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University Relations, "Dr. Leonard Munstermann '64 will receive The Distinguished Alumni Award during Homecoming 2004" (2004). *Campus News Archive*. 2025.
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Dr. Leonard Munstermann '64 will receive The Distinguished Alumni Award during Homecoming 2004

Summary:

(September 23, 2004)-Dr. Leonard Munstermann, '64, research scientist at the Yale School of Public Health, will receive The Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Minnesota, Morris Alumni Association during the Alumni Association annual dinner to be held October 8 during Homecoming weekend. The award is presented annually to UMM alumni who have made noteworthy contributions in their professional lives, to public service, or in service to the University, thus reflecting favorably upon UMM.

“Leo has to count among the founders of UMM,” said Eric Klinger, professor of psychology at UMM, in his letter of nomination on behalf of Munstermann. “He early accrued some firsts: a member of the first UMM graduating class, the first senior president of the Morris Campus Student Association, and, as my first UMM undergraduate research assistant, he was the first undergraduate research assistant in psychology at UMM, and possibly at UMM in general. Given that in 1962 he also became editor of the Vanguard, as UMM’s student newspaper was then called, he was positioned to influence UMM policy at a critical stage in its development.”

Following his graduation, Munstermann became a life member of the UMM Alumni Association and a member of the University of Minnesota Presidents Club. He served in the Peace Corps as a high school teacher of science and biology in Ghana during 1964-66. He holds a master’s degree in biology from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities campus, and a doctoral degree in biology from Notre Dame.

“(Munstermann) became an entomologist, “ continued Klinger, “and, as befits any good Minnesotan, devoted himself to the study and control of mosquitoes. His research has taken him to 49 U.S. states and 56 foreign countries on every continent except Antarctica. He has slogged through Asian marshes, hiked up Andean mountains, and traversed many other exotic places in search of specimens. He has become a world-class scientific expert and resource on mosquitoes.”

He has been since 1995 Curator for Entomology at, and Associate Curator of, Yale University’s Peabody Museum of Natural History, a prestigious museum with 1.5 million insect specimens to organize and study. Since 1992 he has also been a research scientist at Yale University School of Medicine, where he teaches and supervises dissertations. From 1978 to 1992 he worked in varying research and teaching capacities at the University of Notre Dame.

In the course of this career, Munstermann has authored and co-authored 173 publications, of which 60 are articles in refereed scientific journals, 24 are chapters in scientific books. Additionally, he has presented 136 papers and posters at meetings of scientific societies and a number of prestigious invited lectures.

His research has since 1981 been funded by grants to him, mostly federal (National Institutes of Health), and he has brought in educational grants, mostly from the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation. He has been associated with other grants totaling several additional millions.

“In sum,” Klinger concluded, “it seems inescapably true that Leo has contributed to UMM, to science, and to humanity at a level of distinction that reflects most favorably on UMM and is clearly deserving of the Distinguished Alumni Award.”

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