Dr. Edward Burger is a member of The Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts Board of Advisors

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Media contact: Lori Fogleman, Baylor University Director of Media Communications, (254) 710-6275 or Lori_Scott-Fogleman@baylor.edu
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Baylor University Honors Distinguished Williams College Math Professor With The Robert Foster Cherry Award for Great Teaching

Inspirational and passionate mathematician Edward Burger to receive $200,000 award for his ‘proven record as an extraordinary teacher and distinguished scholar’

WACO, Texas (Jan. 14, 2010) – Baylor University has named Dr. Edward B. Burger, Distinguished Professor of Mathematics and Gaudino Scholar at Williams College in Massachusetts, as the 2010 recipient of the Robert Foster Cherry Award for Great Teaching, the only national teaching award – with the single largest monetary reward of $200,000 – presented by a college or university to an individual for exceptional teaching.

“Baylor University is very pleased to honor Dr. Edward Burger, truly one of our nation’s most outstanding, passionate and creative mathematics professors, with Baylor’s 2010 Robert Foster Cherry Award for Great Teaching,” said Baylor Interim President David E. Garland.

“During our more than 160-year history, Baylor University has been recognized nationally for the emphasis we place on exceptional classroom teaching. Our students already benefit daily from our notable faculty, who understand and greatly appreciate the value of teaching,” Garland said. “The Cherry Award allows us to extend that experience by bringing to our campus some of the world’s greatest teachers, such as Dr. Burger. We congratulate our 2010 Cherry Award recipient and we look forward to welcoming him to Baylor University in the fall.”

The Cherry Award program at Baylor is designed to honor great teachers, to stimulate discussion in the academy about the value of teaching and to encourage
departments and institutions to value their own great teachers. Individuals nominated for the award have a proven record as an extraordinary teacher with a positive, inspiring and long-lasting effect on students, along with a record of distinguished scholarship.

Burger visited the Baylor campus in October 2009 to present a Cherry Finalist Lecture on “The Art of Exploring Invisible Worlds: Thinking Through the Fourth Dimension.” As the 2010 Cherry Award recipient, he will receive the $200,000 award, plus $25,000 for his home department at Williams College. He will teach in residence at Baylor during fall 2010.

“The Robert Foster Cherry Award for Great Teaching committee was very pleased with the strength of the applications for the 2010 award,” said Dr. Heidi J. Hornik, professor of art history and chair of the Cherry Award Committee. “All three finalists had successful visits and lectures on campus last fall. Dr. Burger demonstrated that he was not only a leading educator in his field but that he has truly committed his life to the effective teaching of mathematics.”

“I am extremely honored and humbled to learn that I will receive the 2010 Robert Foster Cherry Award for Great Teaching,” Burger said. “Now more than ever, our country is ready to begin a critical and honest discussion on the core tenets of education, which in my opinion include inspiring minds, fostering creative thinking and changing lives; and to consider imaginative means by which to realize these important goals. I hope that through Baylor University’s deep commitment to teaching, I will be able to add my voice to this important national conversation. I am also delighted and honored to be invited to join the Baylor community and look forward to collaborating with and getting to know the students, faculty, staff, and alumni of Baylor University.”

Burger’s national reputation has allowed him to serve as a consultant for the “NUMB3RS in the Classroom Project” with CBS-TV/Paramount Studios/Texas Instruments and most recently with NBC Learn, the educational arm of NBC News, on “The Science of the Olympic Winter Games.” The 16-part video series, which explores the science behind individual Olympic events, will air on the “Today Show” and throughout the 2010 Winter Olympics coverage on NBC-TV. Burger is featured in the “Mathletes” segment, in which he discusses the math found in the Olympic games. The series is available online at http://www.nbclearn.com/olympics.

Hornik said that although Burger’s main focus is on undergraduate education, the Williams professor also is concerned with math education on the secondary school level. In addition to teaching in residence at Baylor in the fall, Burger plans to reach out to local schools and organizations to demonstrate his passion for mathematics and mathematical thinking.
“In fact, some Waco-area schools have used his math classroom video tutorials to great success,” Hornik said. “His love of mathematics will be felt by students and faculty at Baylor, as well as throughout the Waco community.”

Dr. Lance Littlejohn, chair of the department of mathematics at Baylor, said he and his colleagues look forward to Burger’s presence next fall among his department’s already award-winning faculty and undergraduates of all majors at Baylor.

“Ed Burger is, quite simply, a teaching phenomenon,” Littlejohn said. “He is immaculately organized and extremely articulate with an engaging personality, and he has an uncanny ability of taking very difficult mathematics concepts and making them understandable to all students. It is well known that, in Ed’s classes, students are pumped with excitement when his class starts and, at the end of his lectures, they leave his classroom with an even higher feeling of exhilaration.

“I want our undergraduate non-math majors to experience him as a teacher, and, equally important, I want our math majors to take a class from him as well,” Littlejohn added. “Taking a class from Ed Burger will, I am certain, be a positive experience that our students will never forget.”

