

Best and Brightest



**University of Washington
Recognition Award Recipients
2009**

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2009 UW Recognition Award Recipients

This is the time of year that the University of Washington honors some of its best and brightest. Awards are given to honor outstanding teachers, staff, mentors and those engaged in public service. There are also awards for students, alumni and friends of the University who have distinguished themselves. On June 11, all these special people will be honored at a formal ceremony hosted by President Mark Emmert at 3:30 p.m. in Meany Hall. Here, we introduce you to the people behind the accomplishments.

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The President's Medal is given to two top seniors in the graduating class, one of whom completed at least three-fourths of his or her degree requirement at the UW and the other who entered the University with at least 60 transfer credits from a Washington community college. Candidates are judged on overall academic record, including grades.

Best & Brightest 2009

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Distinguished Teaching Award

Gino Aisenberg

By Joel Schwarz
News & Information

The old baseball player and manager Leo Durocher was wrong when he uttered his famous remark, “Nice guys finish last.”

Gino Aisenberg, an assistant professor of Social Work and a winner of a 2009 Distinguished Teaching Award, exemplifies just how wrong Durocher was. A former chaplain and one-time hospital emergency room worker, Aisenberg turned to social work in an effort to bring change to the residents of South Central Los Angeles, where he was raised.

“Growing up there I saw the Watts riots, and the police and tanks in the streets. I was on the corner the night before where the violence over the Rodney King trial broke out,” he said. “I remember researchers would come into the community to collect data and later I would be angered reading their papers that crunched numbers but did nothing to promote meaningful change for the people in the community. I felt as an insider I could bring ideas to help people.”

And that’s something he certainly has brought to the UW since he arrived in 2002, earning praise from his colleagues and students alike.

“Gino is much more than an extraordinary instructor. He is a life mentor, a role model for excellence, and the embodiment of the compassionate, generative and powerful social work scholar-educator-practitioner. Gino’s impact on all of our students, but particularly students of color and especially Latino students, has been nothing short of transformational,” said Edwina Uehara, dean of the School of Social Work.

“In short he is a phenomenon. In the seven years he has been with us, he has contributed more to the teaching mission of the school and the professional education of all students — particularly students of color — than any other individual I know.”

Susan Kemp, a former Distinguished Teaching Award-winner, noted that as a colleague, “I am honored (and cursed!) to teach in courses parallel to those he teaches. He sets a very high bar for teaching excellence, and the students we share set their expectations accordingly...Students’ comments indicate great appreciation for his compassion, humanity, responsiveness,



investment in their learning and support for their ongoing development.”

Even with those kinds of reviews, Aisenberg doesn’t consider himself to be the top dog when it comes to teaching in his family. That honor goes to his wife Grace, who is an elementary school teacher.

“She is the natural teacher. I work at it, while teaching just flows from her.” But he adds, “I’m very comfortable sharing my life experiences in class and they inform my teaching. These experiences are part of me and it enriches a way of engaging with diverse communities,” said Aisenberg.

Two of the things he tries to imbue his students with are a belief in their own power and to be good listeners.

“I want my students to have a belief in themselves, their power to make a difference and be a difference. I emphasize in the beginning of a class that I look at my students as future colleagues. Many students will be clinicians and I will make referrals to them and they will diagnose that referral. I want them to know when they graduate from our program and end up with a referral that it will be done well,” he said.

“It sounds simple, but I also want my students to be better listeners. A lot of social work is listening and being able to engage cultural, age and gender differences. Social work also involves justice and to be an advocate who engages policy and organizational issues. So learning isn’t compartmentalized.”

In addition to his classroom skills, Aisenberg has involved his students by helping to organize a Latino/Latina social work student organization, collaborating with students to write a social work practice book for working with people of color and marginalized groups, and engaging students to do field placement work in the multicultural White Center Learning Project with refugee and immigrant populations.

“Winning this award is humbling, but the recognition is not just about me. There are so many people who are a part of it,” Aisenberg said. “I stand on the shoulders of those who mentored me and I hope others can stand on my shoulders. I take the most satisfaction from having student take what they’ve learned and running with it. I love that look in their eyes when they own a project and will take a leadership role.”

Distinguished Teaching Award

Steven Herbert

By Joel Schwarz
News & Information

Journalism's loss is teaching's gain, particularly for Steven Herbert's students in the Department of Geography and the Law, Societies & Justice Program.

Back in the days when Herbert was in high school and later as an undergraduate at the University of Kansas, he was focused on becoming a journalist. But then he started wondering if he wanted a career that provided more immediate service to others.

"One day I mentioned this to a professor who asked me, 'Do you want to be a teacher?' I had never thought of teaching, but quickly warmed to the idea. I thought the challenge of being a good teacher would be an interesting one. At the time I was pretty shy and thought teaching would bring me out," Herbert said.

In the course of getting his teaching certificate, he had to teach a ninth-grade geography class and totally bombed. "Essentially, I talked too much, didn't think to engage the students and bored them."

Herbert's teaching skills have come a long way since then, and he is one of the winners of the University's Distinguished Teaching Award for 2009. He has been a UW faculty member since 2000.

Herbert's style of teaching is to engage students rather than lecture them. One of his students who nominated him for the award puts it this way: "He challenges students to learn with him, not from him."

His teaching prowess also provokes raves from his faculty colleagues.



"...Herbert can do it all. I can think of no faculty member over my 25 years at UW who has done so much at so many levels and so well to enhance our core teaching mission," said Michael McCann, a 1989 distinguished teaching award winner, in nominating Herbert.

Most of the classes he teaches deal with the contemporary world around such issues as policing and other institutions that deal with criminal offending.

"Part of these classes is gathering basic information and I know there is no right answer or correct way to police. So part of my job is getting students to appreciate the range of plausible answers on what the police and other institutions do," he said.

"I also want my students to develop the capacity to assess one answer versus another and to be able to articulate and defend their answers. I hope they find that kind of work enjoyable and that it is not intimidating but exciting. I like the energy students bring to the classroom. It is contagious for me."

As for giving up that earlier ambition of being a journalist, Herbert doesn't have any regrets.

"There is nothing like the experience of a good class. It can be a tremendous re-energizing experience for me. Students help excite me about questions I think about when I see them wrestling with issues with energy and insight.

"I feel blessed to be at the UW. In my classroom I pose some pretty tough questions and expect students to answer them in public. That involves taking a significant risk. I'm amazed at the consistent willingness of so many students to take that risk. Without that I wouldn't succeed and have gotten this award, he said."

Distinguished Teaching Award

Janice Laakso

By Beth Luce
UW Tacoma

For five consecutive years, UW Tacoma students have earned distinction by winning a national social work contest testing their skills at influencing state policy. Guided by Janice Laakso, associate professor of social work, the students are armed with the fiery passion for social justice that she instills in them. She teaches her students to stand up for what matters.

Laakso was selected to receive the UW Tacoma Distinguished Teaching Award. She was chosen by a committee of faculty members from a field of accomplished colleagues. Laakso will receive a \$5,000 honorarium and will deliver a lecture, open to everyone, in the fall.

In support of Laakso's nomination for the award, one of her students, senior Rob Jones, wrote, "Dr. Laakso is one of the most effective teachers I've ever learned from because of the passion she has for her profession." Her passion shows, not only as a teacher and mentor, he added, but "as a world-class social worker."

Laakso brings 25 years of social work experience to the classroom, which she draws on for lesson examples. "When we're discussing aspects of social work such as ethics or criminal justice, I can demonstrate my point with a story of something I've experienced," she said. "It's better if you have real-life experience."

Although she has many years of teaching experience, Laakso strives to learn new techniques and develop innovative assignments to improve her teaching. "Teaching is important to me and I take it seriously," she said. "I really care that students learn."

Laakso engages with her students in active learning, which she defines as "facilitating students' opportunities to apply what they learn in the classroom to the greater community and society."

Jones applauds Laakso for her methods. "One part of this is Dr. Laakso's enthusiastic call to all of her students to get excited about social work and to practice social justice for all," Jones said. "She does not stop at merely teaching the material, but continues to impact as many lives as she can."

Another student, Tim Person, told Laakso, "I have never voted



in my life, but after this experience, I will not miss out on this privilege. I am a firm believer in change through advocacy."

Laakso encourages the different worldviews that her students bring to class. "I strive to create an environment where students feel safe to share ideas, even when they may be unpopular or incongruent with my own," she said. "But my purpose is to broaden their viewpoint." She encourages them to "leave their comfort zone sufficiently to experience a learning edge," and to think critically about social justice and ethics, and then decide where they stand on the issues.

Her students complain that she works them too hard, she notes, but after they graduate and look back, they realize how much they learned in her class, and they put that knowledge to good use.

Recently she met Ramon Gomez, a former student from the University of Texas (a native Texan, Laakso speaks with a charming drawl), at a national conference. She did not remember him, but he remembered her. He related a story that she told in one of her classes a decade or more ago that had a huge impact on him. That was the moment he decided to become a social worker. Today he's the director of student and community affairs at the University of Texas School of Social Work.

Sharon Gilbert, a former UW Tacoma student, e-mailed Laakso to tell her how much she had learned about advocacy in her class — although, at the time, she didn't think she needed it. Gilbert now incorporates legislative advocacy into her work for the Department of Social and Health Systems.

"I try to make what I teach as pertinent as possible to the jobs they'll have when they graduate," Laakso said. "They learn a lot, and that's what students want."

She's passionate about all of the courses she teaches, Laakso said, but history is her favorite. She loves it when students begin her history of social work class feeling skeptical that there is anything important to know, but by the end of the quarter, they're hooked.

