



The Board of Overseers of  
the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth  
is pleased to award the 2015 Overseers Medal to

## Kenneth R. French

**Roth Family Distinguished Professor of Finance  
Amos Tuck School of Business Administration  
Dartmouth College**

Professor Ken French is a luminary in the field of finance who raises the intellectual standard of the entire school. Moreover, he is a gifted teacher who demands clarity of thought from his students and genuinely cares about their learning. In this way, Professor French is the embodiment of Tuck's ideal scholar/teacher. He has also been extraordinarily generous to Tuck with his time and resources, and for that Tuck is exceedingly fortunate and grateful.

Professor French is best known for research that has fundamentally changed our understanding of expected returns on stock investments. In the late 1980s, Ken and his longtime collaborator, 2013 Nobel Prize winner Eugene Fama, published two oft-cited papers—"Permanent and Temporary Components of Stock Prices," and "Business Conditions and Expected Returns on Stocks and Bonds"—that challenged the long-held view that the return on the stock market is essentially unpredictable. Instead, they showed expected returns are linked to the contours of the business cycle—low when times are good, and high when times are bad. It is hard to overstate the importance of this finding for the world of investments.

In the 1990s, French and Fama disproved another venerable theory: the capital asset pricing model, which held that a stock's systemic risk was the single factor affecting its expected return. In two seminal papers—"The Cross Section of Expected Stock Returns," and "Common Risk Factors in Stocks and Bonds"—they established their now-famous three-factor model, which added factors related to size and value to the standard model, and thereby formulated a much more empirically robust way to forecast stock returns.

These monumental papers, and dozens more Professor French has penned, have been cited thousands of times—a truly astounding accomplishment—and have inspired hundreds of subsequent papers, both theoretical and empirical.

Professor French's impact on practitioners has been just as strong. His three-factor model, for example, is used today to evaluate and improve the performance of mutual funds. And his well-buttressed criticism of active fund management has helped make passive investing, such as indexing, the favored approach for many investors. Indeed, Professor French's scholarly work is so applicable to the real world that he serves both as co-head of investment policy and as a member of the board of directors at Dimensional Fund Advisors, an investment firm with more than \$400 billion in assets under management.

Professor French joined Tuck in 2001, after teaching at the University of Chicago, Yale and MIT, and established himself here immediately as an intellectually curious and rigorous leader among the faculty members in the finance area. Always willing to provide feedback on his colleagues' work, he pushes them to see subjects in new and creative ways, and searches for the most interesting insights about their research.

In the classroom and among students, Professor French is viewed as a brilliant teacher without peer. Every year, students sign up for his Investments class to get the unique experience of learning business principles from the person who first identified them, something akin to learning the laws of motion from Sir Isaac Newton. What they may not know at first is that he ultimately wants them to think clearly and rigorously, and investments are simply his way of getting them there. Then he joins many of them on bike rides through the Upper Valley—his favored mode of exercise—to continue the conversation.

In recognition of his outstanding contributions to the life of the school through research, mentoring, and teaching, the Tuck School of Business Board of Overseers is pleased to honor Kenneth R. French with the Overseers' Medal for 2015.

Paul Danos  
Dean  
Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth  
June 13, 2015

Christopher J. Williams T'84  
Chairman, Board of Overseers  
Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth  
June 13, 2015