I could not read it when I was in India because it was not available in most of the libraries. When I came here in the 1980s, I found a copy in our library and read them. Especially I like the Santi parva, which is described in volumes 8 to 10, and Anussana parva in volumes 10 to 11. These volumes discuss the importance of santi or peace and salvation or moksha in one’s life. To live our everyday lives, we need artha or material things and kama or love. To satisfy our needs, one has to live according to certain laws or expectations of society, and this is called dharma or morals. The challenge of living a peaceful life in the midst of obtaining artha and kama without violating dharma for everyday life is discussed in many ways as questions and answers. Discussing different situations from common man to kings and ministers gives a better perspective of how to approach life. I was told that this work was expected to be read by advisors to kings in those days. After reading this work, I bought a copy, hoping that my kids will read it some day. This work helped me to face many challenging situations in my life boldly and peacefully, and I recommend anyone to read it for a peaceful life.”
Dr. Barbara B. Shadden
College of Education and Health Professions
Department of Rehabilitation, Human Resources and Communication Disorders
Appointment to University Professor

*The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran (1923)

“I don’t remember life without reading, so I find it almost impossible to select one book that has been most influential in my life. My mother often told the story of finding me at the age of five hiding beneath the blankets of my bed with a stolen flashlight reading a favorite book. Since I must choose, I select *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran. I probably read this when I was fourteen or fifteen, an impressionable age. I discovered the book at my generation’s version of a garage sale—the white elephant sale—and bought it because it had a pretty leather cover. I remember being puzzled when I began to read, then slowly beginning to realize the power of words to raise questions, suggest ways of living, guide values. As a typical teenager, I was filled with the usual angst about life, or at least about my life. In the words and thoughts of Gibran, I found some peace and some answers and reassurance that I was not alone. So I also learned that words helped me feel part of a larger community. I don’t know how the content of *The Prophet* would move me today, but this book showed me that the printed word makes a difference in the lives of people.”
Professors

Dr. Denise R. Beike
J. William Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences
Department of Psychology
Promotion to Professor

*Searching for Memory: The Brain, the Mind, and the Past* by Daniel Schacter (1996)

“Among a number of other books and scholarly articles I read around the same time, Schacter’s book inspired me to shift my research focus toward the study of autobiographical memory. Although I was familiar with much of the research on memory before reading Schacter’s book, his descriptions of memory phenomena really sold me on the fact that memory is both important and fascinating—that it is the center of human experience. I could see the questions that had always intrigued me as primarily questions about memory rather than questions about the self or emotion (as I had previously thought of them).

Dr. Stephen K. Boss
J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Geosciences
Promotion to Professor

*The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway (1952)

“This book is of significance to me because the protagonist, Santiago, is symbolic of our lives. Santiago rises each day to toil, largely unrecognized, yet he perseveres, doing only what he knows to ‘do’ best. His epic struggle takes place alone, beyond the vision of others. How much like our own lives is his, where others cannot know of the challenges each person endures. In the end, his struggle is the only reward, known but to him, though others come to suspect and appreciate the effort of his life. And so it is with each of us.”
“This is an important book for stream ecologists because it brings together a lot of information about the rivers in North America that can be used and referenced by researchers. If available, I could assign readings from it for my students. The book obtained very favorable reviews and has won several awards. Each chapter was written by regional experts selected from the area where the rivers occur. I was pleased to have been asked to write about the largest region and the largest river(s). In fact, I was also asked by the editors to write about the rivers of the southern plains, but deferred that to my friend and very capable river ecologist Dr. Bill Matthews at the University of Oklahoma. I asked my wife, Kristine Brown, Dr. Don Jackson at Mississippi State University, and Kevin Pierson, a former student now with The Audubon Society, to co-author with me.”
Dr. Carl J. Circo

School of Law
Promotion to Professor of Law


“I treasure *An Army at Dawn* as a tribute to my father, Joseph Circo, who served during the North African campaign, and to my mother, Carmella Circo, who worked in a bomber plant during the war. My parents’ names appear in no books, but an important part of their story is recorded here. The war separated my parents for three long and difficult years shortly after they married.