"She has changed how I perceive many social justice issues, and I know I will be a much better social worker for it one day," Jones said.

Distinguished Teaching Award

Peter Littig

By Elizabeth Fischtziur
UW Bothell

For UW Bothell's Peter Littig, mathematics is not just an academic subject, but rather something deeply woven into the fabric of our collective consciousness. For Littig, mathematics is a joyful endeavor, one he describes as a journey filled with surprising turns and beautiful vistas.

His enthusiasm is clearly contagious; his students are mastering their coursework and he is earning praise campuswide as recipient of the 2009 Distinguished Teaching Award.

Littig joined UW Bothell as an assistant professor in the Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences Program in 2005. One of his first challenges was to help establish a calculus sequence for the institution's first class of freshmen, a challenge he readily accepted. In his first three years at UW Bothell, he earned the distinction of developing six unique courses, from Interdisciplinary Cryptography to Women in/and Mathematics, each echoing his commitment to real-world problem-solving and interdisciplinary teaching and learning.

In his classroom, Littig strives to create affirmative learning environments in which he and his students "engage in rigorous scholastic inquiry and seek to connect course content to their lives beyond the classroom." As an example, in his course Game Theory and Its Applications, students learn about game theory as an interdisciplinary approach to the study of human behavior. Through their work, students seek to understand competition, cooperation, strategy and conflict using symmetric and asymmetric games, zero-sum and non-zero-sum games, mixed and pure strategies, Nash equilibria and strategic moves.

By focusing on applications from a range of disciplines including anthropology, business, philosophy and biology, students can



place the material in the context of their lives. In the course, mathematics is used as the toolkit and language for relaying analyses and students are able to apply mathematical principles to practical situations.

This hands-on, thoughtful approach to mathematics helps Littig's students to see math in a way many of them had never considered. As the son of schoolteachers, Littig understands the role he plays as an educator and strives to make a lasting impact through his efforts. Says Littig, "I want my students to recognize the mathematics that is in them, to see that human beings are mathematical beings... I want them to recognize that mathematics is this long conversation and it's as much about being human as it is about solving problems." When placed in this context, Littig finds that his students are better able

to absorb the complexities of subjects like calculus and statistics and, best of all, to find meaningful applications in their lives.

Littig received his doctorate in mathematics from UW Seattle, his Master of Science in mathematics from the University of California, Davis, and his Bachelor of Science in mathematics from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Prior to coming to UW Bothell, he taught at UW Seattle, UC Davis, and Alhambra High School. Littig was twice nominated for the Distinguished Teaching Award, both in 2007 and 2008. In 2001 he received the Excellence in Teaching Award from the Department of Mathematics at UW Seattle.

Says UW Bothell Chancellor Kenyon S. Chan, "Professor Littig reflects UW Bothell's core value of transformational education, 'engaging our students in transformational learning experiences that challenge their expectations, broaden their horizons and stimulate their ambitions.'" For this reason, Chan and the entire UW Bothell community are honored to announce Peter Littig as the 2009 Distinguished Teaching Award recipient.

Distinguished Teaching Award

Dolphine Oda

By Steve Steinberg
UW School of Dentistry

Dr. Dolphine Oda's UW Distinguished Teaching Award this year may have surprised somebody somewhere — but certainly nobody at the School of Dentistry. A faculty member there since 1985, Oda has been chosen outstanding teacher by the students 20 times.

"In my experience, her record of teaching effectiveness is unparalleled," wrote Dr. O. Ross Beirne, her department chair, in a letter supporting Oda's nomination for the UW award.

Students' evaluations of her oral pathology classes make it clear why she's so highly regarded. "Dr. Oda is an amazing teacher, lecturer and mentor. Every lecture is extremely organized to follow her syllabus," one student wrote. "There are no surprises on her exams."

Wrote another: "This is the best course I've taken at dental school."

Oda's aptitude for teaching follows from an abiding love of learning. She said, "I always enjoy the questions I'm asked, especially the ones I don't know."

She plans to begin lessons in piano and French this year. She'd also like to learn Hebrew, so she can speak all the Semitic languages; she already knows Arabic and Assyrian.

Oda was born in the Iraqi city of Kirkuk, the site of the ancient capital of Assyria. Her family moved to Baghdad not long after her father died in a car accident in 1953, and she attended dental school there. Her mother finished raising the family's six children with the help of a large extended family, friends and neighbors.

After dental school came a residency at the University of Manitoba, where Oda obtained her master's degree in pathology. Canada's climate, she said, came as an extreme shock.

"One good thing about the cold weather — nothing grows. The viruses died too, so nobody got colds," she said with a laugh. Another good thing: She taught gross anatomy at Manitoba and enjoyed it immensely. "That's how I found out I love to teach," she said.

After Canada came stints as a postdoctoral fellow in cancer research at the University of California, San Francisco and at the Indiana University School of Dentistry, where she earned a certificate in oral pathology.



Then it was on to the UW as a professor of oral biology. She became a professor of oral and maxillofacial surgery in 1997. "Ever since dental school, I knew I would end up in academia," she said. "I was always inquisitive, and I was not interested in private practice."

One of her former UW students, Anacortes oral surgeon Pardeep Brar, said Oda's connection with students is unmatched. "I think she really cares about her students, and she really loves what she's doing. She does a lot of things on her own time that go above and beyond. She'll review cases with students at any time," he said.

Nor does the connection end at graduation, Brar said: "In private practice, if there's a case I'm concerned about, I can call her anytime, and if she's not available, she'll get back to me within the day."

Oda's concern for people also extends well beyond the UW campus. In 2006, she and her husband, George, started the nonprofit Assyrian Children's Fund, to which she has donated all her continuing education speaker's fees to support children of needy families in Iraq.

"The war in Iraq left a lot of families with nothing," she said. "There are many families who have nothing, hardly have a decent meal maybe once a week." The money goes to all struggling families with young children. Before 2006, she donated her speaker's fees to a variety of causes, mostly for research and educational purposes but some for local organizations and churches.

She and her husband, an ardent amateur historian and linguist, have two children: a daughter at Harvard, and a son about to graduate from Seattle's Garfield High School who will attend Johns Hopkins University as a premed student.

When her son leaves for college, Oda would like to volunteer as a math tutor in primary or middle school. She'd also like to teach or do clinical work in developing countries a few weeks of the year. She said it would also be nice to have more time for her hobbies, which include plenty of reading — especially science, religion and politics — and long walks around her Magnolia neighborhood.

But she has no plans to slacken her pace at the School of Dentistry, where she has donated extensively to an endowment fund. "I promised myself, the day I feel bored, I'll retire," she said. "I like to stay excited about what I do."

Distinguished Teaching Award

Catrin Pittack

By Clare Hagerty
Health Sciences News

Dr. Catrin “Cat” Pittack speaks the language of anatomy.

“I’m an anatomy geek,” she said proudly. “I think it’s the coolest subject on the planet.”

It comes across in her teaching — in how she’s able to engage her undergraduate and first-year medical, nursing and dental students to learn the finer points of human anatomy in a whole new way.

Hands-on classroom demonstrations range from bringing in a variety of hand-crafted models — hinge-joint models made from drain pipes and duct tape, middle ear models made from candy boxes and yo-yos, umbrellas for demonstrating heart valve function — to collections of bones.

Pittack also temporarily turns students into “living” uterus: “We’ll drape a big sheet over them and their arms become the uterine tubes,” she explained. “This is, after all, their language — the language of anatomy — and they need to perfect it to do their work. It’s subject matter they’re already very interested in — the human body.”

Pittack’s passion for the material she teaches and her creativity in presenting it to Health Sciences students across many disciplines are only part of why she is the recipient of a Distinguished Teaching Award. From her students’ perspective, Pittack is committed to their success. Her responsiveness to their individual goals and learning styles, combined with her innovative ideas and much-appreciated sense of humor, are what make her, in their words, “a remarkable professor.”

“In our entire undergraduate careers, we have never encountered a professor so able to relate to students and easy to approach,” wrote former students Amber Chambers and Nick Shalygin in their award nomination letter. “The impact of her incredible teaching style, personality, and the relationship we formed while in her class will last many years. This is a true sign of a remarkable professor.”

Susan Lim, a first-year student in the UW School of Nursing, agreed. “I was inspired by Dr. Pittack’s passion for human anatomy,” she wrote, “and often left class in awe of the complexity of its structures and the amazing synchronous mechanisms that keep us alive.”

Molly Tollefson called Pittack “one of the most talented and committed professors” she’s encountered. “Her commitment to her students is paramount and it is clear that she truly cares that



we not only learn, but retain and use the material — now and in our future careers.”

For Pittack, it’s all about creating a thriving learning environment in which students get excited and stay engaged. “I’m always looking for ways to relate what we’re learning back to their own bodies — to have the students come up with the answers, so they stay engaged and take that next step in the learning process,” she said.

Pittack, who joined the UW Department of Biological Structure as a senior lecturer 10 years ago, teaches a variety of anatomy classes for undergraduates, nursing, dental and medical students and residents. She is known for introducing new technology in her classes to keep pace with her tech-savvy students, including the creation of Web pages and 3D models that help explain complicated relationships during human development.

Dr. John Clark, who chairs the Department of Biological Structure and has worked with Pittack since 1999, calls her “one of the most creative and personable educators in the Health Sciences curriculum” as well as “one of the finest educators” at UW.

Kate Mulligan, a senior lecturer in biological structure, said Pittack “fully deserves” the recognition.

