

Russia honors professor for preservation work

December 04, 2014 11:00 AM Carol Schlueter
cjs@tulane.edu



In St. Petersburg, Russia, professor William Brumfield accepts the Likhachev Prize for years of work in writing about and photographing historic Russian architecture. Only two Westerners have been honored with the prize in its history. (Photo by Dmitry Kosheyev)

In historic St. Petersburg, Russia, a special ceremony recently honored six recipients of the Likhachev Prize, that country's most prestigious honor for cultural preservation. Among the six was Tulane University professor [William Brumfield](#), only the second Westerner ever to receive the prize.

Brumfield, a professor of Slavic studies, prolific author and renowned photographer

of historic Russian architecture, received the prize “for outstanding contributions to the preservation of the historic and cultural heritage of Russia.”

“In the current political environment in Russia, this is an extraordinary gesture,” he said. He added that the award “was based on years ? indeed, decades ? of demanding field work, photography and research.”

The honor is particularly meaningful to Brumfield because of its namesake. The prize is named in honor of the late Dmitry Likhachev, one of Russia's most outstanding scholars who led a movement for protection of historical monuments, libraries and archives. He also survived a Soviet labor camp.

“To receive the Likhachev Prize is an extraordinary honor, one of the highest that Russia offers in the area of culture,” said Brumfield.

Presented for selfless activity in cultural and historic preservation, the prize was established by the Dmitry Likhachev Foundation and the St. Petersburg government in 2006, in honor of the 100th anniversary of his birth.

“In Russia, he is regarded as a saint,” Brumfield said of Likhachev. “This prize is part of preserving his memory and using that as a fulcrum for the cause of preserving cultural heritage. Dedication, determination and ultimately triumph for the cause of a nation's culture ? he embodied all of that.”

Brumfield is the author of 35 books and dozens of articles on preservation of Russian architecture, primarily in the [Russian north](#). He also is a regular contributor to the [Russia Beyond the Headlines](#) website.

“In the current political environment, this is an extraordinary gesture.” — William Brumfield, professor of Slavic studies