



# NEWS RELEASE

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**For immediate release**  
**March 16, 2001**

**What:** Distinguished Lecture - "The Effects of Marital Conflict on Children"  
**Who:** Dr. E. Mark Cummings, professor of psychology at University of Notre Dame  
**When:** 7 p.m., Thursday, March 29  
**Where:** Carter Hall, in the University Center, on the USI campus

## Speaker to address impact of marital conflict on children

Dr. E. Mark Cummings, professor of psychology at University of Notre Dame, will discuss "The Effects of Marital Conflict on Children" at 7 p.m., Thursday, March 29, in the University Center's Carter Hall on the USI campus.

Cummings' research interests focus on the family factors - especially socio-emotional processes - associated with normal childhood development and the development of psychopathology in children. Of particular interest are the emotional relations between parents and children, the emotional relations between parents, and the influence of those relations on children's adjustment.

Marital conflict is a key factor in the adjustment problems of children, according to Cummings. His lecture will consider the kinds of problems children develop when marital conflict is high, including increased stress and emotional instability, greater aggressiveness towards others, and a tendency to become overly involved in their parents' problems.

Given that everyday conflicts are inevitable, Cummings believes the goal cannot be to avoid having spousal differences, but instead should be to find ways to engage in constructive rather than destructive conflict.

His lecture will conclude with a description of progress being made toward greater understanding of the distinctions between constructive and destructive marital conflict that is the result of recent research at University of Notre Dame. Special consideration will be given to the implications of those differences on children's emotional security.

Cummings earned a B.A. at Johns Hopkins University and an M.A. and Ph.D. at University of California, Los Angeles. His numerous publications include the recently released book, *Developmental Psychopathology and Family Process: Theory, Research, and Clinical Implications*. Current grants include more than \$1 million from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to study "Marital Conflict Resolution and Child Development" and more than \$2 million from the National Institute of Mental Health to study "Family Process, Emotional Security, and Child Adjustment."

The lecture, presented by the Department of Psychology, is part of USI's Liberal Arts Distinguished Lecture Series. The program is free and open to the public.

Additional information about Cummings is available on the Web at [www.nd.edu/~psych/faculty/index.htm](http://www.nd.edu/~psych/faculty/index.htm).