

Robinson Wins First Ribicoff Junior Faculty Prize

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Michael Robinson (far left) is surprised by President Walter Harrison, Provost Lynn Pasquerella, and student Maria Qadri '09 as he teaches his class on Tuesday.



(L-R) Harrison, Robinson, Pasquerella, and Qadri.

Michael Robinson, assistant professor of history at Hillyer College, has been selected to receive the first-ever **Belle K. Ribicoff Junior Faculty Prize**.

The prize, which includes an award of \$10,000, will be presented to Robinson at Commencement on May 17.

President **Walter Harrison**, Provost **Lynn Pasquerella**, and student **Maria Qadri '09** – who together made up the selection committee for the prize – surprised Robinson in the middle of his class Tuesday with the news that he had won.

In a moment that was reminiscent of those “Publisher’s Clearing House” commercials where winners receive a knock on the door from the “Prize Patrol,” Harrison, Pasquerella, and Qadri walked into Robinson’s classroom carrying balloons, and notified a stunned Robinson that he had been selected for the award.

Robinson was one of 19 junior faculty members who were nominated for the award, and Pasquerella said that the field was extremely competitive. Robinson was nominated by Hillyer College Dean **David Goldenberg**.

Harrison, Pasquerella, and Qadri made their selection with input from a faculty advisory committee made up of last year’s Bent, Larsen, and Trachtenberg Award winners: Associate Professor of Marketing **Charles Canedy**, Professor of Mechanical Engineering **Chittaranjan Sahay**, and Associate Professor of

Sociology **Jay Stewart.**

A Generous Gift

The Belle K. Ribicoff Junior Faculty Prize, together with an endowed chair for junior faculty, were established this year through a generous gift from **Belle K. Ribicoff**, a long-time supporter and life regent of the University.

Each year, the prize will recognize an outstanding junior faculty member – a professor who is in a tenure track position, but not yet tenured. Every three years, beginning in 2011-2012, one of the prize recipients from the prior three years will be chosen to hold the **Belle K. Ribicoff Professorship** for a period of three years.

A Highly Respected Scholar of Exploration

Robinson, a highly-respected authority on exploration, has been invited to speak at some of the most prestigious gatherings of scholars in the world, including the Philadelphia Geographical Society, The Explorers Club of New York, and the Canadian Historical Association.

Robinson's critically acclaimed book, *The Coldest Crucible: Arctic Exploration and American Culture*, was awarded the prestigious 2008 Book Prize by the Forum for the History of Science in America. An exhibition based on the book, which Robinson curated, is currently on display at the Portland Museum of Art in Portland, Maine.

In addition to being a gifted scholar, Robinson also is an outstanding teacher who receives high marks from his students. Robinson has worked to revamp the history curriculum at Hillyer, making it more vibrant and more motivating for students, and he has brought new technologies into the classroom.

"Professor Robinson is an outstanding teacher and researcher who uses his scholarship to create an engaging learning environment," Provost Pasquerella said. "He represents excellence in every aspect of University life—teaching, research and service."