



July 3, 2009

Biology professor wins NKU award

*By Howard McEwen
Enquirer contributor*

HIGHLAND HEIGHTS - Dr. Gregory A. Dahlem of Northern Kentucky University's Department of Biological Sciences has won the Michael C.C. and Susan S. Adams Outstanding Non-Tenure Track Faculty Member Award for 2009.

"I am surprised and greatly honored to have received this award," said Dahlem. "If I had to pick one aspect of my role as a faculty member at NKU (that earned the award), it would be my contagious enthusiasm for the field of biology and entomology and my undying curiosity about the natural world."

The award, announced in June, recognizes and rewards excellence in classroom instruction and contributions to the learning environment by full-time temporary and non-tenure track faculty members.

Dahlem, who has taught at NKU for 19 years, said each class has its own rewards.

"The chance that I have each semester to change students' lives and how they look at the living world is a great responsibility and provides great rewards," said Dahlem. "I really see the difference I can make when I have the chance to work with students one-on-one or in small groups."

Dahlem maintains an active research agenda, although as a non-tenure track professor it isn't required. He has developed a national and international reputation for his research in flesh flies and he has been writing a column titled "Research Briefs" for the American Entomologist since 1994.

He has been working on a research project with two scientists at the University of Cincinnati, Dr. Ron DeBry and Dr. Trevor Stamper. They are studying the development of a DNA-based identification system for forensically important flies through a grant from the National Institute of Justice.

"We hope this will provide a new tool for crime labs throughout the United States that will allow forensic scientists to better use insect evidence to solve homicide investigations - think Gil Grissom on CSI," Dahlem said.

Dahlem believes the main key to his earning the award is "for as long as I can remember, I always wanted to be an entomologist."

His main area of study is the identification of flesh flies.

"These are a very difficult group of flies to identify," he said. "While the over 300 species found in the United States look very similar to one another, the species have a wide range of natural histories."

Lee Weiner of the Department of Computer Science is the recipient of the Outstanding Part-Time Faculty Excellence in Instruction Award for 2009.
