

# Faculty Scholar Award

Jacksonville State University Yearbook article on the  
Faculty Scholar Lecturer Award, 1994.

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# Faculty Scholar Award

The Faculty Scholar Lecturer Award, which is given out to one deserving member of the JSU faculty per year, was given to Dr. Gates for her research on a relatively unknown actress/writer Elizabeth Robins. Dr. Gates has also recently published a major biography on Robins, a project which she has worked on since her graduate days.

"...I found the research on Elizabeth Robins because I was doing theater research...She was very instrumental in getting Ibsen staged in London during the 1890s. What attracted me to the theater side of her life was her career on the stage, as well as the fact that in the documented letters she writes you can have the sense of putting me, the reader, in a place or time where I can almost take...from her written up account of it what went on in a certain scene. So the way that I constructed my literary biography, is to preface each of my long chapters with a little dramatic scenario, that puts Elizabeth Robins in a time and place and really kinds of writes a little scripted scene for an event in her life that kind of shapes her and forms a cameo for that phase of her life."

"It began as a dissertation project. In fact, I was a theater student first, working on an MFA as a kind of theater historian.

(I) discovered Elizabeth Robins because I was interested in theater history, so the acting career was the thing I was attracted to. But as soon as I started to discover all this (her fiction)...I would say she published about twenty books including a handful of memoirs and memoirs of other people..."

"...I was encouraged to go on after my MFA in theater to get my Ph.D. in English, and it's kind of as if I entered my Ph.D. program already deciding that my dissertation work would be on Elizabeth Robins. I had to develop some other teaching areas; Shakespeare research is a very different aspect of scholarly studies. Over the course of being a grad student, I discovered where her private papers were. It was possible to do a new and fresh study of Robins that would be just the thing for a dissertation work. They always steer you toward doing either a certain angle on an already established writer that has never been written about before or a minor writer that hasn't been written about enough. That's why we get so many scholarly books on a range of writers is because people end up (writing) their dissertation topics. This is perfect for me because it linked into the women's studies that was one of my focus areas. I had direct access to the collection at the

University."

"...People look back and are beginning to pay more attention to women writers, fiction and creative work...than they might have maybe twenty years ago. And part of that instinct is to expand the more inclusive look to decide who forms American Literature, to say that it's not just the select few white males that made up our body of literature...it's very ethnically diverse, and includes women writers."

Dr. Gates has received five hundred dollars, as well as a stipend to help pay for expenses, as part of her award. The only requirement is that she give a formal lecture on her subject.

Gates plans to continue doing research on Elizabeth Robins, as well as establish her further in the professional literary mind. "My main objective is to see that her career as a writer becomes re-established, making text of her's more available (to the general public)"

Scott Hopkin

*Dr. Gates speaks with some students after a class about her research.*





*Dr. Joanne Gates, recipient of the 1995 Faculty Scholar Award.*

Images taken from 256 and 257 pages of the screen image corresponding to pages 254 and 255 of the Mimosa Yearbook of 1995. At the time, the Lecturer Award was awarded by the Arts and Sciences School at their annual award ceremony.

(An all-university lecturer award was initiated in the Spring of 1998.)

On February 23, 1995, I delivered the Lecture:  
"Elizabeth Robins: A Life in Letters."

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