“Cat acts as a catalyst for her students and for her colleagues,” Mulligan said, “and her knack for balancing family, work and play always provides a healthy perspective.”

That perspective is evident in Pittack’s ability to juggle teaching with a busy family life — she and her husband have a 10-year-old son and an 8-year-old daughter — and plenty of sports.

A runner for the past 22 years who also enjoys skiing and mountaineering, Pittack is an ultimate frisbee four-time world champion. Before relocating to Seattle in 1989, she competed on a world-champion team in Boston, then, in 1990, helped to form Seattle’s first elite women’s ultimate frisbee team, “Women on the Verge.” In 2002, Pittack joined the newly formed “Seattle Riot” team, which went on to win both world and national championship titles.

Pittack’s athleticism clearly feeds her enthusiasm for teaching the intricacies of human biological development.

“I am always striving to be better when it comes to my teaching methods,” she said with a smile. “I guess it’s working!”

Distinguished Teaching Award

John Webster

By Peter Kelley
University Week

One of the hardest things for a teacher to learn, says John Webster, is how to listen — really listen — to students. Until you learn that, “you probably won’t ever be as good a teacher as you could be.”

Webster, associate professor of English, says he took his own time learning this, but it stuck. Now he’s the recipient of a 2009 Distinguished Teaching Award, backed by such high praise as that of Gary Handwerk, his department chairman, who wrote, “I say with full confidence and total conviction that John Webster is the best teacher I have ever met on this campus.”

In a long and varied UW career — he got here in 1972 — Webster has been committed to helping students learn.

“I’ve come to understand that there is learning, and then there is really learning — the kind you remember the rest of your life,” he said. “The trick is how you get from one to the other.”

Webster also has become a campus leader in the teaching of writing, notably serving since 2003 as director of writing for the College of Arts and Sciences. In that role he helped create the Odegaard Writing and Research Center, which has provided thousands of mentoring sessions to support students and faculty in improving writing campuswide.

Webster’s other writing-related innovations include the 4 x 4 Initiative, which brings together faculty from disparate disciplines to help better integrate writing into classwork, and the Writing Ready program for students entering college with low confidence in writing.

Unusual for a fellow who actually started college wanting to be a chemist? Maybe. But Webster said: “I think of my career as a series of reinventions of myself in various ways. It’s a big part of what has made it fun.”

As for teaching, though he’d taught at the UW for years, Webster said, “I don’t think I had a clue for most of the first 15 years I was here.” Then in 1986 he became director of the Expository Writing Program for the Department of English, and that changed everything.

The work was far from his own research, on Shakespeare and the early modern period. But they needed someone and he was looking for a change.



What resulted? “The biggest part of running the First-Year English Program is mentoring new TAs,” Webster said. “And that really forced me to start learning about teaching.”

Then in 2000 Webster became UW director of the Puget Sound Writing Project, a national program that works with K-12 teachers to improve their instruction of writing.

This, too, was career-changing, and made him “start over as a writer,” he said. He was reminded of both the difficulty and delight of writing. “It’s both a delivery device and an interrogatory device. Having to sit down and write is how you begin to understand what you’re talking about in the first place.”

And writing’s not always easy. “I want (students) to be able to see that they are investing themselves in a complex act in which not quite getting it right at a certain point is almost requisite,” he said. “I wouldn’t ask them to do something that was easy and they’d be bored if I did.”

This brings him, and us, back to the idea of listening to students, and helping them connect with learning personally, not just academically. “It’s my job to create a place where students can bridge the gap between their life and their schooling,” he said.

That’s why Webster said he works to create assignments like “The Romantic Survival Project.” When teaching about the age of romanticism, he asks students to write about places in the current culture where elements of romanticism remain. “What students really do is show me parts of their lives,” he said. One even found romanticism in “a brilliant essay” on the odd Coen Brothers film *Barton Fink*.

And where did the idea for the project come from? “From working with those K-12 teachers and seeing them engage students in ways I didn’t know how to as a university teacher.”

There may be a book about teaching ahead for Webster, who’s eager to follow up on some of his writing mentoring during the years. Meanwhile, he said he is deeply enjoying that charmed stage of a long career where disparate experiences all seem to come together.

“I feel very fortunate,” he said, about the award and the series of reinventions that got him here.

Excellence in Teaching Award

Ed Chang

By Sandra Hines
News & Information

The imagined worlds in video games, Harry Potter books and other texts from fantasy and science fiction genres become starting points for how to study real-world culture. Television, the Internet and Facebook provide ways of learning how to think critically about complex ideas and controversial topics in Teaching Assistant Ed Chang's classroom.

"Every time I read a book, watch a movie or see something as innocuous as a commercial, I hear his voice in my mind, asking me questions. 'What does this mean?' I hear Ed asking. 'How may I use this media to better understand my world, my society and myself?' I am no longer a passive observer in my own life; I am actively engaged in the media I consume, in the lectures I listen to and in the worlds I speak and write in," wrote student Rebecca Slingwine in a letter of nomination for Chang, a TA in English, for the Excellence in Teaching Award.

In describing the course, Introduction to Cultural Studies: Virtual Worlds and Video Games, that Chang taught winter quarter, he told students that by using "a broad archive of 'imagined worlds' — drawing on literature, video games, text games and hypertext, film and scholarship — this course will identify and explore some of the key concepts, the key moves and the key terms of the interdisciplinary fields of cultural studies."

Take the World of Warcraft game, www.worldofwarcraft.com, for example. Its 11 million game players create their own characters in one or more races such as blood elves, gnomes, humans and orcs. "The savage, green-skinned Orcs are one of the most prolific races of Azeroth," the game site says and describes racial characteristics of Orcs in categories such as "blood fury."

Chang made use of the game for his students to consider the cultural logics of race, gender, class and sexuality, he said.

"Ed led discussions on topics I had never felt comfortable discussing, such as race and classism in America," Slingwine wrote. "He taught us how to have productive dialogs on these topics; he did not let us turn the discussion into an exchange of



hackneyed buzzwords, and he made us examine ideals held paramount in our society, such as multiculturalism and self-determination."

Chang pushes his students to think, wrote Gary Handwerk, chair of English. "His courses — independently designed and taught at the 200-level — are innovative and challenging; they range from cutting-edge topics to very traditional sorts of literature and culture courses. Regardless of the topic, Ed keeps his focus upon the core reading and writing skills that students should acquire in his classes."

The number of hours students say they put into Chang's courses is invariably at the high end, Handwerk wrote. "Students find his classes challenging; they feel they need to work hard to do well; they recognize and appreciate the effort that

Ed, in return, puts into their learning."

"Ed was great in the classroom but what puts him over the top is what he does for his students outside of class. He does more in this area than any other teacher I have ever met," wrote student Nicholas Trost. "He listens. He holds collegial hours in Suzzallo Espresso every Thursday afternoon to keep tabs on his current and former students. He e-mails asking me how I am doing. . . He always gives me sound advice on what classes to take and offers suggestions on how to plan my life after college."

Chang's bachelor's and master's degrees are from the University of Maryland at College Park. He's been at the UW three years and, along with his teaching, he's been an officer for the English Graduate Student Organization and involved with the Q Center. The center seeks a UW community with respect for all people including those who consider themselves gay, bisexual, lesbian or transgender.

Chang should also be recognized for helping new teaching assistants in the department become better teachers, according to Anis Bawarshi, associate professor of English. He has helped during orientation and led workshops.

"Ed's expertise, experience, warmth and wisdom have been a valuable and valued resource to his peers," he wrote.

Excellence in Teaching Award

Sachi Schmidt-Hori

By Catherine O'Donnell
News & Information

Sachi Schmidt-Hori moves easily, almost like a sylph, around her classroom in Parrington Hall. She smiles, she gestures. Speaking together, she and her students fill in the blanks of a textbook dialogue in basic Japanese.

Deadly dull stuff in lots of classrooms, but in Schmidt-Hori's, there is both easy laughter and relaxed focus on the job at hand.

Things move quickly as Schmidt-Hori takes her students from the dialogue to a series of hand-drawn pictures on formal and informal verb tenses, to a review game much like Jeopardy — all in the course of a 50-minute class. When it's over, the students lean back in their chairs. They've worked but liked it.

For outstanding work as a teacher, Schmidt-Hori has won a 2009 Excellence in Teaching Award. It follows a 2003 award for Outstanding Teaching Assistant in Asian Languages & Literature.

"She is clearly one of the most outstanding of the 20 or so teaching assistants employed in our department," as evidenced by reports from both students and supervisors, said Michael Shapiro, chairman of Asian Languages & Literature.

Schmidt-Hori, 36, teaches because she loves it. Along the way, she's working on a doctorate in classical Japanese literature. Schmidt-Hori confirmed her interest in becoming a scholar as she watched her husband, Roy Cleasto Schmidt, study for a master's degree in business administration at the University of Oklahoma.

She audited first- and second-year Japanese courses for a year to begin learning how one's native language is taught. The Oklahoma professor teaching the courses saw Schmidt-Hori's passion for study and teaching so he told her about an adjunct lecturership in Japanese.

She had studied English since seventh grade in her native Japan and held a bachelor's degree in American Studies from Obirin University in Tokyo.

As her husband finished his MBA, Schmidt-Hori was accepted at the UW. In 2003, she received a master's degree in Japanese linguistics, gradually becoming fascinated by the history of the language, and that experience led her to classical Japanese literature.



Modern minds find truth in science, but ancient Japanese people often found it in Buddhism, Shintoism or Confucianism. Literature provides a window into that thinking, Schmidt-Hori said.

