

Professor given W. Germany's highest civilian award

By Stan Nelson
Of the Emerald

Distinguished scholars often let their accomplishments speak for themselves and remain silent in spoken acknowledgement.

Germanic languages and literatures Professor Emeritus Wolfgang Leppmann is one such man. In his more than 30 years of service at the University, Leppmann has earned high support and praise from fellow colleagues, both nationally and internationally.

This week the Federal Republic of Germany recognized Leppmann's lifetime outstanding achievements by presenting him the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit, one of the highest civilian awards granted by the West German government. The Order of Merit is rarely bestowed upon German languages, literature and cultural scholars such as Leppmann, said West German Consul General Eva Lindemann.

Lindemann presented the award to Leppmann Monday at a private ceremony held at the Faculty Club, calling him "a truly universal man" in research and wisdom.

"How fortunate that the University of Oregon has faculty members with the classical attributes of the inquisitive mind and intellectual reasoning power encompassing any and all subject matter that presents itself during a lifetime in an academic career," Lindemann said.

Lindemann further commended Leppmann for generating in students a mutual interest between West Germany and the United States.

"The award was arranged without my knowledge," Leppmann said. "I am very pleased. It was an honor given to the department as well as myself," he added.

Leppmann is a very modest man, said Roger Nicholls, professor of Germanic languages and literatures, which makes it difficult to know the extent Leppmann has contributed to education during his lifetime.

A native of Berlin, Leppmann received his early education in Germany, Switzerland, Italy and England before attending the University of Toronto, where he received his undergraduate and master's degrees. He later received his doctorate from Princeton University.

He first joined the University faculty in 1954 after serving three years as an instructor at Brown University. In the ensuing years, Leppmann taught at Yale University, the University of Virginia, the University of Toronto and Vassar College as a visiting professor, he said.

Leppmann was instrumental in the creation of what was to become the department of Germanic languages and literatures in 1964 and acted as the first head of the department, said Jean Woods, present department head.

Leppmann "has the knack of introduc-

ing students to the language and culture of Germany and making them want to pursue the field of study," Woods said. He has his students' admiration at both the undergraduate and post-graduate level.

Leppmann taught Wood's first- and second-year German instruction while she was an undergraduate at the University and helped provide incentive to go on to post-graduate work, she said.

Three of Leppmann's former students are past or present heads of Germanic language departments at U.S. colleges or universities, she said.

Besides educational instruction, Leppmann has proved to be a successful author, having written five internationally recognized books. Time Magazine described Leppmann's 1984 publication, *Rilke: A Life*, as "a rather brilliant account" of Rainier Maria Rilke, who was a 19th-century Czechoslovakian poet. The New Yorker and the New York Times also reviewed Leppmann's book.

The biography, originally written in German, has since been translated into French, Italian and is in the process of being translated into Czech.

His most recent publication is a novel on Gerhardt Hauptmann, a famous German author of the 19th and 20th centuries who began his career as a leader of the Naturalist movement.

Leppmann is also a frequent con-



Wolfgang Leppmann

tributor to the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, the German equivalent to the New York Times.

"His style of writing is admirable. He makes the struggle to learn German worthwhile," Woods said.

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Kesey

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Bookstore and confronted the two protesters, engaging in a discussion on the content of the article.

"I've caught a bunch a shit for (the article)," Kesey said.

Esquire published the story from the conference he attended in New York with noted poet Alan Ginsberg, Kesey said.

"Most of the comments aren't even mine," he said. "The other stuff were just plain dumb things to say, and I wish I hadn't done it."

One comment Esquire attributed to Kesey stated, "I believe if you put a polygraph on people and ask them, 'Are you happy with your life?' the homosexuals I know would say, 'Yes, of course, I am,' and the machine would say, 'You're lying.'"

"I said that," admitted Kesey, saying he didn't base the comment on any facts.

Kennedy and Seibert persisted in accusing Kesey of making inordinate observations of the AIDS issue, citing another passage from the article: "the scriptures, not just the Judeo-Christian scriptures but lots of scriptures, say, 'Don't screw animals,' it's not because God doesn't want us screwing animals, he's telling us that if we're going to screw animals, we're going to get things from them this is not a virus? What if we're manufacturing it?"

Kesey denied having said anything to that effect.

"When you stand up in front of the media, what comes out is another thing," Kesey said.

Seibert urged him to apologize before the estimated 100 people attending the awards banquet for the remarks he admitted making in the article. Kesey said he would apologize, but did not formally do so.

Ironically, Kesey is suing the University for \$4 million as a result of a January 1984 auto accident that claimed the life of his son while

on a University wrestling trip.

University President Paul Olum, representing the University, testified this week against Kesey's suit, which Kesey hopes will increase safety standards and precautions in transportation of athletic teams.

"Pioneers often wander off the path and have to try and chop their way back on," Kesey concluded.

As for the protest, Kennedy said he was satisfied with the effort. "I think Mr. Kesey knows where we are coming from. My opinion of him, based on what he said, hasn't changed.

Kennedy said he hopes the protest will encourage future judges to look more closely at the recipient's background.

Ideally, GALA had hoped to prevent the Pioneer Award from being given to Kesey. Kennedy said he was in contact earlier Thursday with members of a University faculty panel responsible for choosing this year's award recipients, urging them to reconsider Kesey's nomination.

Vice President for Administration Dan Williams, one of four on the award panel, said Kesey was picked primarily because he is a distinguished author.

"In our judgments, we did not examine the precise nature of the things he writes about," said Williams, adding that the panel had no knowledge of the Esquire article. "Had we known about it, I'm sure it would not have influenced our decision, which was based on the contribution he has made, not his opinions."

Other recipients of the Pioneer Award were Leonard Casanova, the University's football coach from 1951 to 1966 and athletic director emeritus; Jean Tate, Eugene real estate broker; Earle Chiles, president of the Chiles Foundation; and Robert Chandler, chairman and editor of the Bend Bulletin.

Criticism

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someone was paid to do," she said. The OSP program was something to be proud of and "naturally I am disappointed that OSP seems to be operating on a smaller scale than it was," Hartman said.

"Ismach said the article didn't have anything to do with it, that it was my unprofessional attitude in my suggestion that they hire somebody to take the position Mary Hartman used to have," Howard said.

"I'm really not going to speak to that," Ismach said. Ismach

would neither confirm nor deny Howard's accusations because it was a personnel matter, he said.

Although Ismach said "usually we'll work nine months in advance" in terms of hiring for adjunct positions, he said he didn't remember when the position was filled.

"It really is routine. We use different people year after year for the adjunct positions," he said. Hiring procedures are less formal for adjunct positions,

and Ismach usually confers with other journalism school administrators, he said.

"I just didn't think with the deal over the OSP it was wise to recommend him," Metzler said.

Howard believes the Emerald article was "the straw that broke the camel's back" and said the journalism school is hypocritical "to take something someone says and use it as grounds for dismissal," he said. "They're supposed to teach freedom of speech."