

## Zopito Marini

The OCUFA Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards Committee is pleased to present an OCUFA Teaching Award for 2006 to Professor Zopito Marini of the Department of Child and Youth Studies at Brock University. Professor Marini is an exceptionally gifted and dedicated teacher whose impact on his students is far-reaching and profound.

Zopito Marini pioneered the Program of Child and Youth Studies at Brock, serving as its Director and then founding Chair of the new department, now one of Brock's largest and most vibrant. As a result, many students and colleagues throughout the Niagara region have been significantly impacted by Prof. Marini's exceptional teaching skills. Indeed, he has left a lasting impression as indicated by almost 150 glowing letters, notes, and email messages received in support of his nomination. For example, an undergraduate student wrote: "Dr. Marini...brought the material to life in his dynamic way... Often students would continue discussions on our way out of class because Marini's lectures were so fascinating, his delivery so passionate that we did not wish the class to end." Another put it this way: "Professor Marini is a teacher that shows a lot of passion for the material and cares deeply about the level of learning in his students." And yet another: "This course is my elective and... it's my absolute favourite. I love this class! It makes me think a lot about things I never thought about before."

Further evidence of his superior teaching skills includes his receiving last year the Brock University Award for Distinguished Teaching, and the Faculty of Social Sciences Award for Excellence in Teaching. He was also given the rare honour of delivering the Social Sciences Convocation address that drew a standing ovation. Furthermore, he is listed as one of Brock's favourite professors in a book entitled "The Student's Guide to Canadian Universities". Finally, his dedication to students is eloquently expressed in a short publication of his teaching philosophy entitled: "The Teacher as a Sherpa Guide" which has itself made widespread impact on students and colleagues.

At the graduate level Prof. Marini is an effective thesis supervisor and mentor who includes students in co-authored presentations and publications. A graduate student wrote: "Thank you for all your guidance and support... as well as making me smile and believe in myself through some hard times." Another expressed: "I will never forget all of your support, caring, and guidance! Thank you so much!!!"

Prof. Marini has provided educational leadership in workshops on evaluation methods to graduate teaching assistants, on the effective use of seminar systems to colleagues, and on bullying (his specialty) to various audiences. He has received many grants to develop the use of technology in university teaching (e.g. WebCT), resulting in a monograph, book chapter, manuals, videos, journal articles, and numerous presentations at pedagogical conferences and workshops across the country. He successfully lobbied Brock's administration to establish the Centre for Teaching and Learning and Educational Technologies, which helped improve teaching across campus. Finally, he shares his expertise with several social agencies, schools, and parent groups.

Zopito Marini is a dedicated professor who cares deeply about his students and his courses. He creates an environment where students feel comfortable asking questions. His students tell it best: "Marini's boundless enthusiasm was why I came to class every Friday morning at eight. He made the topics interesting and relevant. A fantastic professor."; "Thanks Professor Marini, for the first time in university I have understood and enjoyed learning about the theorists."; "Professor Marini is the best professor I ever had!"; and finally, "Dr. Marini challenged our thinking and made us go above and beyond the normal, everyday acceptance of information. He changed my life." What more can we ask of a university teacher? – only that he accept an OCUFA teaching award.