

**The William H. Riker University Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching
Doctoral Ceremony: Saturday, May 20, 2006**

**Ashok Das
Professor
Department of Physics and Astronomy**

To hear his former students describe Ashok Das, you would be forgiven for thinking that he is an artist rather than a physicist who studies the most fundamental building blocks of nature. His courses—on gravitation, relativistic quantum mechanics, and field theory, to name a few of the topics that he teaches—are, as one colleague notes, as “challenging as it gets.”

Yet he communicates those concepts with such transparent and flawless success that his students and colleagues are left searching for superlatives. “A living legend,” “in the presence of real brilliance,” “miracles on the chalkboard,” “everybody’s favorite professor”—these are just a small sample of how those who have taken one of his courses describe Professor Das’s skill as a teacher.

Those descriptions are matched only by the way his former students, many of whom are now prominent researchers and scholars themselves, describe Professor Das’s commitment as a colleague and friend. He is, they note, a scholar whose openness and generosity as a mentor serves as a model that they try to emulate in their own careers as academic and scientific leaders.

Since joining the Rochester faculty in 1982, Professor Das has established an international reputation as a leading scholar in the field of theoretical high-energy physics. His published work, some of which is drawn directly from his carefully crafted lecture notes, serve as standard texts for courses throughout the world.

We are proud to honor Ashok Das. A teacher and scholar who exemplifies the values and attributes of our University community, we present to him the William H. Riker University Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching.