Paul Higdon, Ph.D., professor of music and chair of communications at St. Louis Community College-Florissant Valley, has been named the 40th recipient of the David L. Underwood Memorial Lecture Award.

David L. Underwood was known for his love of education. He was deeply concerned with the welfare of students and staff alike. His dedication went beyond office hours and he tirelessly gave of his time and talents to further the educational mission at Florissant Valley.

Recipients of the Underwood Award demonstrate that same dedication and commitment. Chosen by a committee of peers, recipients exhibit excellence in instruction and a genuine, humanistic concern for students, faculty, staff and all of education.

“I am very honored and humbled to be placed in this fine group of colleagues,” said Higdon.

Higdon teaches numerous classes and cherishes the wonderful music students who flock to STLCC. Although he is a pianist by training, he also conducts the college chorus.

Higdon grew up in Burlington, Iowa. His college studies began at Southeastern Community College in Iowa and continued at Truman State University, where he earned both his bachelor’s and master’s degrees. He studied with David McKamie and William Blaine and won numerous piano competitions.

After teaching English in Guangzhou, China, at age 25, he moved to Kansas City, where he earned his doctorate at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music in 1998. His dissertation received recognition by the conservatory, and he also won a Graduate Student of the Year Award. During this time, Higdon taught at Avila University and Kansas City Kansas Community College.

Higdon has performed piano concerts in 10 states as well as Malaysia, Hong Kong and Italy. Many of these concerts were the result of winning piano competitions.
In summer 2016, he is slated to perform again in Hong Kong with the Hong Kong China Philharmonic.

Higdon served as co-chair of the Global Education Committee for several years.

In his spare time, Higdon enjoys international travel and learning Italian. He considers himself very fortunate to have many wonderful international experiences. Higdon says he is also pleased to be part of the Italian Learning Circle where he, colleagues, and students experience Italian culture.