The minds of her students fascinate her as well, including those that struggle with Japanese. "I think, why do you choose to take Japanese? It's so distant from English."

It's "crazy and great" that students take on such a difficult language, Schmidt-Hori said. "They get my respect because they are doing something challenging."

"Sachi has distinguished herself in our department by being the only TA (not just in Japanese, but in any language) who has taught all levels from first through fourth year," said Amy Snyder Ohta, an associate professor of Japanese.

In 2001, Schmidt-Hori studied Korean on a fellowship, then the following year served as Lead TA in her department, in charge of mentoring other TAs. She also took a year off when her daughter, Momoka Joy, was born five years ago — but missed the classroom.

Schmidt-Hori entered the doctoral program believing she didn't know enough, and continues believing it. "No matter how much I learn," she said, "I feel my knowledge is inadequate."

But Judy Okada, a lecturer who supervises her teaching, said Schmidt-Hori "is one of the most knowledgeable TAs I have worked with in my 20-plus years of teaching."

Audrey Wijaya studied first-year Japanese with Schmidt-Hori. "Being in her class was the best memory I have from studying at the UW," she said.

Wijaya remembers the handmade picture cards Schmidt-Hori brought to class. They took time to prepare, but Schmidt-Hori always came prepared.

"I love that Schmidt-sensei (an honorific for "teacher") was also a bit strict in teaching and giving out marks," Wijaya said. "She set a standard a little higher than other TAs."

Schmidt-Hori is preparing a dissertation proposal about social outcasts in medieval Japanese literature. For Schmidt-Hori, the dissertation, the teaching and the family commitments require juggling, but as far as she's concerned that's fine.

"I love what I do, period."

Distinguished Staff Award

Cynthia Anderson

By Peter Kelley
University Week

Cynthia Anderson is paying it forward, extending to others the sort of guidance she was once given as a new and uncertain transfer student.

In her third year as academic adviser for the Comparative History of Ideas program, Anderson loves her work and is deeply appreciated by her colleagues. She's a perfect choice, then, for a 2009 Distinguished Staff Award.

"It's a bit mesmerizing to watch the changes in facial expression as students come and go through her office door," wrote History Professor John Toews in a letter supporting Anderson's award nomination. "My sense is that Cynthia really does believe that every student is a miracle waiting to happen and that her absolute sincerity about this also convinces the students with whom she is consulting."

He's right — Anderson knows from personal experience how academic advising can help bring life choices into focus. What students want is available at the UW, she said with a smile. "You just have to dig a little."

She also knows that things change for students. That's why when planning with students she stresses that nothing is carved in stone. "I say, 'This is on paper, but it doesn't have to stick. Life happens, and you can change this plan.' I think as a student that always made me feel good, knowing it can change."

Her own story is not unlike those of the students she now assists. She was born in Pakistan but was adopted and raised in Sequim, Wash. The first in her family to graduate from a four-year college, she went right after high school but, like some at that age, it just didn't feel right. She took a few years off, then returned to school at Seattle Central Community College. Her varied interests caught the eye of an instructor, who suggested she look into the UW's CHID program.

"He gave me a pamphlet, and it's the same pamphlet I give students now — though we've changed it a bit," Anderson said.

She transferred to the UW and flourished in the CHID program. Then just before graduation, Amy Peloff, the program's assistant director, took her aside to talk about the new position of



undergraduate adviser. "She encouraged me to apply for it, and it turned out to be this perfect transition into being able to do what I wanted to do, but didn't quite know where I was going to find it."

That Peloff feels the selection has worked out well is dramatically obvious in her support letter. Peloff wrote that as an administrator she is committed to providing "a hands-on, student-centered advising model." Of Anderson, she said, "Cynthia doesn't just share my vision of undergraduate advising, she has upgraded, enhanced, improved, and in general, just blown it out of the water since she has taken on the role of CHID adviser."

Anderson returns the praise, saying her CHID colleagues are "like family." She's fond and proud of the students she helps,

too. "I think of it as a privilege to be a student at the UW, and to be in an environment that's nourishing and supportive," she said. She added that she reminds students that "there are 10 doors open for every one that is closed — they just haven't found it yet."

Anderson also has shown the ability to step beyond her role as adviser when needed. Peloff noted in her letter that programmatic decisions sparked an "all-consuming crisis" that Anderson helped to resolve last year. "As the adviser, Cynthia was in the middle of students, faculty and staff who were all trying to figure out how to communicate with each other across the divides of race, power, and difference. ... The grace with which she navigated this untenable position was beautiful. She simply refused to compromise the integrity with which she supported each CHID student and the program as a whole."

Witnessing as students build their lives and academic careers never gets old for Anderson. "We work in the system and can show them where to go, but the fun part is getting to watch it all work for them and be there when they realize why all of it matters to them personally."

She's delighted about her award, especially since it comes through the good wishes of her colleagues, and the students with whom she has worked.

"We get the best students!" she said. "It's different every single time someone comes in — my job is never the same."

Distinguished Staff Award

Alex Danilchik

By Nancy Wick
University Week

Alex Danilchik, the School of Drama's technical director, is a man who doesn't like to say no. Scenic design students come to him with crazy ideas: Making pictures magically move onstage, suspending heavy objects that people have to walk under, making actors appear to levitate.

And, writes their teacher, Robert Mark Morgan, in his letter nominating Danilchik for the Distinguished Staff Award, "Alex hears the ideas, invests in the design dreams of the students and puts in all the extra time and effort that is required to make it a reality."

"I don't often say no, but I don't say yes either," is how Danilchik explains it.

"I look at the situation and assess it, and then work with the students to find out what it is they're really after. And then we try to make that happen, even though it might not be quite what they envisioned initially."

Danilchik has a long history of making it happen, and it all began with flickering electric candles. This was the early 1980s and he was a UW student in electrical engineering and computer science. But he had a sister who loved theater, and she suggested he take some classes in the drama school just for fun. That led to working backstage, and when a show's prop list included electric candles that would flicker and look like real candles, Danilchik, with his electronics background, was just the man to create them.

"Of course, when you do something like that, they latch onto you and say, 'That's great, do you want to try this?'" Danilchik says. "And I like challenges, so I'd always say yes. Then one of our professors (now emeritus), Bob Dahlstrom, started working with me, and he had a passion for what he was doing that easily transferred to me."

So Danilchik became the drama school's de facto prop master. By 1983 he'd become so immersed in the work that when the school decided to create a half-time staff position, he was the natural choice to fill it. He did that for two years before the position was made full time, and he never did get his degree.



What he got instead was a job that involved constantly creating new objects like the flickering electric candles. "Alex is a little like the TV show character MacGyver," writes Jordan Baker, a scenic artist for the drama school, in his letter of support for Danilchik. "He has an unbelievable ability to put together several unrelated items to form a solution to a mechanical problem posed in a play's staging."

Danilchik worked on props for 15 years, finding or creating everything from exploding pens to fake pig intestines. He was feeling a little burned out with the job when a scene shop staffer left and he was able to move into that position. Now he spends his time collaborating with a team to execute designs for the drama school's shows, and doing some informal teaching along the way.

The teaching can range from showing someone how to use a tool to taking him or her through the whole process of designing a show — from drawing to reality. "I get joy out of that," Danilchik says. "Being able to work with students, collaborate with them is satisfying. They bring their side of it and you bring your side. You put that together and see the result."

Danilchik has been a University employee for 25 years now — laboring till midnight for tech rehearsals, getting up the next morning and coming to work, one show after another through the academic year, building opera sets in summer. But he says he isn't tired of it.

"The thing that's enjoyable is the variety of things we do. Even though we're always building scenery, every show is different. The time period is different, the structure itself, the vision. To facilitate making it happen is fun. The people I work with are great. I get up every morning and I enjoy coming to work."

That's the positive attitude he's known for. Writes the School of Drama's master electrician, Dave Hult, "I'm quite confident that the word 'no' cannot be found in Alex's vocabulary. This is not to say that 'yes' is more prevalent, but, in such a subjective, artistic, interpretive field as theater design, I am inspired by Alex's motto of 'Let's try!'"

Distinguished Staff Award

Laura Davenport

By Vince Stricherz
News & Information

When you come from a military background and have a fondness for higher education, it's not necessarily a simple thing to find a career that meshes the two. But Laura Davenport found a spot at the UW that did just that.

For three years she has been lead secretary and the only UW employee for the Aerospace Studies Department and Air Force ROTC Detachment 910. But, as her 2009 Distinguished Staff Award might indicate, her role is beyond that of a typical secretary.

"She performs complex secretarial duties, coordinates office operations and makes travel arrangements," Col. P.K. White, aerospace studies chairman, wrote in a nominating letter. "She is the first person people talk to when they call, and the first person people see when they enter our office; she always makes an outstanding impression on prospective students and their parents."

The detachment has 5.5 officer positions and three enlisted personnel and carries 115 to 150 cadets, depending on the time of the year, a higher number than the Army, Navy or Marine ROTC detachments on campus.

"I tend to think of myself as the liaison between the UW and the Air Force," Davenport said. "I play traffic cop in some regards."

She also plays "detachment mom" to the students.

"Sometimes they come to me in tears and I have the fun of telling them it's going to be OK. Other times I say, 'Stop crying, suck it up and act like an officer.'

"They're my babies. I watch them come in as freshmen and they're so young and nervous, but I can assure their parents they're in good hands," she said. "Watching them mature and grow is very gratifying."

Both of Davenport's parents were in the Navy, and she served three years before taking an early discharge as she went through a divorce.

