

**Verleihung des Bundesverdienstkreuzes am Bande für  
Prof. Krishna WINSTON  
Laudation von GK Dr. Ralf Horlemann  
Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, 13. Februar 2017**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

**Esteemed Guests**

**Dear Professor Krishna Winston**

- **“We, the Archives staff, called him Fonty”. This is the first sentence in Krishna Winston’s celebrated translation of “Ein weites Feld” by Günter Grass, which she congenially translated into “Too far afield”.**
- **Those who know the powerful language of Günter Grass’ novels in German understand the linguistic challenges and traps of translating it into English.**
- **And Krishna Winston has translated 658 pages of this epic novel. It’s a masterpiece!**
- **Holding a laudatio on the occasion of the bestowal of an Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany on behalf of the German Federal President is a wonderful duty for any Consul General.**
- **And I am so happy to be here today to fulfill this duty.**
- **Holding a laudatio in English for a celebrated translator of German literature into English is, however, quite a daunting task.**
- **And holding it for someone who is known for catching any inconsistency in the language, whom nobody can fool when it comes to translations is somehow awe inspiring, I have to admit.**
- **So, I beg your understanding and discreteness, dear professor Winston, for any inconsistencies and any “Germanisms” my speech may contain.**

- **I stand in front of you and all your guests today, to honor and applaud the great achievements in your life devoted to the German language, to the appreciation of German literature in the English language and to the understanding between two great and closely related nations: Germany and the United States of America.**
- **Born towards the end of WWII, when Germany in general, but also German culture and literature were disgraced by the Nazis, you have chosen to follow in the footsteps of your parents as a translator of German literature, and a translator from culture to culture.**
- **Your parents, Clara and Richard Winston, have translated more than 150 books from German into English. Great literature from Thomas Mann, Franz Kafka, Hermann Hesse, Hannah Arendt, Rolf Hochhuth and so many others.**
- **They have won several translation awards, including the American Book Award in 1978.**
- **At the time, when your mother died, you were collaborating with her on a translation of a book by Johann-Wolfgang Goethe.**
- **So, you are standing in a great tradition of translators and you have translated major works of Peter Handke, Golo Mann, Siegfried Lenz and of course Günter Grass.**
- **You have been awarded a number of prizes for that, including the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translators' Prize and twice the Schlegel-Tieck Prize, i.a. for your outstanding translation of Günter Grass' *Too Far Afield*.**
- **There can be no doubt that you belong to the great translators of German literature into English in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (and beyond).**
- **But there is something else that I have to mention today, something that makes you and your life truly remarkable.**
- **Since 1968 you have educated generation after generation of American students as a teacher of German.**

- **Your passion for teaching, and for teaching German, has deeply influenced hundreds and hundreds of students and has made the German Department at Wesleyan University what it is today.**
- **Your passion for the German language was indeed deeply rooted in your passion for teaching and your commitment to your students.**
- **You have always taken great pride in your students and in spite of all your accomplishments in translation and literature, you have never put Krishna Winston in the foreground, but always your students and your cause: translation.**
- **Your wine and cheese parties in the German Department are well remembered and maybe a formative (or: transformative?) experience for your students.**
- **And your wearing of a chair on your head in a DaDa-kind of expression on one of these occasions is legendary.**
- **Because you knew what your students knew: you were a great source of motivation and inspiration for your students and everyone around you.**
- **And beyond being a “campus citizen”, you have always been an active and engaged citizen of Middletown, supporting issues of social justice and the protection of our environment – both causes which are also very dear to Germans.**
- **For this engagement, you have received the Edgar Beckham Social Justice Award.**
- **And through your work with students and scholars around the world, across cultural and ethnic backgrounds, you have set an example of a world citizen firmly rooted in her local community.**
- **Today, as we are facing a growing tide of nationalism, ignorance and intolerance, the world needs people like you, Krishna Winston.**
- **Yes, you can be proud of yourself**

- **And your family and friends, your colleagues and students, your neighbors and everyone who knows you are proud to know you.**
- **So, it gives me great pride and pleasure that the President of the Federal Republic of Germany has accepted our proposal to bestow the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany upon you.**
- **Thus, it is a very pleasant and joyful duty for me to decorate you now.**
- **Let me conclude by reading the document honoring you with Germany's Order of Merit, as is the custom, in German:**
- **In Anerkennung der um die Bundesrepublik Deutschland erworbenen besonderen Verdienste verleihe ich Frau Professorin Krishna R. Winston das Verdienstkreuz am Bande des Verdienstordens der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Berlin, den 8. Dezember 2016. Der Bundespräsident. Joachim Gauck.**
- **Let us raise our glasses to Krishna Winston. To her continued health, and energy and joy of life!**