When I was a child, my father sometimes spoke of these places, times, and people with such detail that I see his image in the pages of Atkinson’s book. What impresses me most is that the stories of my parents’ experiences during the war reflect little of the sacrifice that they and their generation endured. Rather, much like Atkinson’s account of the campaign in North Africa, they simply confirm the pragmatic drive of those who know what they must do even though they cannot be sure how to do it. As children of immigrants, and burdened by the Great Depression and World War II, my parents had no opportunity to complete their formal studies, but from them I acquired a reverence for education, a lifetime devotion to hard work, and the knowledge that faith and perseverance can overcome all manner of tragedy, setbacks, and missteps.”
Mr. Tom W. Dillard
University Libraries
Tenure


“This book represents a lifetime of studying the people of Arkansas. The seventy-four people highlighted in this volume cover the spectrum from U.S. senators to a Spanish spy, from renowned writers to a maker of archeological fakes. By understanding the incredible contributions Arkansans have made to the nation, one is better prepared to deal with the prevailing stereotypes about Arkansas.”
Dr. Alan Ellstrand
Sam M. Walton College of Business
Department of Management
Promotion to Professor

Dangerous Liaisons? When Cultivated Plants Mate with Their Wild Relatives by Norman C. Ellstrand (2005)

“The book I have selected was written by my brother, Norman C. Ellstrand, a professor of genetics at the University of California, Riverside. The book provides an objective view of key issues underlying the debate over genetically modified organisms. As a management professor, these issues are only tangentially relevant to my research and teaching interests in strategic management. However, I selected the book not because of its content, but as a tribute to the author. Not only am I proud of the many distinguished accomplishments of my brother, but he has been an important source of guidance and inspiration to me in my career. Although we are in very different academic disciplines, many of the rules of the game are the same across our disciplines and institutions. My brother has always offered me sound advice as I have advanced through the academic ranks. Through this tribute, I hope he will understand how helpful he has been to me over the years and share in my accomplishment of attaining the rank of professor.”

Dr. Magda El-Shenawee
College of Engineering
Department of Electrical Engineering
Promotion to Professor
Dr. Uche Ewelukwa
School of Law
Promotion to Professor of Law

*The Pilgrim’s Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come* by John Bunyan (1678)

“*Pilgrim’s Progress* taught me the importance of having a goal in life and the need to pursue my life goals fearlessly and with un- wavering faith, dedication, and passion, ignoring all obstacles and problems along the way. Pilgrim’s journey convinced me that no goal, spiritual, academic, or professional, is unattainable with help from above. Through reading *Pilgrim’s Progress*, I learned that to live a purposeful life and succeed, I must have the mindset of a sojourner, very much like the protagonist in the book. As an African woman, I, like millions in the continent, have confronted situations that could easily plunge one into despair and hopelessness; *Pilgrim’s Progress* provided and continues to provide a lens through which I understand and take on life’s challenges and struggles. The book has helped me to remain grounded, purposeful, and accountable. Ultimately, I chose this title because it underscores for me the importance of always remembering where I am coming from and the reason(s) why I am here on earth.”

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Dr. Lynn C. Koch
College of Education and Health Professions
Department of Rehabilitation, Human Resources and Communication Disorders

*Five Little Peppers and How They Grew* by Margaret Sidney (1881)

“As a child, I struggled with reading until one of my teachers encouraged me to get a library card. This is the first chapter book I read cover to cover, and it began a lifelong love of and adventure in reading.”
**Mr. Jura G. Margulis**

J. William Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences  
Department of Music  
Promotion to Professor

*Jura Margulis Live on the Horowitz Steinway* by Jura Margulis  
(audio CD, 2006) and *Piano Sonata in B Minor*, a facsimile score by Franz Liszt (2009)
Dr. Scott J. Mason
College of Engineering
Department of Industrial Engineering
Promotion to Professor

Dr. Linda Myers
Sam M. Walton College of Business
Department of Accounting
Promotion to Professor

Positive Accounting Theory by Ross Watts (1985)

“I chose Positive Accounting Theory simply because it’s one of the most influential books in accounting and changed the course of accounting research by moving us away from normative studies to studies that investigate why the world functions as it does. It’s a book to which every Ph.D. student in Accounting should have access.”
**Dr. Janine A. Parry**
J. William Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences
Department of Political Science
Promotion to Professor

*Arkansas Politics and Government: Do the People Rule?*
by Diane Blair (1988)

“Diane’s book is sublime in its perfect blend of scholarship and citizenship. It is thoroughly-researched, beautifully-written, and relevant. It is a model for what professors should be doing, as was she.”

