CONGRATULATIONS to Professor Jerry Dávila, who was invested on October 16, 2013 as the first Jorge Paulo Lemann Chair in Brazilian History.

Mr. Lemann, the benefactor of the chair and of the Lemann Center for Brazilian Studies, attended and was recognized by Chancellor Phyllis Wise for his generosity toward the University of Illinois. Chancellor Wise and LAS Dean Brian Ross presented Professor Davila with a medallion signifying his position. Diane Koenker introduced Jerry, who then spoke eloquently about his vision of Brazilian history at Illinois.

Jerry Dávila is Jorge Paulo Lemann Professor of Brazilian History at the University of Illinois. He received his bachelor’s degree from Dartmouth College in 1991 and his Ph.D. from Brown University in 1998. His research is focused on the influence of racial thought in public policy, as well as twentieth century social movements.

Professor Dávila has authored numerous books including The Dictatorship in South America (Wiley Blackwell, 2013); Haiti’s Dilemma: Brazil and the Challenge of African Deindustrialization (Duke, 2010), winner of the Latin American Studies Association Brazil Section Book Prize; and Diploma de Whiteness: Race and Social Policy in Brazil, 1917-1945 (Duke, 2005).

In 2000, Dávila taught as a Fulbright Lecturer at the University of Sao Paulo, and in 2005, he led the Fulbright Distinguished Chair at the Catholic University in Rio de Janeiro. He has also received the National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship and the Fulbright-Hays Research Fellowship. From 2013 through 2017, he will serve as Vice-President/President-Elect of the Conference on Latin American History, the affiliate of the American Historical Association dedicated to the study of Latin America.

He has also written for publications including the New York Times about democratic transitions in countries like Brazil and Chile as they emerge from within military rule.

Investiture as a named chair or professor is one of the highest honors that a faculty member can receive, and the investiture ceremony reflects that dignity. An investiture honors the distinguished professor who, because of his or her accomplishments, has been chosen by a committee of peers to hold the chair. The ceremony also honors the donor, whose vision of the future of the University has brought the chair into existence. An investiture is both ceremonial and joyous.
Left to right: Mary Arends-Kuenning, Brian Ross, Chancellor Phyllis Wise, Jorge P. Lemann, Jerry Dávila, Liv Thorstenson Dávila, Diane Koenker and Werner Baer.