"I loved being in the Navy. I loved the structure and the discipline. I loved the diversity," she said.

After her discharge, living as a single mother on welfare in Eugene, Ore., she entered a community college program that



guided her back to higher education. She got a degree from the University of Oregon, then went to Portland State University to work and earn a master's degree.

She moved with her partner to Seattle four years ago and landed at the UW a year later. Even though the military's Don't Ask-Don't Tell policy does not apply to her as a civilian employee, she said she made it clear during job interviews that she is a lesbian.

"I feel very respected and appreciated in this environment for who I am and for the service I provide," she said.

Besides her ROTC duties, Davenport is lead Service Employees International Union steward for north campus, and also serves on the UW Transportation Committee and the Group 1 Safety

Committee.

Others in the department cite her efforts as being instrumental in the UW's Air Force ROTC program being recognized as the top program nationally in 2007.

"One of the most important elements of Laura's service is her sense of volunteerism," Capt. Allen Monroe, assistant professor of aerospace studies, wrote in a support letter. "She is probably grossly overqualified for her current position and she consistently looks to assist the other members of not only this but also our neighboring departments when she sees an opportunity to make a positive impact."

Davenport's duties include issuing uniforms to the cadets and directing them to the proper person to talk to for academic and career guidance. But she also makes sure they look like officers, wearing the uniform correctly and getting haircuts when needed.

She believes an important part of her mission is to help cadets understand their role in protecting everyone's right to speak out and question government leaders. "If I can help a future officer understand the importance of diversity to our country, then I've done my job," she said.

The hardest aspect of the job, she said, is losing close colleagues on a regular basis, since the Air Force rotates new personnel in on an average of every three years.

"It's my job to help them," she said. "These officers and enlisted personnel are coming from a very different environment, sometimes from the front lines, and it's my job to help them assimilate."

Distinguished Staff Award

Linda Lawson & Alejandro Moreno

By Steve Butler,
Health Sciences News

When people arrive at Harborview's Psychiatry Clinic on the fifth floor of the East Clinic building, they approach a glassed-in reception area. Whether they are returning patients or new visitors deep in crisis, they are greeted by Linda Lawson and Alejandro Moreno in the same way. With a smile.

The smiles and professionalism of these two patient services specialists mean the world not only to patients but also to the clinic's staff and providers, who nominated Lawson and Moreno for the Distinguished Staff Team Award.

"I can't think of any other team that better exemplifies distinguished staff at the University of Washington," says Laura Collins, clinic manager. She adds that the attributes of this winning team include their great expertise, strong work ethic, go-to attitude and broad rapport with staff and patients.

Looking at their administrative job functions is one way to understand how they contribute to the smooth running of the clinic. When patients arrive, Lawson and Moreno discreetly notify the providers (approximately 20 psychiatry residents and 25 psychiatry faculty). They also schedule, in person and by telephone, patient appointments in the clinic and several other primary care clinics.

As the senior member of the team, Lawson has been an employee at Harborview for more than 15 years. Her areas of expertise include coding patient visits and making sure that all regulatory requirements are met for documentation and billing.

During his eight years at Harborview, Moreno has concentrated on referrals from internal and external providers. He also screens patients for insurance coverage and refers them to financial counseling if needed.

Along with these clinic functions, Lawson and Moreno both excel at handling people and crises. "I remember when we had the earthquake," Lawson says. "We had to make sure we got everybody out and down the stairs. By the time we got across the street, the building was really shaking, but we did get everybody out."

While earthquakes are fortunately not part of their daily routine, dealing with people in crisis is a common occurrence.



Sometimes, the need is to help people on the phone, who call for help with anger management, depression, anxiety or thoughts of suicide. Other times, it can be people who arrive in the clinic agitated and frustrated by not being able to access the services they need.

In these situations, Lawson and Moreno immediately try to determine what is going on and how they can help. On occasion, this requires escorting the patient to the Emergency

Department. More often, they manage to de-escalate the crisis by creating a comforting environment, serving coffee and water, speaking calmly and providing needed resources.

With many patients, the greatest reward is seeing the benefits of therapy. "A lot of times people are getting better," Moreno says. "They become more responsive and linger by our desk to talk." Likewise, Lawson says that helping patients feel good makes her feel good. She is also delighted that many come back to say "hi" even when no longer in treatment.

While they describe winning the Distinguished Staff Award as a bit overwhelming, they are extremely grateful for the high esteem shown by their colleagues and for the team honor.

"Alejandro and I work as a team, and we work well as a team," says Lawson. "He is fun and always looks to help." Even though she initially trained Moreno, they now mentor each other to keep up with rapid changes in billing and documentation.

Moreno views his teammate in the same way. "We help out as much as possible and cross train to cover for each other." What impresses him most is how Lawson talks to people on the phone. "Her voice is very calming. She never sounds upset or stressed out."

When not at work, Lawson enjoys walking and riding her bike along the Green River Trail in Tukwila. She is also taking knitting classes at Harborview's Patient and Family Resource Center with the goal of making hats and scarves for friends and relatives.

Moreno relaxes by cooking, gardening, reading, hiking and painting Ukrainian Easter eggs (known as pysankas). In addition, this native of Texas has a secret for enjoying life in Seattle. He loves the rain!

Distinguished Staff Award

MarDee Schaefer

By Tina Mankowski
Health Sciences News

The walls in MarDee Schaefer's office are a testament to the friendships she has forged during her more than 25 years serving the UW Department of Anesthesiology and Pain Medicine.

Photographs of weddings, birthdays and family gatherings form a collage capturing special moments of family and friends. Most of the hundreds of pictures, however, are of Schaefer's co-workers — nurses, receptionists, residents and faculty — all friends who have been a part of Schaefer's life through the workday and beyond.

"See those four little ones," she says pointing to a picture of quadruplets with a note of pride. "Mom was an Ob/Gyn and dad was here in anesthesiology. What a great family."

Schaefer, manager of UW Medical Center's Anesthesia Clinical Services, is a 2009 recipient of the Distinguished Staff Award. A longtime UW employee, she was selected for her sustained support of the mission of the UW exemplified through her job performance, collaboration, service to others as well as her resourcefulness.

More than 50 faculty, 24 residents and 30 nurse anesthetists working in at least 30 locations depend on Schaefer to schedule their day's work of administering anesthesia to the patients who seek treatment at UW Medical Center. New subspecialties in both surgery and anesthesia make it critically important to connect the most appropriate faculty and staff to ensure excellent patient outcomes. Schaefer excels at this complex task.

"You will never hear MarDee say, 'That's not my job,'" wrote Karen Souter, associate professor in the Department of Anesthesiology and Pain Medicine. "She is an exceptionally talented office manager who has supported her small team over many years of leadership, office systems and varying financial climates. She has the ability to get 110 percent effort from her team members, she is a strong leader who understands the overall mission, but who is never too busy to roll up her sleeves to help her team meet their deadlines."

But the day is not over when Schaefer clocks out. She has raised money for colleagues who have found themselves in unexpected financial situations, counseled employees through job loss,



used her own vacation time to help sick colleagues and comforted staff and faculty who have lost loved ones. Schaefer even hosts a small "cottage industry" in her office, helping one of her colleagues sell hand-made designer headwear suitable for the operating room environment.

When co-workers conspired to nominate Schaefer for this award, current and former colleagues and faculty members from around the world sent notes and letters attesting to her warmth and business acumen. "She absolutely exemplifies integrity and excellence in collaborations and interactions with colleagues" wrote faculty member Irakli Soulakvelidze.

Many of her past associates recall that when they first joined the department, Schaefer was considered the "go-to person." Former faculty member Dan Dalglish said that when he first came to the UW, he was told that if he didn't know something, he should ask her — and it proved to be good advice. "I'm still in touch with her even through it's over seven years since I left Seattle. I still occasionally call her with questions."

"These people are my family," says Schaefer with obvious pride. "I absolutely love my job and my colleagues."

And the love is returned in many ways. "One of the students did her residency in Ireland," recalls Schaefer. "Her fiance remained behind to work in Seattle. When she finished her residency, she planned a graduation, wedding and formal event in Ireland, and all of us were invited."

Two weeks before the wedding, anesthesiologist Janet Pavlin asked Schaefer if she was attending the wedding. "I didn't have that kind of money for airfare," said Schaefer. "The next day Dr. Pavlin asked me if I had passport. She had frequent flyer miles and invited me to come with her! We traveled all over Ireland and Scotland and had a blast!"

In addition to her extended family, Schaefer has a grown son and daughter and three grandchildren — with several more on the way when her son marries later this year and she 'inherits' four additional grandchildren. But the little ones will be in good hands. They will become part of the extended family that MarDee Schaeffer has so lovingly grown and nourished all these years.

Marsha L. Landolt Distinguished Graduate Mentor Award

Richard Strathmann

By Vince Stricherz
News & Information

Richard Strathmann considers himself pretty fortunate. He works at a world-renowned natural biology lab set in one of the most picturesque parts of Washington, the San Juan Islands.

But don't expect the fact that he recently retired as a UW biology professor and resident associate director of Friday Harbor Laboratories to slow his work.

"I retired to have more time for teaching and research," Strathmann said with a laugh.

He has done a lot of both during his 35 years at the lab, and the graduate students who came under his direction were direct beneficiaries. So it seems appropriate that he is the 2009 recipient of the Marsha L. Landolt Distinguished Graduate Mentor Award.

