Baylor University’s Dr. Kent Gilbreath has been selected as a Piper Professor of 2007 by the Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation. Gilbreath is a Professor of Economics and Holder of the E.M. and Thelma Stevens Chair of Private Enterprise and Entrepreneurship in the Hankamer School of Business.

Concerning the award, Dr. Gilbreath said: "I am deeply honored to receive this award for teaching. I believe that teachers and scholars are the custodians and key contributors to an essential civilizing process. We who teach must understand the intellectual wealth of the civilization we have inherited and comprehend the great task with which we have been entrusted. Like Thomas Jefferson, I believe America is a land that should be led by an "aristocracy of talent"-not by a noble elite. If our nation-indeed our world-is to survive and thrive in the future, teachers must help build a foundation of knowledge and integrity in the minds and hearts of those who will carry us into the future."

The Foundation bestows fifteen awards each year to professors in Texas of superior teaching at the college level. Participation in the prestigious program is by invitation only. Candidates are nominated through the university's President's Office.

"Any time I’ve needed anything, from advice on a course to help with important life decisions now that I’ve graduated, Dr. Gilbreath has gone well out of his way to help me," wrote David Brod, an alumnus now working for Deloitte & Touche in Michigan. "I’ve seen him do the same thing for hundreds of other students during the time that I worked with him as well. No student is more important than another, and he's always committed to helping those that seek his advice and counsel. It's something that has made an immensely positive difference not only in my life, but undoubtedly in the lives of thousands of other students over the years. He really cares about his students, and it shows."

Gilbreath joined Baylor in 1973. He earned his BA (graduating magna cum laude) and MA degrees in Economics from Baylor and his PhD in Economics from the University of Florida. As a member of the Department of Economics, he has focused interests in Economic History, Energy and Environmental Economics, and Forensic Economics.

From 1981 to 1991, he served as Associate Dean of the Hankamer School of Business and has been selected Most Outstanding Professor at Baylor and Distinguished Professor in the School of Business. In 1985, the Baylor University Alumni Association presented him the first Outstanding Young Alumnus award, and in 2004 presented him the Outstanding Alumnus Award.

His scholarly contributions include books published by the Conservation Foundation (one of the world's most respected environmental research organizations) and the University of Oklahoma, as well as over thirty-five published articles dealing with such topics as world commodity markets, international finance, population projections, tax reform, technology development, and economic growth.

He has received grants from numerous organizations, including the Continental Corporation, the Ford Motor Company Fund, the General Electric Foundation, the General Mills Foundation, the General Tire Foundation, the Getty Oil Company, the Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation, and the World Order Foundation.

Gilbreath has also served country and community with excellence. Notably, he served three terms (1979-1986) as an elected member of the Board of Directors of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas. In this position he was involved in the supervision of financial institutions in the Southwest and in the formulation of U.S. monetary policy through the establishment of the Federal Reserve System's discount rate.
In addition to this exceptional service, he has also been involved in many different organizations over the years, including: Boards of directors of the Texas Lyceum Association, the Central Texas Zoological Society, the Art Center, KWTX Broadcasting Company, and the Baylor Foundation; advisor to the Heart of Texas Council of Governments; former director and past president of the American fellows of the Amundsen Institute of U.S/Mexico Studies; advisory board of the Heart of Texas Business Resource Center; member of the Waco Charter Commission where he served as chairman of the finance committee; chairperson of Waco's Citizens Advisory Committee on Redistricting; Texas Supreme Court's Citizens' Commission on the Texas Judicial System; and Vanguard School Board.

At Baylor University, Gilbreath has served as Chairman of the Faculty Senate, Chairman of the University Council, and Chairman of the Steering Committee of the Institute of Environmental Studies. He has also served on the School of Business Executive Council and as Chairman of the School of Business Alumni Committee. He has also participated on numerous University and College committees over the course of his career.

In addition to his professional activities, Gilbreath founded and coached the Baylor University Men's Soccer Team and helped organize the Y.M.C.A. youth soccer program in Waco. He has been Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Texas Collegiate Soccer League and is currently a member of 7th and James Baptist Church in Waco.

Students have presented Gilbreath with the Circle of Achievement Award for outstanding teaching three times. Kent has studied five languages and visited more than 35 countries, demonstrating a clear interest in international issues, a foundation that supports his active participation in international education programs. He has accepted numerous invitations to teach abroad as a visiting professor (e.g., with Monterrey Tech and the World Campus Afloat program) and through university-sponsored study abroad programs (most notably the Baylor in Great Britain program).

Gilbreath teaches between 500-600 students each year and still manages to receive outstanding student evaluations. Gilbreath also spends an enormous amount of time outside the classroom, maintaining an “open door” policy and regularly spending 20-30 hours a week with his students.

"The door to Dr. Gilbreath's office is also always open," Stephanie Powers, a former student, wrote. "Dr. Gilbreath counsels his current and previous students in everything from better studying methods to career opportunities to life issues. Dr. Gilbreath maintains a personal interest in each of his students. Even though he has often had up to 500 students per semester, Dr. Gilbreath knows them each by name. A feat, that until I met him, I thought impossible."

Gilbreath is not only an outstanding teacher, but he is also innovative. For example, he establishes an active learning environment in very large sections of students (often more than 200 each semester) by employing his Socratic method of teaching. This approach requires students to articulate answers, to develop and defend those answers, and to learn from the unexpected. This classroom experience is one that students are not apt to forget.