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**Dr. J. Michael Plavcan**
J. William Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences
Department of Anthropology
Promotion to Professor

*The Panda’s Thumb* by Steven J. Gould (1980)

“This book was formative in my career, as I read this collection of essays on natural history and evolutionary biology just before I left for college. Gould’s skill at unveiling the marvels of nature and evolution, as well as his ability to tell the stories behind discoveries, helped spark my interest in natural history and my pursuit of a career studying the beauty of the natural world.”
Dr. Jennie S. Popp
Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food, & Life Sciences
Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness
Promotion to Professor

The Merchant of Venice by William Shakespeare (1598)

“When I was a high school freshman, my English instructor assigned six plays and novels at the beginning of the year. While other more contemporary options looked more appealing, I decided to give Shakespeare a whirl first. This play has held a place of honor in my home library ever since for three reasons. First, two of the main characters, Bassanio and Portia, provided good evidence that love, not money, is the path to happiness. Second, Portia inspired me to believe in myself and my abilities, and never to be afraid to fight for what I believe is right. Finally, Shakespeare himself showed me the rewards of keeping an open mind to new experiences as life lessons, and the inspirations that can come from unexpected places.”

Dr. Yo'av Rieck
J. William Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences
Department of Mathematical Sciences
Promotion to Professor

Three-Dimensional Geometry and Topology
by William P. Thurston (1997)

“In the 1970s, a young American mathematician called William P. Thurston proposed a wild conjecture that classified all possible three-dimensional spaces, such as the large-scale structure of our universe. In a course given in Princeton in the late 70s, Thurston suggested various imaginative ways to tackle the problem, and practically every method he developed grew into a rich field of study. The class notes that circulated throughout the mathematical community have helped (and continue to help) educate many geometers, of which I am one. This book is the first of three parts of a detailed reworking of these notes.”
Dr. Gary W. Ritter
College of Education and Health Professions
Department of Education Reform
Promotion to Professor

*There Are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing Up in the Other America* by Alex Kotlowitz (1992)

“These books played an important role in shaping my views on education reform and strategies for improving the education system in the U.S. In *There are No Children Here*, Kotlowitz tells the story of two boys trying to succeed in school as a way to escape the disadvantages they face every day. For me, a couple of years removed from working in an inner city school, this was an important and vivid reminder of the many challenges facing students in poverty. So, I clearly had made the goal of improving schools for kids a career objective of mine, but I was not sure how to do this. The Hanushek book, which I read one year later, described the kind of careful thinking and rigorous analysis that has the best chance of leading to positive school reform for our students.”

Dr. Manuel D. Rossetti
College of Engineering
Department of Industrial Engineering
Promotion to Professor

*Simulation Modeling and Arena* by Manuel D. Rossetti (2009)

“I selected this book because it represents over twenty years of my experience working with and teaching computer simulation. The book represents a pragmatic, active learning, and rigorous approach to preparing students for a topic that is extremely challenging. Since computer simulation modeling combines data collection, probability modeling, statistical modeling, computer programming, mathematical modeling, and design, the material in this book represents a culmination of many of the key ideas and concepts that an industrial engineer must use in the field.”
Dr. Richard D. Sonn
J. William Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences
Department of History
Promotion to Professor

Sex, Violence, and the Avant-Garde: Anarchism in Interwar France
by Richard D. Sonn (2010)

“This book is the culmination of a number of years of work and bridges the experiences of my youth with that of my research field in modern French history. One of the publisher’s blurbs on the back cover, written by Prof. Martin Jay of the University of California, Berkeley, who also happened to be my mentor in graduate school, captures this well:

“Drawing on a wealth of new sources and a lifetime immersion in the history of European anarchism, Richard Sonn has fashioned a fresh and arresting account of the libertarian and libertine left in France between the wars. Unflinchingly acknowledging their more dubious passions, such as eugenics, he nonetheless provides us a sympathetic portrait of men and women dreaming of a better world, free of economic injustice, state tyranny, and the repression of the body. Rather than a period of decline for anarchism, the interwar years in France, he demonstrates, were an era of renewal based on ethical principles and the repudiation of violence, whose echoes reverberated in the 1960s and beyond.”
"In the story of the Road to Emmaus, the risen Christ appears unrecognized to some travelers who are despondent over what to do next, after their belief in a better life for themselves has been crushed by the harsh realities of the crucifixion and the repression of the early Christians by the Roman authorities. He helps them see that some essential Scriptures that would help them are admittedly hard for anyone to understand, but that this is no reason to give up trying, because mastering them may well provide a key to their future. By the time these formerly despondent travelers get it, He disappears from their midst. The travelers then recount to each other how their hearts were warmed by his explanations and reassurances. This story captures the essence of the life’s work of a university reference librarian. Our students are on their difficult road to a degree and usually cross our paths only when they are in deep despair about some major paper or research project. They don’t know us personally, but we sympathetically hear out their often very personal stories of being lost and confused. We buck them a bit, and then help them find the literature that will help them regain hope. We build their faith in their own abilities to get the job done. At the end of the day, we just disappear. But before we can do so in good conscience, we must first have opened up their understanding to the particular ‘scriptures’ that will help them. . . . And, yes, on our very best days, we will have set their hearts on fire!"

