
John Adams Appointed to Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs

John S. Adams, professor of geography, planning, and public affairs and chair of the Department of Geography, has been named to the first Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs. Adams' appointment, which was announced this past June, was made by the Dean of the Graduate School and Vice President for Research Christine Maziar, based on recommendations from CURA.

"I'm highly honored and gratified to be associated with [the Fesler family's] generous support . . . of the University," Adams replied when asked for his reaction to the announcement. "Urban and regional analysis is often unfashionable among social scientists, but I've always felt that our land-grant university has a special mission to help Minnesotans understand our state and its place in the region, the nation, and the world." This endowment, he says, demonstrates that the Fesler family "understands the crucial role of philanthropy in making certain work possible that otherwise would remain undone."

The Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs is one of four endowed chairs and two named professorships made possible through a generous contribution to the University of Minnesota by David R. and Elizabeth P. Fesler. The Fesler-Lampert Endowment in Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies was initially established in 1985 through a \$1 million grant from the David R. Fesler Fund of the Saint Paul Foundation, Inc. The gift was matched by a \$1 million allocation from the Permanent University Fund, and the combined endowment and matching funds have now grown in value to over \$9.5 million. The endowment is intended to stimulate interdisciplinary research and teaching through the appointment of distinguished, broadly learned scholars to endowed faculty positions at the University of Minnesota.

Tom Scott, director of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, called Adams "the logical and obvious choice



John S. Adams

to be the first holder of the Fesler-Lampert Chair. The quality and quantity of his contributions to our understanding of urban affairs—through his research, teaching, and community outreach—are unmatched by anyone else at this or most other universities." Scott noted that Adams' "entire academic career as a student, teacher, and researcher has been focused on urban and regional change," and praised his "extensive contributions to the University, to professional geographers, and to the broader Minnesota community."

David Fesler also was pleased when he learned of Adams' appointment. "I took a course from Professor Adams many years ago on the geography of the Twin Cities," he explained, "and I enjoyed him very much as a teacher. Even though I'm a native of the Twin Cities and have lived here all my life, I learned a tremendous amount from that course. So when he was selected as the chair, I was elated." In addition, Fesler noted that Adams is a good choice for the honor because he has "always been involved in the community" and has been "very active in University affairs, above and beyond his contributions

[in the Humphrey Institute and Department of Geography]."

John Adams has been a professor of geography at the University of Minnesota for the last 30 years. He received his bachelor's degree at the University of St. Thomas and his master's degree at the University of Minnesota before completing his Ph.D. in economic geography at the University of Minnesota in 1966. Adams took a position as assistant professor at the Pennsylvania State University before returning to the University of Minnesota in 1970 as associate professor in the Department of Geography. During his career, Adams has also taught as a Fulbright Professor at Moscow State University and at the Economic University of Vienna, and has been a visiting professor or lecturer at literally dozens of colleges and universities throughout Europe, Asia, and North America.

In addition to his many teaching accomplishments, Adams served as the first director of the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs from 1976 to 1979. He has also directed the Urban Studies Program in the College of Liberal Arts, coordinated the Humphrey North-South Fellowship Program (a Fulbright Exchange program for officials from developing countries), and served a term as president of the Association of American Geographers.

Through his research, Adams has contributed significantly to knowledge and understanding of urban and regional affairs. He has written, edited, or co-authored over 100 articles, books, and reports on the American city, regional economic development, intra-urban migration, housing markets, urban transportation, and urban development. His publications include the four-volume *Contemporary Metropolitan America* (Ballinger, 1976), *A Comparative Atlas of America's Great Cities* (with Ronald Abler and Ki-Suk Lee; University of Minnesota Press, 1976), *Housing America in the 1980s* (Russell Sage Foundation, 1987), and *The Path of Urban Decline* (with Barbara VanDrasek and

Laura Lambert; Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, 1995). In addition, Adams has been a regular collaborator with CURA as well as a frequent contributor to the *CURA Reporter* over the past 25 years.

Currently, Adams is engaged in research with the University of Minnesota Center for Transportation Studies on land-use and transportation issues in Minnesota's major urban areas. He says he plans to use the resources provided by his appointment to revise and update *Minneapolis–St. Paul: People, Place and Public Life*—a book he co-authored with Barbara VanDrasek and published (with help from the Fesler family) with the University of Minnesota Press in 1993—based on population and housing data from the 2000 Census. "Much has changed since the first edition of that book," Adams explained. "[T]he number of households in our area has expanded faster than the housing stock, raising house prices and rents, and encouraging reinvestment in areas that had been deteriorating for several decades. Meanwhile, our first-ring suburbs are showing signs of aging, and property tax collections often are rising more slowly than what communities would like to spend on maintenance and improvement. At the outer edges of the greater Twin Cities region, low-density development adds to congestion on the region's trunk highway system, fraying nerves and challenging legislators and planners to figure out better ways to foster growth and guide change. These are just a few of the topics and issues facing us as we plan our revision." Adams added, "Our earlier book helped

many local citizens and leaders understand the way this area works. I hope that the revision will do the same."

