FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Final 2014-15 ECU Voyages Lecturer to Discuss Sex, Seduction in John Donne’s Poetry

GREENVILLE, N.C. (March 10, 2015) — East Carolina University soon will welcome to campus Dr. Illona Bell, Samuel Fessenden Clarke Professor of English at Williams College, who will deliver the Thomas Harriot Lecture, the final lecture in the 2014-15 Voyages of Discovery Lecture Series. Bell will discuss “Sex and Seduction in John Donne’s Poetry,” at 7 p.m., March 24, in the Bate Building, room 1032. The Thomas Harriot Lecture is cosponsored by the Department of English, and is free to all attendees. No tickets are required.

In 1977, Bell received her Ph.D. in literature from Boston College. She received her B.A. in literature from Radcliffe College in 1969. Her areas of expertise include Renaissance literature, Shakespeare, Elizabeth I, early modern women writers, lyric poetry and Virginia Woolf.

Bell is the author of “Elizabeth I: The Voice of a Monarch,” “Elizabethan Women and the Poetry of Courtship” and numerous essays on Renaissance poetry and early modern women. In addition, she has edited the classic, “John Donne: Selected Poems.”

According to the Poetry Foundation, John Donne’s standing as “a great English poet, and one of the greatest writers of English prose,” has only been solidified since the early 20th century. Throughout the 18th and most of the 19th century, Donne’s work was not appreciated. However, during the first 20 years of the 20th century, his poetry was rehabilitated.

“Its extraordinary appeal to modern readers throws light on the Modernist movement, as well as on our intuitive response to our own times,” reads a biography of Donne on the Poetry Foundation website. “He is not a poet for all tastes and times; yet for many readers Donne remains ‘the first poet in the world in some things.’ His poems continue to engage the attention and challenge the experience of readers who come to him afresh….Donne's love poetry was written nearly 400 years ago; yet one reason for its appeal is that it speaks to us as directly and urgently.”

Donne was born in London in 1572. He attended both the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge but did not receive a degree from either university. He studied law at Lincoln's Inn, London, and was appointed chief secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton, Keeper of the Great Seal. In 1615 Donne became an Anglican priest and in 1621 he was named dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London. He died in London on March 31, 1631.

Financial underwriting for the Voyages series is made possible by the Harriot College’s Dean’s Advancement Council, various university organizations, and many friends and supporters. To make a contribution to the series,
contact Major Gifts Officer Jennifer Tripp at 252-737-4201, or via email at trippj@ecu.edu. For additional information about the Voyages series and its speakers, visit www.ecu.edu/voyages. More information about Harriot College is available at www.ecu.edu/cas. Individuals requesting accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) should call 252-737-1016 (voice/TTY) at least 48 hours prior to the event.

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