Stan Kary of the Psychology Department at St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley is recipient of the 1988 David L. Underwood Memorial Lecture Award. Kary earned his B.A. and M.S. degrees from S.I.U.-Edwardsville, and his Ph.D. from the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

Named for Underwood, former dean of instruction at Florissant Valley who was known for his dedication to education, the award is presented each year to an outstanding instructor of the college. Recipients must exhibit excellence in teaching.

*From the Globe-Democrat, 4/13/77:*

**Professor serves up 'banquet' of knowledge.**

Zestful and unpredictable Auntie Mame saw life as a banquet to be enjoyed to its fullest. Being the realist she was Mame knew the banquet was ignored by short-sighted and frightened little people who preferred starving to death.

The same philosophical outlook is shared by Professor Stan Kary, who teaches psychology at St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley. Prof. Kary's "banquet" consists of the tremendous advantages offered through the junior college district's educational and instructional bill-of-fare.

"We have so much to give," said the irrepressible educator whose jaunty classroom air is contagious. "Yet, the people who paid for establishment of the Junior College District in 1962, do not take full advantage of what's being offered," he said.

The district covers 718 square miles and serves a population of nearly two million. The district's three colleges have a combined enrollment of more than 20,000.

"It should be much higher," Prof. Kary contends. "Try an evening class," he encourages anyone who will listen. You can learn anything from training your dog to higher calculus."
Prof. Kary’s love of learning did not bloom overnight. He got off to a poor beginning, since he placed third from the bottom of his high school senior class. His teachers did not think much about the educational prospects of the farm boy from northern Wisconsin.

"They told me not to think about college," he said. "I was told that college was not for me . . . that I should be a farmer instead."

So, when Kary was 23 years old, he worked in a foundry. His daily chore was to operate a drop hammer used in the shaping of sledge hammer heads.

"I nearly went bananas," Kary said, "pounding away day after day after day with the uncomfortable realization I could be doing the same unsavory job until I was 65."

"Why don't you quit and go to college," joked a fellow worker. "That's a good idea," Kary said, walking away from the drop hammer which he never went near again.

To everyone’s’ amazement, including his own, he enrolled at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, and a new world opened to him.

"It gave me a new sense of freedom that was exciting," he recalled. "I could actually sit cross-sided at my desk and say whatever I wanted to say.

“The teachers were patient with me and they were inspirational.” It wasn't a primrose path because Kary worked from 4 p.m. to midnight, but he managed to get a 4-year degree in psychology and pick up a master’s degree in the same subject.

Next year the professor will be on sabbatical and study for a doctorate degree at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

Because of his own struggles Kary is mindful of the working students’ problems at Florissant Valley.

"Most of them work," he said. "They come to class, looking a bit strained at times and I try to be patient with them.

"Some people might think we are downgrading the educational system," he said. "But, I believe it's better to educate the total masses. The end result will be a better society and I feel proud to be part of that growing process."

Prof. Kary glows when he talks. The inner conviction that "life is a learning process" stimulates him.

"We learn something every day of our lives," Kary said. "Even the mentally retarded can learn. They just do it more slowly."
For two years after college graduation he worked with the seriously mentally retarded in Illinois. The challenge was almost too much for him. "I got so depressed, I couldn't stand it," he said. "It takes a very special kind of person to work with the severely mentally handicapped.

"But, the experience was good for me. It reminded me of Apostle Paul's words - "There, but for the grace of God, go I, and I've been happy with my lot in life ever since. I look forward to every day."

There do not seem to be enough hours in the day for his teaching interests. Besides teaching psychology to college sophomores, he travels for the government to teach U.S. Air Force cadets. Through him, they are able to earn master's degrees without going to college.

The counselor-educational safaris have taken him to Dover, Delaware, and to Charleston, South Carolina.

Prof. Kary also instructs youngsters, ages 6 to 14, in the art of Judo which, he says, means "gentle way" in English.

Every Saturday he teaches Judo, together with Bill Shelton (who has a 3rd degree black belt), at the YMCA in Alton, Ill. "Working with little kids is exciting," Kary said. "You find out where they are (in attitudes) and can help them develop before they get into any psychological difficulties."

Kary, 35, lives in Alton with his wife Jane and three children--Merianna, 12, John, 10, and Nancy, 8.

With his own children he practices the same philosophical guidelines which enliven his classes in college.

"We're not here to make them fail," he reasons. "If they succeed, we will succeed."