

Mayberry receives Abigail Allen Award for Service to Women

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Dr. Susan Mayberry, professor of English in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences at Alfred University, received the Abigail Allen Faculty Award for service to women during the annual Honors Convocation. Mayberry, who has taught at Alfred University for 25 years, "exemplifies Abigail Allen's famous exhortation to be 'radical, radical to the core,'" according to the citation read during Honors Convocation. The citation says that Mayberry's colleagues "reflected on the force she has been - and continues to be - on the AU campus[holding] her own in a faculty of mostly men." Her colleagues credited her with introducing the texts such as Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* to the campus community. "And she let it be known that just because she was small and a woman didn't mean she wasn't in charge." Mayberry was director of the Women's Studies Program from 1988 to 1991 in addition to teaching courses in Shakespeare, Southern literature, British and American poetry and African-American women writers. It was her interest in African-American women writers that led her to write *Can't I Love What I Criticize: The Masculine and Morrison*, an exploration of male characters in Nobel Prize-winning author Toni Morrison's novels. Published by the University of Georgia Press in 2007, Mayberry's book received a 2008 Toni Morrison Society Book Recognition Award and was nominated for a 2008 Southern Atlantic Modern Language Association Studies Award. But the highest praise - in Mayberry's estimation - came from Morrison herself. Mayberry sent a copy of the book, along with a note, to Morrison and received, in return, a hand-written note from the author: "Dear Susan Mayberry, I have admired a number of critical texts on my work, but I can't say I have enjoyed any more than your 'Can't I Love' For freshness, scrutiny and a welcome point of view it is in a class by itself." At last year's Morrison conference, when Mayberry's award was announced, Morrison laid her hand on Mayberry's shoulder, and said, "'I wrote to tell you that, didn't I.'" Mayberry said. Her role as a teacher has been recognized as well. Her citation for the Abigail Allen Award says, "An exemplary teacher who inspires, nurtures, and offers tough love where needed, Mayberry has been recognized with AU's Excellence in Teaching award many times. She has also inspired and nurtured her junior colleagues, who value her 'generosity as a mentor.'" A 1973 graduate of Meredith College with a B.A. degree in English, Mayberry completed her master's in English from North Carolina State University in 1975, and a Ph.D. degree in English from the University of Tennessee in 1982.