WELL-ENDOWED CHAIRS

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The juxtaposition of occupations with appropriate names has been a parlor game for many years, no doubt first stimulated by genuine examples noted on signboards and the like. However, these are few and far between, and it is quicker and easier to invent one's own instead of search them out. In Games for Insomniacs (Doubleday, 1966), John Fuller cites rug salesman Walter Wallcarpet, ingenue Kitten Kaboodle, churchwoman Gloria N. Exsellsis, and cook Minnie Stroney. Mary Ann Madden featured the game in a New York Magazine competition, with hilarious results: math teacher Lois Carmen Denominator, tennis referee Madge Point, bookie Dahlia Double, and so on.

With such a long history, what more can be said? In the letters column of the Cornell Chronicle, a one-man crusade has been going on against the use of long-winded titles when referring to holders of endowed chairs (The Susan Linn Sage Professor of Philosophy and Humane Letters). Professors James Gair and Paul Schaffner of Cornell University decided that such titles might be less objectionable if the endower and the chair matched better, as in The Sir Lee Fellowes Professor of Human Relations, or The General Electric Chair of Criminology. To their extensive list the Cornell Linguistics Circle added a good number, and Mary Youngquist a few more.

The Lotta Noyes Chair of Acoustics
The C. M. Fall Chair of Aerospace Engineering
The Lyon S. Lehr Chair of African Zoology
The Auntie Bellum Chair of American History
The Randy Bull Chair of Animal Husbandry
The Ken Shippe Chair of Anthropology
The X. Hume Chair of Archaeology
The Hy Rice Chair of Architecture
The C. Brush Marx Chair of Art History
The Horace Cope Chair of Astronomy
The Father Dan U. Kenzie Chair of Astronomy
The Harder Heering Chair of Audiology
The A. Dell Wise Chair of Austrian Studies
The Rusty Carr Chair of Automotive Engineering
The Hy N. Lowe Chair of Aviation Science
The James Crow Chair of Black Studies
The Leif N. Bloom Chair of Botany
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The Wright Price Chair of Business Administration
The Pat Hand Chair of Casino Management
The Ho Lee Chair of Chinese Religion
The Fu Ling Chair of Chinese Satire
The Estes Redd Chair of Chinese Studies
The Bill D. Bridges Chair of Civil Engineering
The Rosie Finger Dawn Chair of Classics
The Ray Z. Wages Chair of Collective Bargaining
The Ann A. Logg Chair of Computer Science
The W. Manny Backhoffer Chair of Consumer Affairs
The Virginia Reel Chair of Dance
The Shirley Knott Chair of Debate
The Drew M. Out Chair of Dentistry
The Kurt N. Call Chair of Drama
The Y. R. Yu Chair of Eastern Ontology
The Hy Steele Chair of Engineering
The Reed Enright Chair of English
The Lefl E. Woods Chair of Environmental Science
The X. Q. Smee Chair of Etiquette Studies
The Horace Schumaker Chair of Farriery
The Hy Stile Chair of Fashion
The Art C. Kraft Chair of Fine Arts
The Mark D. Walz Chair of Folk Epigraphy
The Sal Monilla Chair of Food Handling
The Weldon Burger Chair of Food Preparation
The Paul E. Vu Chair of French
The Rockefeller Chair of Geology
The Elder Barry Chair of Horticulture
The Justin Case Chair of Insurance
The Sophie Cushing Chair of Interior Decoration
The Warren Peace Chair of International Relations
The Buster Boone Chair of Investment Counseling
The Tex Dodge Chair of Law
The Seymour Bodz Chair of Life Drawing
The Tuan Tu Chair of Malayan Mathematics
The Gil Netz Chair of Marine Biology
The Count von Thieu Chair of Mathematics
The Pierce Armour Chair of Medieval History
The Constance Raines Chair of Meteorology
The O'Kleefe Kluster Chair of Military Science
The Oliver Onion Chair of Mixology
The Roland Rock Chair of Modern Music
The Carol Singer Chair of Music
The Perry Scope Chair of Naval Engineering
The Tryon Beauchamp Chair of Naval History
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It is easy to suggest plausible words that cannot be found in any dictionary. It is much more difficult, however, to prove the legitimacy of such words by discovering literary citations, just as the editors of Merriam-Webster and the OED have done. Dmitri Borgmann has succeeded in locating a citation for the 15-letter isogram uncopyrightable. On p. 4 of a booklet entitled "Circular 1: General Information on Copyright" (October 1974 printing, printed by the U.S. Government Printing Office for the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.) the following is found:

"Even though a work does not fit conveniently into one of the 14 classes, this does not necessarily mean that it is uncopyrightable. However, there are several categories of material which are generally not eligible for statutory copyright protection ..."

Note that the word is here used as an adjective. If one could find an analogous citation in which the word was used as a noun and pluralized, a 16-letter isogram would be legitimized.