“This book studies and analyzes the processes of growth and advancement of minority executives from three U.S. companies that have been successful in developing minority leaders from entry to executive level. It offers insightful advice to aspiring young managers on how to seek out mentoring relationships from senior corporation leaders to gain knowledge about organizational culture and to build a network of developmental relationships. I shared this classic work with my colleague, La Loria Konata, and we decided to do research on diversity and career development issues in the library profession using the three paradigms laid out in the book as our theoretical frame. Our research proposal landed us a research grant from the American Library Association Diversity Office in 2003. The result of our six-month research was published as a book chapter, ‘Connect Diversity to Management: Further Insights,’ in Our New Public, A Changing Clientele (J. R. Kennedy, L. Vardaman, and G. McCabe ed. Westport Conn.: Library Unlimited, 2008). The invaluable advice from this book is to seek mentorship and build a professional network early in one’s career. While I was not climbing a corporate career ladder, the book never failed to inspire me to attain higher academic and scholarly goals.”
Dr. Mindy S. Bradley-Engen
J. William Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences
Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice
Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor

*Naked Lives: Inside the Worlds of Exotic Dance*
by Mindy S. Bradley-Engen (2009)

“This work is my first (although hopefully not only) book, and as such represents my first self-directed, large-scale, multi-level qualitative sociological endeavor. Although there is a fairly large scholarly literature on stripping as an occupation, much of this literature is limited to auto-ethnographies, single-case studies, or small-sample participant observation research. The lack of systematic comparative analyses of different kinds of social environments was a glaring gap in the literature. I resolved to fill this gap, and do so in a truly sociological and creative fashion. This decision had tremendous impact on my life. My research area placed considerable stress on my career, productivity, professional relationships, and personal life. At many times it would have been much easier to ‘sell out,’ do something more conventional, and quit fighting the battles my ‘mainstream’ colleagues did not have to face. But I refused to give up on this area of research, believing that ultimately I would overcome the many obstacles in my path to produce something both truly sociological and theoretically and methodologically original. Acknowledging all its flaws, I nonetheless embrace this book as my first big victory in this regard.”
**Dr. Nebil Buyurgan**

College of Engineering  
Department of Industrial Engineering  
Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor

*The Last Lecture* by Randy Pausch (2008)

“This book inspired me more than any book; it was the best guide for me as an educator and a parent that made me change many things in my life. More importantly, it spoke my language; it put everything in an analytical way.”

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**Dr. Jesse J. Casana**

J. William Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences  
Department of Anthropology  
Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor


“This book is the final publication of a series of excavations conducted during the 1930s in the same region where I currently work. Robert Braidwood, who wrote the book, is really the father of modern scientific archaeology, and this volume represents one of the finest site reports ever produced. Even though the book is old, it remains the most important publication on the archaeology of the region and an essential reference for all work done there today. Much of my research has built on the findings of this early project and in some ways revised and updated them.”
Dr. Jackson Cothren
J. William Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences
Department of Geosciences
Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor

_Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen: Reflections at Sixty and Beyond_
by Larry McMurtry (1999)

“I first read this book as an adult, but I wished I had been introduced to it earlier in my life. Since reading it, I see my life growing up in (and still very much a displaced resident of) a small town in eastern Arkansas with a good deal more appreciation for its complexities.”

Dr. Ann M. Killenbeck
School of Law
Promotion to Associate Professor of Law
**Dr. Seok Eun Kim**  
J. William Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences  
Department of Political Science  
Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor

*The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*  
by Thomas L. Friedman (2007).

“The book is a bestselling book across disciplines, but probably more popular in management and political science. The book analyzes globalization, primarily in the early 21st century. The author argues that there are ten forces that have flattened the world, such as the collapse of the Berlin Wall, Outsourcing, Insourcing, and In-forming (example, Google). These ten forces are leveling the playing field in terms of commerce, in which all competitors have an equal opportunity. This book will be useful for my teaching in public management because one of the big trends in (public) management is networking in which public, private, and nonprofits in the U.S. and other countries must collaborate to find optimal solutions for increasingly ‘wicked’ public problems such as water, education, energy, and crime.”