"One demonstration of the effectiveness of Richard's mentoring is the large number of former students and (postdoctoral researchers) that continue to return to FHL on a regular basis to conduct their own research, and to teach and collaborate with Richard," Friday Harbor Labs Director Kenneth Sebens and former Director A.O. Dennis Willows wrote in their nominating letter.

Playing a guiding role in students' lives clearly is important to Strathmann.

"Mentoring is one of the most fun things, and the decrease in mentoring is one of the most difficult things about retiring because students are fun to work with," he said. "It is a wonderful opportunity to help people find their way."

Dawn Vaughn believes her wonderful opportunity was in being mentored by Strathmann. She began her doctoral work in 2003 at the age of 40; then in 2005 she found herself dividing time between the Northwest and Indiana when her husband accepted a faculty position at Purdue University. It helped that Strathmann understood the difficult choices she was facing and encouraged her to find balance between her personal and professional life.

"Richard is always available to his students," Vaughn wrote in a letter supporting his nomination. "He is a tireless editor, experiment designer and collaborator of ideas, methodology and



data analysis. As the associate director ... his obligations have been many and often stretch well beyond those of a researcher, teacher and mentor. Nevertheless, it is clear that his students and their research are a priority."

As a mentor, Strathmann believes his most important job is to help students discover what strongly interests them, what they are good at and what they will be able to make interesting and relevant to others in their field.

"If they can have all that, then they will go on and be very creative individuals on their own," he said.

Strathmann earned his doctorate at the UW in 1969 and worked at the University of California, Los Angeles, and the universities of Hawaii and Maryland before returning to the UW in 1973. He has

published more than 90 research papers on various aspects of the biology of larvae of marine organisms, such as sea urchins and sand dollars, and he is one of the recognized founders of the field of larval ecology.

While at Friday Harbor, he mentored 12 students who completed their doctoral degrees and four who completed master's degrees. He also served as mentor to more than 30 postdoctoral researchers at Friday Harbor, as well as numerous UW undergraduates.

"... There is no living person in the world who has so profoundly and positively influenced graduate students in the field of marine invertebrate development, larval biology and life history evolution," wrote Richard Emler, a biology professor at the University of Oregon and a doctoral student of Strathmann's in the early 1980s.

"Some faculty have had greater numbers of students pass through their labs, others have written books, but no one has been as effective ... at stimulating growth of ideas and information in this area of ecological and evolutionary biology and attracting graduate students to work in this area."

Strathmann's own view is that mentoring draws on many resources and benefits many people. Many people have a hand in the process, and mentors tend to profit from the experience as well.

"Students turn up a lot of things that I never would have expected," he said. "One of the great things about being on the graduate faculty is what you learn from your students."

David B. Thorud Leadership Award

Cindy Atman

By Hannah Hickey
News & Information

If you had to design a public playground, where would you start? What information would you need? What factors would you consider?

When the UW's Center for Engineering Learning and Teaching asked this question of freshman engineers, it found that male students were more likely to consider budget and cost of materials. Female students were more likely to consider things like who lived in the surrounding neighborhood and whether the playground would be accessible to handicapped children. In time, however, these differences diminish.

This data is the kind that the center's founding director, Cindy Atman, is passionate about collecting. The winner this year of a David B. Thorud Leadership Award wants to help transform the way we teach engineering.

"If we get all our engineering students to graduate with the idea that problem definition is the key, then we've made huge progress," Atman says.

Atman says she's always been interested in the intersection of science, technology and education. She trained as an industrial engineer and worked in Washington, D.C., training U.S. senators and their staff on office automation software. But she was interested in broader issues and returned to earn a doctorate in Engineering and Public Policy, followed by a fellowship at the U.S. Agency for International Development and a faculty position at the University of Pittsburgh. She gravitated toward education, which she views as fundamental.

In 1998 she was recruited to create a center at the UW that would study engineering education, a field that she was instrumental in starting. She moved with her husband — then on the faculty at Carnegie Mellon — and two children to Seattle to try something new. Atman now holds the Mitchell T. Bowie and Lella Blanche Bowie Endowed Chair in the UW's Human Centered Design & Engineering.

"[Cindy] staked out a direction for her research and a trajectory for her career that many would say was highly risky in the tradition-bound field of engineering," wrote Jim Borgford-



Parnell, now the center's assistant director, in his nomination letter. Others point to her as "willing to be a trailblazer," and ready to take on "personal risk."

Until Atman arrived at the UW, no College of Engineering had a center that was devoted to education research and to interacting with other faculty in the college to improve teaching. Atman made it work, nominees wrote, by cultivating a diverse staff, supporting their research, and earning a reputation for rigorous scholarship. The center has met with more than 60 percent of faculty in the UW College of Engineering to discuss teaching approaches. It also has published widely, becoming a national and international leader in the field.

"We were the first center in the country to do this. This was a whole new arena,"

Atman said.

As years passed, scholarship in engineering education has become more accepted, in no small part due to Atman's efforts. In 2003 Atman became principal investigator and founding director of the Center for the Advancement of Engineering Education, a national collaboration of scholars from five universities funded by the National Science Foundation.

"When I started out, I used to say that in 10 years I wanted 10 centers across the country competing with me for grants," Atman said. "We've surpassed that," she said, with three university departments now focused exclusively on engineering education.

A typical day for Atman could include facilitating a conference call with peers across the nation, guiding a research team, writing a grant proposal, advising a faculty colleague on course design and planning a report for national policy-makers.

Through the years, Atman says she's learned to judge situations, to know when to take a leap and when to take baby steps. This could be the time for a leap. As the federal government boosts funding for science and engineering research, she hopes to also see an increase in support for engineering education.

"The academic community is just now realizing that the educational system designed for 20th century engineering does not work well for this century's students," Matthew O'Donnell, dean of the UW College of Engineering, wrote in his nomination letter. "Cindy was ahead of the curve by at least a decade."

David B. Thorud Leadership Award

Jill McKinstry

By Nancy Wick
University Week

Jill McKinstry is the director of Odegaard Undergraduate Library. But a couple of hours every week, you'll find her on the reference desk, answering student questions.

"When you do a lot of administrative work, it's therapy to be on the reference desk," she said. "It is extremely satisfying because it's so direct. You can help someone get what they need immediately."

The students in question probably don't know they're being served by the library's director, but that suits McKinstry. "My role is to help, to facilitate, to advocate, to encourage and to mentor," she said.

She's done all those things well, leading to her being honored with a David B. Thorud Leadership Award.

McKinstry started her career here as a part-time temporary reference librarian in the Fisheries/Oceanography Library — a job she arrived at by a circuitous route. Her first UW degree was a bachelor's in Spanish language and literature. She went on to get a master's and had started a doctoral program when she thought to herself, "I don't think I'm a very talented literary critic." She was also at a point in her life when she was ready to have children, so she dropped out of academic life for a while.

When she came back a few years later, it was to study classical Greek, just because she loves languages. "I thought, I love this but I have to work and this is probably not going to lead me to a job. And it just dawned on me, librarianship," McKinstry said.

Once enrolled in library school, she began working on the Suzzallo reference desk, and it was a match made in heaven. "I love the hunt in librarianship," she said. "Students come in with a question and you have no idea what question is going to come to you. Also, you're constantly learning and you get to be around such bright, interesting people."

McKinstry made the most of the opportunity at the Fisheries/Oceanography Library, and eventually became assistant director there.

Up until that point, McKinstry had been doing the library work of reference, collection development and instruction. But that changed in 1990, when she applied for and got a new position as assistant to then-Libraries Director Betty Bengston. She was



plunged into administration, but also into technology. When the library decided to go to a new online system in 1992, she was called upon to head the interface working group.

More assignments involving technology followed, as the libraries moved forward into the online world with each new development. The experience stood McKinstry in good stead when, in 1997, she was named to head Odegaard, where bookshelves were being removed to make room for networked computers in a so-called "learning commons" and "collaboratory."

In her nomination letter for the Thorud Award, Libraries Dean Lizabeth (Betsy) Wilson wrote of McKinstry, "Under her leadership, OUGL has been transformed into a vibrant learning commons — an

educational touchstone for the 12,000 students who daily pass through its doors. She has worked tirelessly to nurture effective relationships throughout the UW, and make catalytic connections that improve undergraduate teaching, learning and research."

To hear McKinstry tell it, some of that collaboration was the result of luck. "We had computers in classrooms," she said, "and we had space."

But Wilson thinks otherwise. "Candidates for UW positions often note that their motivation to apply was the opportunity to work with 'the fabulous Jill McKinstry,'" she wrote.

Some of McKinstry's collaborations have resulted in Odegaard being open 24 hours, a successful Common Book program with the Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs (McKinstry served three years on the committee and co-chaired it twice), the location (with the College of Arts and Sciences) of a writing center in Odegaard that is open late, and the co-sponsorship of a lecture series, "Research Exposed," that brings UW researchers into the libraries to speak about their work.

McKinstry also established the Libraries Research Award for Undergraduates, and she and her husband endowed a fellowship to help underrepresented students pursue a career in academic librarianship.

"I try to help make things happen," she said. "I've got an amazing staff of nine librarians and they are out creating opportunities. So I see my role as helping them get those innovations started, and to be open to the next creative partnership."

James D. Clowes Award for the Advancement of Learning Communities

Tetsuden Kashima

By Catherine O'Donnell
News & Information

Tetsuden (Tetsu) Kashima believes it is never too late for justice, and that the best teaching engages students in real-world situations.

For work that grows out of those beliefs, Kashima is the 2009 winner of the James D. Clowes Award. Established in 2003, the award recognizes a UW faculty or staff member for innovative contributions to teaching and learning.

