

<http://tntoday.utk.edu/2014/10/03/microbiology-professor-stein-wilhelm-appointed-mossman-professor/>

# Microbiology Professor Steven Wilhelm Appointed Mossman Professor

October 3, 2014

Steven Wilhelm, professor of microbiology, has been appointed Kenneth and Blaire Mossman Professor.

The five-year appointment began August 1, 2014, and continues through the end of the 2018–19 academic year. This appointment is renewable competitively under the guidelines of the endowment.



The professorship in the College of Arts and Sciences was generously endowed in 2010 by alumni Kenneth and Blaire Mossman, formerly of Scottsdale, Arizona. Kenneth Mossman said on that occasion, “Establishing the professorship is a way to give back to the University of Tennessee, an institution that has been so important to us in our lives.”

The couple met at the university in 1968 and were married in 1970 while still students. Blaire received her bachelor’s degree in French with highest honors in 1971, and Kenneth earned a master’s degree in 1970 and a doctorate in 1973 in radiation biology.

Both Kenneth and Blaire Mossman are now deceased (Blaire passed away in April 2011 and Kenneth in January 2014); however, their legacy endures through their gift to the college, which has established a professorship to honor and encourage stellar faculty engaged in biomedical research and teaching.

“We are delighted to acknowledge Steven Wilhelm’s excellence as a teacher-scholar with this named professorship appointment,” said Theresa Lee, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. “His strong research program has consistently attracted grant funding and produced publications in high-profile journals. Also to his credit, Professor Wilhelm has evidenced commitment to mentoring junior faculty colleagues in his department and nurturing the next generation of scholars by engaging not only graduate and undergraduate students, but also high school students in his research.”

Wilhelm's research focuses on molecular ecology of viruses, bacteria, and algae in oceans and large lakes as well as within other systems. He and his research team seek to understand the increase in degradation of fresh waters in recent decades and what can be done to protect our fresh water resources.

Recently Wilhelm's microbial ecology research has overlapped biomedical areas as he works to understand the environmental factors that regulate toxins from waterborne algal blooms that are contaminating water supplies globally. He is also part of a National Institutes of Health-funded team that is developing insight, based on mouse microbiome models, to modulate the severity of malaria.