



**RICHARD J. POWERS**

COLLEGIATE  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

LIEUTENANT COLONEL  
U.S. ARMY, RETIRED

As a first lieutenant stationed in Stuttgart, Germany, in 1982, retired U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Richard J. Powers spotted a sign that irreversibly changed the course of his life. The education center needed a substitute to teach an ill professor's English class. He asked if he could give it a try, and not long after, they asked him to stay. From that point on, LTC Powers had found his life's passion: giving military students unforgettable learning experiences. Humbled to receive this award, he said, "It means that a student recommended me for this honor. That alone is reward enough."

He taught UMUC courses in the evenings while on active duty, and later transferred to the Army Reserve. Since 1988, he's taught literature, communications, information literacy, writing, and film studies full time in Stuttgart and online. Since 1999, LTC Powers has also trained over 3,500 UMUC faculty members to teach online as a global senior faculty development trainer.

Raised in a military family, he grew up moving along the East Coast, but is a self-proclaimed "Marylander at heart." He learned from his high school and college English teachers that teaching with a passion can instill passion for writing and literature in students.

This philosophy has allowed him to take students on a journey, which often began in uncertainty about their writing and ended in captivating narratives about an Afghanistan war zone or missing a deployed family member. In a fall 2013 creative writing seminar, his students' exuberance for their writing culminated in the class self-publishing a literary magazine and hosting a "Reading Celebration" event to share their work with family and friends.

LTC Powers builds not only passion, but writing skills that serve as a foundation for students' futures. In countless notes from former students, some have shared news of earning a master's in English or a PhD, fueling fires for reading and writing first lit in his classroom. "Those were some of my proudest moments," he said. "The mark of a great teacher is when the student surpasses the teacher."

After 28 years of active duty Army and Army Reserve service, LTC Powers retired in 2010 with the Defense Meritorious Service Medal. He holds a BA in English from Wake Forest University, an MA in British and American Literature from New York University, and is a certified Master Online Teacher from the University of Illinois.