Kashima, a professor of American ethnic studies and adjunct professor of sociology, played a vital role in *The Long Journey Home*, a ceremony held May 18, 2008. The UW bestowed honorary degrees on 449 Japanese Americans — 66 years after they were dismissed from the University because of their ancestry.

In February 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an executive order that led to the internment of nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans living on the West Coast. Two-thirds were American citizens. The U.S. had entered World War II three months earlier, and there were fears — unfounded even then — that Japanese Americans would be disloyal.

Lauro Flores, chairman of the Department of Ethnic Studies, said *The Long Journey Home* reflects Kashima's "extraordinary ability to encourage others, to bring students, faculty and community leaders together."

Kashima learned the power of teaching when he was an undergraduate at the University of California, Berkeley, and Stanford Lyman, a distinguished professor of sociology, noticed his work.

"When you get to know someone who takes a classroom interest in you, the classroom becomes alive," Kashima said. "I assume that students are taking my class because it in some way interests them. After that, it is the professor's responsibility to nurture that feeling and truly make the class interesting.

"Find ways to get students personally involved in class," he added. "Students like to see that what they have done goes beyond the classroom and the school."

Kashima's students have produced works used in public and permanent ways. For a class on internment camps in North America, students compiled a bibliography on the Minidoka incarceration camp in south central Idaho. Published by the



National Park Service with the students' names, it will be available at a visitors center.

Emily Hanako Momohara, an assistant professor at the Art Academy of Cincinnati, said Kashima's class on Japanese American internment inspired her to visit almost all 10 camps and create a documentary. She co-founded Friends of Minidoka, has led pilgrimages to the camp and has assisted the Park Service in Minidoka affairs. Writing of Kashima, Momohara said, "I am privileged to have taken his class, and been the recipient of his mentorship for so many years."

Other Kashima students created DVD documentaries of the Eagledale ferry terminal on Bainbridge Island, where the U.S. military moved the first Japanese Americans on their way to camps. The raw-video footage is available to

videographers, assuming credit is given to the students.

Kashima was 1 year old when his family "went to camp." Like other Japanese Americans, they didn't use words like "internment" or "incarceration." And for years afterward, Japanese Americans who had been held in the camps either did not talk about their experiences or focused on more psychologically manageable topics such as their camp gardens or poor food served in mess halls. That reticence may be part of coping, part of Japanese values inherited from the immigrant generation, including honor earned by quiet endurance, Kashima said.

"The older generation tried not to pass on the hurt, the uncertainty, the negative things about 'camp' to the next generation."

So Kashima didn't think deeply about Japanese Americans and World War II until Lyman gave him a copy of *No-No Boy*, a 1957 novel by John Okada. Widely read in Asian American literature classes, it concerns the price a young Japanese American man pays for deciding not to serve in American armed forces during the war.

Kashima began asking questions, eventually becoming a sociologist specializing in Japanese American socio-history. "I try," he says, "to engage my students in areas I think interesting and important to sociology, American society, and the University of Washington."

Kashima is married to Cecilia Kanako Kashima, and they have two sons, Daniel Tetsunori and James Tetsuro.

S. Sterling Munro Public Service Teaching Award

Kern Ewing

By Sandra Hines
News & Information

Finding ways to make a rambling corner lot in Laurelhurst more inviting for birds and neighbors. Removing a 10-foot wall of blackberries in order to reclaim a streamside area for native plants in the UW Botanic Gardens. Turning a Tacoma gravel pit into a forage area attractive to elk and other wildlife.

These are just a few of the projects tackled by teams of five and six students as part of a UW community-partnership project in restoration ecology that has completed 50 such projects in the last 10 years.

One of the leaders, Kern Ewing, has been named winner of this year's S. Sterling Munro Public Service Teaching Award.

The Restoration Ecology Network is a three-campus program conducting classes and research on restoration ecology. Among its offerings is a capstone experience for students consisting of a yearlong series of courses and real-world experience working with local parks and agencies, utilities, nonprofits and private firms, says Ewing, a professor of forest resources with the UW Botanic Gardens.

The Restoration Ecology Network is "an incredible, three-campus experiment in teaching, research, practice and community engagement," wrote forest resources' Thomas Hinckley, the Program on the Environment's Julia Parrish and the Wilburforce Foundation's David Secord, who is a former director of the Program on the Environment, in their letter of nomination.

Half a dozen faculty members from the UW's three campuses obtained funding to launch the program 10 years ago with a Tools for Transformation grant from the UW, "but Kern provided the original conceptual, focal (interdisciplinary and client oriented), experiential and practical foundations," they wrote.

Another trio of colleagues who currently work with Ewing on Restoration Ecology Network activities wrote that "Kern has pioneered a model of hands-on student learning in restoring damaged ecosystems that engages local communities."

UW Bothell's Warren Gold, who has been with the network since its inception, and forest resources Jim Fridley and Rodney Pond, say Ewing's community collaborations are effective because "student teams work in direct collaboration with community partners on the design and implementation of their



projects, each learning from the other.

"But in the design of these projects, Kern has made sure that the impact on the community does not stop with the end of the academic project. Built into the process is the creation of a community stewardship plan and training session where students work with their community partners to craft a realistic vision for the future of the project site. Community members from K-12 classes, 'friends of' groups, homeowners associations and others are recruited into roles of caring for and learning from the project site into the future to enhance long-term success of the project and community engagement with the site."

Ewing, for example, says one of the first projects the network did was at the Evergreen School near the University District, where UW students weeded,

planted trees and rehabilitated a detention pond area. Not only did they involve the school kids in the process, teachers went on to incorporate water sampling and collecting insects from the pond into their science lessons. And the area is taken care of by parent volunteers to this day, Ewing says.

"One nice thing about working on urban sites is there are so many users," he says. Users who are willing to take on the task after the students have initiated work at a site.

Those who go through the capstone course go on to be project managers and overseers for the city, county, nonprofits and more.

"As an undergraduate in UW's Program on the Environment, I was paired with six other students from two UW campuses and five academic majors to work with the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe on a one-acre forest restoration project on their reservation," wrote Nathaniel Hough-Snee. "Our tribal liaisons . . . were coincidentally graduates of the REN program in years prior. The REN program allowed me to develop my problem-solving, project management and leadership skills.

"After my REN service-learning project, I stayed engaged with environmental issues in the greater Snoqualmie Watershed, eventually becoming an ecological restoration planner for the tribe."

The Restoration Ecology Network has been such a national standout that the journal *Science* featured it and only 11 other community-partnership programs in the course of the year, one each month in 2006. See: <http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/reprint/312/5782/1880.pdf>

Distinguished Librarian Award

Mary Whisner

By Devon Mills
University Week Intern

Reference librarian Mary Whisner says her job is all about the thrill of the hunt — for information, that is.

“I like it when students come in and they say, ‘Geez, I’m really stumped about this,’ and I can show them a way to find it — a database they didn’t know about, a book that they didn’t know would have exactly what they needed,” Whisner said. “It’s fun to help them on their way.”

For 21 years, Whisner has worked at the Marian Gould Gallagher Law Library, doing what she says is her calling — helping students and faculty find the information they need, and teaching future lawyers how to be effective researchers. Whisner’s passion for her work has paid off, since she is this year’s recipient of the Distinguished Librarian Award.

Letters of support from Whisner’s colleagues burst with praise for her knowledge, enthusiasm, humor and creativity. They call her a “genius,” a “reference ‘goddess,’” and “the ultimate extra-mile person.”

But finding her niche in reference librarianship wasn’t easy for Whisner. When she was an undergraduate at the UW, she loved libraries but had no idea she’d end up working in one, let alone here on this very campus.

“When I was an undergrad, I wasn’t the sort of young person who planned ahead very far,” Whisner said. “I was an undeclared major for three years, and finally declared a major when I couldn’t put it off anymore.”

She ultimately graduated with a philosophy degree, and later earned a law degree at Harvard Law School. After two other law jobs, she had a fellowship that allowed her to work with a public interest group in Washington, D.C., and she periodically visited Georgetown University to meet with other fellows and audit classes.

“I found that I really liked being around the academic setting much more than I liked being in litigation,” Whisner said. “When you’re litigating, your job is to disagree with people.”

She recalled one instance in which she had worked tirelessly on a brief that argued her client’s case, and then sent it to the opposing side’s lawyers. Their reply, of course, attempted to tear down all of her carefully crafted arguments.



Whisner said: “I just remember that moment of reading their brief and feeling so discouraged and downhearted. I realized that it took a toll on me. That’s not really what rings my bells.”

She began talking to law librarians that she met through connections at Georgetown and realized librarianship — which involves helping others, rather than disagreeing with them — was a more appealing career path. Whisner earned her MLIS at Louisiana State University and, within a year, found herself right back where she started: the UW.

“Being a reference librarian, I’m on everybody’s side,” Whisner said. “I’m in the reference office, you come in, you want to find information — I want you to find information! It’s terrific. I like seeing people, I like going into the classroom,

I like being in the reference office and I like working with our law librarianship students. There are just a lot of rewarding, interpersonal aspects to the job for me.”

Whisner’s work rewards others, too. Her job is one of “lifelong learning” and “her thinking is relevant, practical, and looks ahead,” wrote Penny Hazelton, associate dean for Library and Computing Services at the law school, in a letter of support.

Since 1999, Whisner has written a regular column, “Practicing Reference,” in the quarterly publication *Law Library Journal*. In it, she tackles different components of reference research from humorous or interesting angles; for instance, her most recent column explores the question of why it is illegal to remove mattress tags as a way of showing how to research federal and state regulations.

