

# Dr. Darold A. Treffert

## To Lecture Nov. 3 on Savant Syndrome



The rare but spectacular condition known as savant syndrome, in which persons with severe developmental disabilities, including autism, display remarkable islands of genius, will be the focus of the next presentation in the John Paul Hammerschmidt Lecture Series at North Arkansas College.

Dr. Darold Treffert, one of the world's leading authorities on the condition, presents "Extraordinary People: Understanding Savant Syndrome," Monday, Nov. 3, at 6:30 p.m. in the Conference Center of the JPH Business and Conference Center on Northark's South Campus. The event is free and open to the public.

Treffert's address will profile several remarkable musical, artistic and mathematical savants, describe the hallmarks of this condition that reveal prodigious skills and remarkable memory, discuss the latest scientific findings that provide clues to the essential question "how do they do it?" and provide insights, based on recent discoveries, about the hidden potential that resides within everyone.

A consultant on the award-winning movie, "Rain Man," which made "autistic savant" household words and resulted in an Oscar for Dustin Hoffman, Treffert has been studying savant syndrome for more than 40 years. He met his first savant his first day as a psychiatrist at the Winnebago Mental Health Institute in Oshkosh, where he was charged to develop a child-adolescent unit.

The father of Northark North Campus Librarian Joni Stine, Treffert is the author of the 1989 book *Extraordinary People*, which has been translated and published in five countries and was reissued in 2000. He has discussed savant syndrome on an array of documentary and television programs, including "60 Minutes," "Oprah," "McNeil/Lehrer News Hour" and "The Today Show," among others, and maintains a web site at [www.savantsyndrome.com](http://www.savantsyndrome.com).

A former president and board chairman of the State Medical Society of Wisconsin, Treffert is a clinical professor in the department of psychiatry at the UW-Madison Medical School and UW-Milwaukee, and also serves on the medical staff of St. Agnes Hospital in Fond du Lac.

Dr. Treffert's talk will be the ninth JPH Lecture. He follows astronaut Dr. Jerry Linenger, Sherpa mountain guide Jamling Tenzing Norgay, CIA officers Tony and Jonna Mendez, syndicated columnist Gwynne Dyer, former North Vietnam prisoner of war Colonel Edward L. Hubbard, 1972 Olympic 800-meter-run champion Dave Wottle, FDNY Chief Richard "Pitch" Picciotto, and Harrison native Dr. Frederick (Ted) Tims, who is associate director for graduate studies and chair of music therapy at the Michigan State University School of Music, as a speaker in the series.