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**Ms. Patricia E. Kirkwood**  
University Libraries  
Tenure

*Chemistry Imagined: Reflections on Science* by Roald Hoffmann and Vivian Torrence (1995)

“The combination of science, poetry and art inspires me to remember why I chose to become a chemist. Then, as some of the images used in the collages were taken from books discarded from a library I managed, it reminds me of synergy of life and how our learning and loves often combine to make art that pleases the eye and fills the soul.”
Dr. Daniel B. Kissinger
College of Education and Health Professions
Department of Rehabilitation, Human Resources, and Communication Disorders
Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor

Dr. Yvette Murphy-Erby
J. William Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences
School of Social Work
Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor

Incorporating Intersectionality in Social Work Practice, Research, Policy, and Education by Yvette Murphy (2009)

“I selected this book because it constitutes a milestone in social work literature and crystallizes the most valuable aspects of social work theory and practice—its holistic perspective, systems-based approach, and commitment to social justice. The book provides guidance for understanding how social constructions such as race, class, and gender intersect with one another and contribute to the oppression of marginalized groups. The book is a product of the University of Arkansas’s Intersectionality Research Team, co-founded in 2004 by myself and Dr. Ania Zajicek, and reflects the team’s commitment to diversity by mitigating the oppression of marginalized groups.”
Dr. Chang S. Nam
College of Engineering
Department of Industrial Engineering
Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor


“I chose this book because it is an uncanny testament to the brutalities of history, especially Korea history, and a nervy attempt to remind us that human beings are worth dignifying. Ten Thousand Lives widened the way I see human beings and, more broadly, the world.”

Dr. Justin Nolan
J. William Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences
Department of Anthropology
Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor

Lines: A Brief History by Tim Ingold (2007)
Ted Sizer’s work helped me imagine the school I wish I had growing up, and that I hoped other children would some day enjoy.”

“My translation from the Italian won the 1996 PEN Renato Poggioli Translation Award.”
**Dr. Jeffrey D. Silberman**

J. William Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences
Department of Biological Sciences
Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor


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**Dr. Ned Snow**

School of Law
Tenure

*Commentaries on the Constitution of the United States* by Joseph Story (1833)

“In this work, Justice Joseph Story examines the meaning and history of the United States’ Constitution. He methodically analyzes phrases and broad topics against the history of the common law and the formation of the Constitution. Standing as the first comprehensive treatise on the Constitution, *Commentaries* remains a guiding influence in constitutional jurisprudence. Justice Story’s reasoning and insights in this work achieve the intellectual integrity that is necessary for the rule of law itself.”
Dr. Jak Tchakhalian
J. William Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences
Department of Physics
Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor

*The Feynman Lectures on Physics* by Richard Feynman

“The first time I picked up this book in middle school was mostly accidental, because I could not find anything else to read during that summer. From the very first pages, I was completely attracted by the ingenious and non-mathematical explanation of natural phenomena. Later on during my freshmen year, I tried to study quantum mechanics from volume three, and again most of what I understand today about the nano-world comes from that lecture set, which I studied many years ago. Surprisingly, even today whenever I need to find a clear and ENTERTAINING way to explain the most complex phenomena to my students, I look up the fabulous book, which I am not afraid to call the Physics Bible for any civilized person who is interested in learning about internal workings of the universe. These lectures defined my way of thinking about physical phenomena.”

Dr. Suresh Kumar K. Thallapuranam
J. William Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor

*One, Two, Three . . . Infinity: Facts and Speculations of Science* by George Gamow (1947)

“This decades-old book was presented to me by my father on my fourteenth birthday. This book provided me the first real glimpse of the wonderful world of science and convinced me as a child that science is the best medium to understand the beauty and complexity of nature. Reading this book was a thought-provoking experience and for the first time helped me to conceptualize the universe as a definite but endless entity, and also perceive time as a possible fourth dimension. This book definitely had a profound influence on my career choice to be a scientist.”

“While studying geography on the sixth floor of the Spencer W. Kimble Tower at Brigham Young University in early 1998, lab manager George Golightly handed me a copy of the 1995 edition of this book. I had never heard of this respected biogeographer who actually cared about why the sky is blue. It was a time of discovery and inspiration. I became keenly aware that the thousands of hours I had spent between 1996-1998 struggling to produce a Gambel oak inventory for the U.S. Forest Service could benefit from a few hours reading geographic science books and digitally processing imagery collected from low Earth orbit! Little did I know I would soon move to South Carolina in 1999 to learn directly from the book’s author, that I would manage his NASA-affiliated lab from 2001-2004, and that I would contribute to a chapter on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the 2005 edition. I couldn’t then imagine that all of this would play a huge role in bringing me to Arkansas where I would have the opportunity to associate with individuals of such high caliber. After twelve years and a career launched, I am very grateful for this seemingly ordinary textbook.”