

uwsp news release

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

University Relations and Communications, 715-346-3046, Fax 715-346-2042,

www.uwsp.edu/news

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Wilke reappointed Distinguished Professor by Board of Regents

Richard Wilke, an international leader in the field of environmental education, has been designated as a Distinguished Professor in the College of Natural Resources (CNR) at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP).

This is the third time Wilke has received this honor, the first being in 1996 and then again in 2001. He was reappointed by the UW System Board of Regents at its March meeting in Madison. His five-year re-appointment runs until March 2011.

The position includes funding for research assistants, equipment and supplies in addition to a portion of Wilke's salary. The regents make special appropriations for each professor and the faculty member is asked to raise additional non tax dollars from other sources to support their work. Wilke's outside support has come from a variety of sources including the National Wildlife Federation, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Northern States Power Company, the National Environmental Education and Training Foundation, the Wilderness Society, and the North American Association for Environmental Education. In addition, he has been the lead author of several competitive multi-million dollar grants from the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In total Wilke has brought over 20 million dollars in external funding to UWSP. He currently directs the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's national environmental education program which is headquartered at UWSP. Through this program over 100,000 educators receive professional development each year.

"Professor Wilke is the only faculty member in the history of UWSP to receive all three of the university's major faculty awards for teaching, research, and service," said Christine Thomas, dean of the CNR. "Perhaps most noteworthy is the Jeske Award presented to Wilke by the North American Association for Environmental

Education in 1992 for outstanding lifetime contributions to the field of environmental education.”

“Rick is responsible for much of the pioneering work in the area of building state capacity for environmental education,” said Deborah Simmons, director for the National Project for Excellence in Environmental Education, as well as the executive editor for the *Journal of Environmental Education*. “Because of Rick’s efforts more citizens have the knowledge and skills necessary to make intelligent decisions on complex environmental issues.”

The Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Soil Conservation Society, North American Association for Environmental Education, Izaak Walton League, Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education, Milwaukee Journal, Northern Illinois University and many other groups also have recognized Wilke.

In 1992 the North American Association for Environmental Education chose Wilke as its representative for Sustainable Development. In 1987 he was selected by the Milwaukee Journal as one of Wisconsin’s outstanding college and university faculty members. In 1996 he was paid special tribute by Carol Browner, U.S. EPA administrator, for his leadership as chair of the National Environmental Education Advisory Council.

Wilke began his career at UWSP in 1975 when he was hired as director of the Central Wisconsin Environmental Station (CWES). The facility is the laboratory for UWSP’s environmental education program, a model for similar programs around the country. In 1985 he was named associate dean for the CNR and held that position until 1998. He has since shared his expertise and knowledge with students in the classroom and in the field.

A native of Manitowoc, Wilke holds two degrees from UWSP and a doctorate from Southern Illinois University. He and his wife, Sarah, reside in Amherst.