In addition to Burger, Baylor also named two other distinguished scholar/teachers as Cherry Award Finalists: Dr. Roger Rosenblatt, Distinguished Professor of English at Stony Brook University, and Dr. Elliott West, Alumni Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Arkansas. The Cherry Finalists each received $15,000, while their home departments also received $10,000 for the development of teaching skills.

About Baylor University’s Robert Foster Cherry Award for Great Teaching
The Cherry Award was created by Robert Foster Cherry, who earned his A.B. from Baylor in 1929. He enrolled in the Baylor Law School in 1932 and passed the Texas State Bar Examination the following year. With a deep appreciation for how his life had been changed by significant teachers, he made an exceptional estate bequest to establish the Cherry Award program to recognize excellent teachers and bring them in contact with Baylor students. The inaugural Robert Foster Cherry Award was presented in 1991 and is now awarded biennially.

The Cherry Finalists each receive $15,000 and present a series of lectures at Baylor during the fall semester. In addition, each finalist presents a Cherry Award Lecture on their home campuses during the upcoming academic year. The home department of the finalists also receives $10,000 to foster the development of teaching skills.
In addition to the monetary awards presented to each finalist, the winner of the Cherry Award receives an additional $200,000, as well as $25,000 for the recipient’s home department, for an award prize totaling $250,000.

For additional information on Baylor’s Robert Foster Cherry Award for Great Teaching, including past recipients and the 2012 Cherry Award nomination process, visit www.baylor.edu/cherry_awards. The nomination deadline for the 2012 award is Nov. 1, 2010.

**About Dr. Edward B. Burger, 2010 Cherry Award Recipient**

Dr. Edward B. Burger has taught mathematics at Williams College since 1990. Since that time, he has been honored with numerous teaching and writing awards, including the 2007 Award of Excellence from *Technology & Learning* magazine, the 2006 Reader's Digest “100 Best of America” as Best Math Teacher, and the 2006 Lester R. Ford Award, the 2004 Chauvenet Prize and the 2001 Deborah and Franklin Tepper Haimo Award for Distinguished College Teaching of Mathematics, all from the Mathematical Association of America.

He is the author or co-author of more than 30 research articles and 21 books and CD-ROM texts, including *The Heart of Mathematics: An Invitation to Effective Thinking*; *Coincidences, Chaos, and All That Math Jazz: Making Light of Weighty Ideas* (each co-authored with Michael Starbird from The University of Texas at Austin); and *Extending the Frontiers of Mathematics: Inquiries into Proof and Argumentation*. He also is an associate editor for *The American Mathematical Monthly* and a member of the editorial board for *Math Horizons*.

Burger also has written and appeared in hundreds of educational videos, including the 24-lecture video series, “Zero to Infinity: A History of Numbers” and “An Introduction to Number Theory” in “The Great Courses” series through The Teaching Company. Some of his college-level videos can be found at youtube.com. He also has appeared on ABC-TV, NBC-TV and NPR stations around the country.

His research interests include algebraic number theory, Diophantine analysis, geometry of numbers, and the theory of continued fractions. He teaches abstract algebra, the art of creating mathematics and Diophantine analysis. His work on fostering and teaching creativity has been recognized in a variety of ways. He is currently a Member of the Board of The Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts.

Burger earned his bachelor's degree in mathematics *summa cum laude* with distinction from Connecticut College in 1985. He received his doctorate in 1990 from The University of Texas at Austin. He has taught or been a visiting scholar at the University of Waterloo in Canada, The University of Texas at Austin,
Westminster College, Texas Christian University, the University of Colorado at Boulder, and Macquarie University in Australia.

**About Baylor University**
A private Christian university and a nationally ranked liberal arts institution, Baylor University is classified by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as a research university with “high research activity.” This blends with Baylor’s international reputation for educational excellence built upon the faculty’s commitment to teaching, scholarship and interdisciplinary research to produce outstanding graduates.

Baylor was chartered in 1845 by the Republic of Texas through the efforts of Baptist pioneers, making Baylor the oldest, continually operating university in the state. Baylor’s 735-acre campus in Waco, Texas, is home to more than 14,500 students from all 50 states and 80 countries.

Baylor’s mission is to educate men and women for worldwide leadership and service by integrating academic excellence and Christian commitment within a caring community. Baylor’s nationally recognized academic divisions offer baccalaureate, master’s and doctoral degrees through 11 academic units: College of Arts and Sciences, Hankamer School of Business, School of Education, School of Engineering and Computer Science, Honors College, Law School, School of Music, Louise Herrington School of Nursing, School of Social Work, George W. Truett Theological Seminary and the Graduate School.

**Contacts:**
For more information about the Cherry Award, contact Linda McGregor, program coordinator for the Cherry Award, at (254) 710-2923 or visit [www.baylor.edu/cherry_awards](http://www.baylor.edu/cherry_awards), Dr. Heidi Hornik at (254) 710-4548 or Heidi_Hornik@baylor.edu and Dr. Edward Burger at (413) 597-2454 or eburger@williams.edu.