The Fesler-Lampert Endowment is intended as a tribute to David Fesler's grandfathers, Bert Fesler and Jacob Lampert. Despite very different educational backgrounds, David Fesler noted, "they were both extremely interested in education." Bert Fesler graduated from Indiana University with a degree in ichthyology, became a self-taught lawyer, and then served as a district court judge in Duluth for nearly 30 years. In contrast, Jacob Lampert was an immigrant from Switzerland who Fesler said "never finished fifth grade. But he was very concerned that his children and grandchildren receive a good education." Lampert bought a retail lumber mill in 1887 that eventually grew into Lampert Yards, Inc., with lumber yards throughout the Midwest.

In addition to the chair in urban and regional affairs, the Fesler-Lampert endowment will be used to fund three other endowed chairs and two named professorships: The Fesler-Lampert Chair in Ecological/Environmental Economics (Steven Polasky, Applied Economics), The Fesler-Lampert Chair in Humanities (Madelon Sprengnether, English), The Fesler-Lampert Chair in Aging Studies (LaDora Thompson, Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation), The Fesler-Lampert Professor in Humanities (Anatoly Liberman, German, Scandinavian, & Dutch), and another professorship in an area of study yet to be determined.

The Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs will be funded for a minimum of three years, with each

chairholder appointed for a one-year period. The position will be funded initially by \$1 million of the Fesler-Lampert endowment which, at the current rate of payout, will provide the chairholder with approximately \$55,000 for research, salary, and logistical support. The funds will be jointly administered by the University of Minnesota Foundation and the University of Minnesota.

Credits

Photos on cover, pages 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 appear courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

Photos on pages 16, 19, 24, and 25 by Bob Friedman.

Photo on page 26 courtesy of John S. Adams.

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Meet CURA's New Editor and Communications Coordinator

This past June, CURA welcomed aboard Mike Greco, our new publications editor and communications coordinator. He takes over the position of editor from Judith Weir, who retired in January after 23 years at CURA.

Mike has been a freelance writer and editor for the past eight years, and started Dire Wolf Publishing Services in 1994. He has also taught communication studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (where he earned a masters degree), the University of Illinois (where he was a doctoral candidate), the General College at the University of Minnesota, and most recently St. Olaf College.

In addition to editing the *Reporter* and other CURA publications, Mike will be responsible for public outreach, media relations, and website development. He can be reached by phone at (612) 625-7501, or by e-mail at greco002@tc.umn.edu.

Shirley Bennett Retires

Shirley Bennett, who started with CURA some 33 years ago and for quite a while was CURA's only staff member, retired from her position as departmental Administrative Director at the end of July. For many years and for many people, CURA and Shirley Bennett were synonymous. There is no way to describe adequately the importance of her role with CURA, nor to express fully our appreciation for her years of faithful and dedicated service.

Shirley came to the West Bank from West Concord, Minnesota as a teenager, and although she leaves CURA, her heart will remain in the vicinity. Years ago she rode with the West Bank Motorcycle Club; her more recent riding has been confined to a chair in the local coffee shop.

Her long-term plans are indefinite at the moment, but she plans to visit friends in Ireland this fall. Shirley is part of CURA's heritage, and we will miss her!

Conference on Natural Capitalism and Eco-Industrial Development, October 4-5

"The Greening of Economic Opportunity: At the Firm, Industry, and Community Level," a conference on natural capitalism and eco-industrial development, will be held October 4-5, 2000, at the Earle Brown Center on the St. Paul campus of the University of Minnesota. The conference will feature a keynote address by Hunter Lovins, pioneer in sustainable development, and workshops by staff of the Rocky Mountain Institute. Also included will be workshops and presentations on eco-industrial development by staff of the Work and Environment Initiative at Cornell University. The conference is co-sponsored locally by CURA, the Green Institute, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and the Office of Environmental Assistance. For more information, visit the Green Institute website at <http://www.greeninstitute.org> or call (612) 278-7100.



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CURA connects University faculty and students with the people and public institutions working on significant community issues in Minnesota.

CURA helps:

- faculty and students produce more relevant research on critical issues
- students strengthen their education through practical experience
- government agencies and community organizations get the assistance they request
- the University of Minnesota fulfill its land grant and urban missions


The *CURA Reporter* is published quarterly to provide information about CURA projects and programs. This publication is available in alternate formats upon request.

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