"There is nothing more precious than a gifted mind. Our colleges and universities rise above the commonplace when they make it possible for the truly great thinkers of our time to nurture the creative spirit of our youth. This is the educational process at its finest." (Wilson H. Elkins)

The Endowed Professorship

For centuries, society has recognized and rewarded outstanding teachers and leaders. In the world of higher education, special distinction is often accorded renowned professors in the form of endowed professorships.

Endowed professorships date back to the sixteenth century, when England's King Henry VIII established the Regius Professorships at Oxford University. These positions are now among the highest honors in academic life.

The Elkins Professorship

In this proud tradition, the Wilson H. Elkins Professorship was established in 1978 as the first permanently endowed, university-wide professorship at the University of Maryland.

The professorship is a fitting way to perpetuate the name and contributions of Wilson H. Elkins, a former Rhodes scholar who led the University of Maryland to new levels of distinction, as its president from 1954 to 1978. Under Dr. Elkins' leadership, the university grew notably in size, scope, and standing.

When the new University System of Maryland began in 1988, Dr. Elkins agreed that his professorship should extend to the entire USM family.

The Elkins Professorship was first held by French geographer Jean Gottmann, of Oxford University. Dr. Gottmann was appointed visiting professor at the University of Maryland, College Park. Since then, the Elkins Professorship has been held by such outstanding scholars as mathematician Charles Fefferman, biologist Keith Proter, and mathematical physicist Michael Fisher.
Candidates for the Elkins Professorship must possess the following qualifications:

- A solid record of achievement in one's academic or professional discipline;
- Demonstrated desire and ability to lead and inspire undergraduate and graduate students in the full range of learning situations, from lectures to student-teacher discussions;
- Evidence of significant achievement beyond one's traditional discipline, but with a scholarly and professional relationship to the academic enterprise at USM; and
- Demonstrated ability and intent to pursue scholarly or professional endeavors beyond the USM.

**Funding the Professorship**

The Wilson H. Elkins Endowment Fund provides support in combination with institutional and System resources for compensation and program assistance to the Elkins Professor. This endowment, and others like it, widen the University System of Maryland's margin of excellence and further its mission of teaching, research, and service.

More information about the Elkins Professorship, including ways individuals can support the professorship, is available from the University System of Maryland Office of Academic Affairs.