

Murphy's romance with Málaga

Spanish city claims him as one of its own

Historic Málaga, Spain, where Pablo Picasso and Antonio Banderas were born, claims Associate Professor of Spanish Daniel Murphy as its adopted son.

Renowned for its culture and architectural beauty, Málaga has embraced Murphy since he took his first sabbatical there in 1999 to finish a book about one of Spain's most revered poets, Vicente Aleixandre. Murphy's work and love for Málaga led to what he calls an "uncommon gesture of esteem" during his second sabbatical in the spring of 2007.

"I was, as far as I know, the first non-Spaniard to be named an honorary member of the Royal, Illustrious, and Venerable Sacramental Brotherhood of Jesus the Nazarene and of the Most Holy Mary of Rocío," Murphy says. He was given the privilege of joining 200 others in carrying the immense and luminous *trono* (float) of "the Bride of Málaga" through the streets during the city's celebration of Holy Week. He stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the novelist Antonio Soler and with Banderas, who re-



turns to Málaga for the celebration each year.

Another highlight of his second sabbatical in Málaga was Murphy's commission to select, and write an introduction to, a new anthology of Aleixandre's poetry. He returned late last fall to present the volume, which earned him praise as a scholar of literature and as someone who has delved into the *malagueño* way of life.

Thanks to Soler, Murphy enjoys a sort of permanent residence and full-time job in his beloved Málaga. In Soler's novel, *El espiritista melancólico*, "El Murphy" bartends at *El Pomelo*, where he is the confidant of the girls who work in this seedy but happy cabaret.