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McMaster University professor Gary Warner has been awarded Canada's highest honour for lifetime achievement. Governor General Michaëlle Jean named Warner to the Order of Canada Friday at Rideau Hall.

Warner has taught courses on French African and Caribbean literature, on French language and 17th-Century literature, as well as on peace and international development at McMaster. He recently completed a five-year term as director of the interdisciplinary Arts & Science Program. Outside the University, he has been active internationally and within the Hamilton community for more than 30 years on issues related to international development. The recipient of numerous awards, Warner was recognized in 1998 with the Hamilton Black History Month J.C. Holland Award, Professional Category, and in March, 2004 with the McMaster Students Union Lifetime Achievement Award.

"As we processed in, standing between the founding president of the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women and a former lieutenant-governor of Ontario, I felt simultaneously humbled, happy and deeply honoured to be receiving this award," said Warner of receiving the honour. "The citations, read aloud as each person came forward, were truly impressive. As my turn for investiture came, my overwhelming emotion was the special thrill of having the insignia pinned on me by Governor General Michaëlle Jean, an immigrant to Canada like myself and a woman whose grace, professional accomplishment and social commitment I greatly admire."

Harish Jain, a professor emeritus of human resources in the DeGroote School of Business, will also receive an Order of Canada in February. Jain specializes in human rights as it relates to various aspects of employment and industrial relations. The author of numerous articles and books, Jain has advocated for racial and other minority rights locally, nationally and internationally. He was appointed as Commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission in April of this year. Most recently, Jain has been a policy and research consultant to the Government of South Africa, Department of Labour, assisting with the transition to de-segregation in all sectors of society. He is currently Donald Gordon Visiting Professor at the Graduate School of Business at the University of Cape Town.

The Order of Canada, established in 1967, is Canada's highest honour for lifetime achievement. Three different levels of membership - Companion, Officer and Member - honour people whose accomplishments vary in degree and scope.

Other recipients of the award included Canadian singer Shania Twain, speed skater Catriona Le May Doan, environmentalist Elizabeth May, chocolatier David Ganong and former Ontario lieutenant-governor Hilary Weston, along with 38 others.

Governor General Michaëlle Jean made the presentations, which included 18 officers and 25 members of the order, recognizing people who have made a difference to their country.