She is also a co-author of *Washington Legal Researcher’s Deskbook*, and has written blogs and research guides.

The award itself has already helped Whisner continue her lifelong learning: In celebration, she treated herself to a Kindle 2, the latest version of Amazon’s portable electronic reading device.

Whisner uses it to read for both research purposes and for pleasure, but she said that for her, there isn’t a sharp distinction between the two.

“Sometimes I’m reading law or librarianship or serious nonfiction because I find it interesting, and it’s nice that it helps my job,” she said. “I think it’s really lovely when you have a profession where you can have that overlap.”

Outstanding Public Service Award

Richard Ladner

By Hannah Hickey
News & Information

Richard Ladner's phone just keeps ringing. And on the other end of the line are people in the deaf and blind communities who have interesting projects to propose.

At least that's how he explains his continuing involvement at age 65 in accessibility research and activism, which is still ramping up.

"It is kind of interesting at this point in my career. You would think I would be winding down," says Ladner, the Boeing Professor in Computer Science & Engineering and this year's winner of the Outstanding Public Service Award. But instead of making plans for retirement, he has a pile of cell phones on his desk that he's adapting to make them accessible, a project to bring American Sign Language to the UW campus, and ongoing relationships with groups on campus and around the country.

Ladner is a hearing child of deaf parents. He joined the UW faculty in 1971, first pursuing a research career in theoretical computer science. In the early 1980s he decided to learn sign language properly. Soon he was tutoring high school students in math as a way to practice his skills.

He slowly grew more involved with the Seattle deaf community and became an active volunteer. He also helped the newly active local deaf-blind community organize a national conference in 1984. At that time he first became involved with the Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Services, for which he later co-chaired a committee raising \$8.6 million for an abused housing center that opened in 2006.

"There are some things that are just worth doing," Ladner says.

For a while he was less active, mainly while he and his wife raised their two children. But then the phone started ringing again and he took on new projects.

And another transition took place: his day job and his community service began to merge. In 2002 the Department of Computer Science & Engineering received an application from a blind student who wanted to do a doctorate. Some academics were skeptical that a blind person could pursue a doctorate. A doctoral student in the sciences would need to read graphs and



diagrams. Ladner responded by taking on the student and launching a research project to develop a tactile graphics tool.

"My whole career changed from doing theoretical computer science to accessibility technology," Ladner says. These days, Ladner and another UW professor, Eve Riskin, lead a research project to transmit American Sign Language over cellular networks. Another graduate student of Ladner's has developed a tool that lets blind people use public computers through a Web-based screen reader. And he's just helped write a grant proposal for another \$25 million project in accessibility.

"The spectrum of Dr. Ladner's work has been broad, ranging from the technical to the very personal," read a nomination letter for the service award by Gus Kravas, special assistant to Provost Phyllis Wise.

Ladner has worked to support people with disabilities in the UW community and around the nation. For more than a decade Ladner led a summer workshop for DO-IT, a program which brings Washington state high school students with disabilities to campus each summer for exposure to college life. More recently, he has begun a national program bringing deaf high school and college students to the UW for a nine-week intensive program in computer science.

"One of my goals is that there be more deaf scientists and engineers. It's happening, but too slowly," he says.

Lindsay Yazzolino, a blind student who worked with Ladner through high school, credits him as a mentor. She writes that Ladner truly believes "that anyone intellectually capable of pursuing careers in the sciences should be able to do so regardless of disability."

In 2005 Ladner was named a recipient of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring. He also serves on the Board of Trustees of Gallaudet University, the only liberal arts university for deaf people, where his parents once were students.

In recent years he has become increasingly involved with the National Federation for the Blind. The NFB Executive Director writes in his nomination letter: "Through our work with Dr. Ladner, we have found a true partner who is dedicated to utilizing the full potential of technology development to improve opportunities, independence and employability for all people."

Distinguished Contributions to Lifelong Learning Award

Oleta Beard

By Alison Koop
Educational Outreach

"It's a challenge for my adult students, who work a full day and then go to class in the evening," says Oleta "Leta" Beard, a full-time lecturer for the Foster School of Business and instructor for the Marketing Management certificate program administered by Educational Outreach.

Yet these students routinely wow the local nonprofits and small businesses they're paired with for practicum projects guided by Beard. Many cite Beard's dedication and encouragement as a foundation for their success in class and after the program's end. Her skill in connecting with adult learners and keeping them engaged has earned her the 2009 award for Distinguished Contributions to Lifelong Learning.

Most of Beard's certificate program students are working professionals looking to make substantial changes in their lives and careers. Her classes are a mixture of diverse backgrounds: international students and MBA graduates come together with career changers of all stripes including teachers, engineers and, this year, a school principal. In a class of 40 students, ages range from 24 to 50, with the "average" student in the early to mid 30s.

Beard takes all that work and real-life experience and uses it to advantage. Class discussion is an absolutely integral part of the program for her evening certificate students, who are "more pointed" and wide ranging than traditional students in their questions and comments. "I'm a firm believer that the students can learn just as much from each other as they can from an instructor," Beard said.

That approach helps bind together these diverse students not only as a class, but into the highly successful teams formed every year for the certificate program practicum. Each team produces a detailed marketing plan for a Puget Sound organization selected by Beard. Most organizations receiving the services of a certificate program team are small businesses and nonprofits that cannot afford to engage a marketing agency — and the results have been stunning.

"The student team that worked with us put together an excellent, functional tool to market our program Their professionalism was outstanding. They presented us with a detailed [plan] that has become our bible," said the head of one organization. Another business owner credited the



implementation of a practicum course marketing plan for helping to increase sales by more than 6 percent year over year. The Washington State Patrol Fire Academy (2006) was so impressed with its document that it was included in the budget proposal to the governor. These are just a few examples of the scores of organizations that have benefited from the knowledge and skills that Beard has imparted to her students over the years.

Having prepared her students fall and winter through a "fire hose" of knowledge, Beard coaches them every step of the way through the spring practicum. She connects so effectively that one team has formally dedicated its plan to her. Not only do her students gain the real-world, practical knowledge and experience particularly valued by adult learners, they also take pride in helping to share UW expertise with the community.

"I develop my classes with the adult learner in mind," said Beard. "Since I have more than 14 years of work experience and 13 years of teaching experience, I am able to combine the 'real' world with the theory of textbook learning into my curriculum."

But that's not the only key to her effectiveness as an instructor of lifelong learners. "She is truly interested in the post-education success of her students," says a recent program graduate. For example, Beard's coaching and encouragement outside of class gave one alumna the courage to start her own branding professional services company.

"I stay in touch with many of my former students," said Beard. "I guess the idea is that the teaching and mentoring doesn't stop when the class ends."

It doesn't stop at borders, either. During the summer of 2006, Beard volunteered to teach marketing management to executives in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, Vietnam. She also taught retailing, "a challenge because they don't use credit in Vietnam and so can't purchase off the Internet. It was extremely rewarding for me because they were so eager to learn and absorb everything they could about marketing." Her host, Royal Education Vietnam, informed her that she had received the highest student ratings ever.

Beard's passion for teaching adult learners has not only helped to connect the UW to the Puget Sound community — it's also made her a global ambassador for the UW.

Alumnus Summa Laude Dignatus

Wayne Quimby

*Adapted from a Columns story
by Shannon O'Leary*

For his prolific, groundbreaking work as instrument designer for the UW's medical school, and for his singular role in marrying the fields of engineering and medicine, Wayne Quinton, a 1959 graduate, has been named the UW's 2009 Alumnus Summa Laude Dignatus — the "alumnus worthy of the greatest praise." It is the highest honor that the UW can confer upon a graduate.

It wasn't the most likely of career trajectories for a child born to Depression-era Idaho farmers. But Quinton always showed a mechanical aptitude, and a natural curiosity about how things worked. When he was a little boy, he spent weeks deconstructing and reassembling the metal toys he got for Christmas. He worked over one windup Model T car so often it got metal fatigue. So he taught himself how to solder, then repaired it.

When he was in high school, his father suffered a heart attack and was ordered to years of bed rest — an event that fired Quinton's lifelong interest in medicine. After graduating from Rigby High School with science honors in 1939, he attended Ricks College (later renamed Brigham Young University) and Montana State College, but didn't graduate from either one.

After the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, he was hired by The Boeing Co. as a master-layout draftsman for the B-29 bomber. He managed to pursue an informal continuing education program there by hopscotching through as many departments as possible. In Boeing's tool-planning group, Quinton found a rich training ground indeed.

Quinton got his first job at the UW as an electronics technician



in 1949. His improbable charge: to develop heat-measuring equipment for an Arctic acclimatization study. "I don't know exactly how I managed to get that job; I was totally unqualified," said Quinton, who at the time was still lacking a college degree. When the study ended two years later, however, the always-assertive Quinton applied for and was hired to head the medical school's brand new instrument shop.

There, he designed some 40 gadgets for the UW, from a hydraulic gastrointestinal tract biopsy device to a one-of-a-kind bubble oxygenator that enabled the first open-heart surgery in the Pacific Northwest. One of Quinton's most pioneering contributions was a shunt he co-designed with UW physicians Belding Scribner and David Dilliard that allowed kidney patients to be easily reconnected

to dialysis machines.

During his tenure in the instrument shop, Quinton also found time to earn a mechanical engineering degree from the UW and to launch a business in his basement. He presciently parlayed many of his medical devices that the UW declined to manufacture into Quinton Instruments. The business was very successful, and Quinton sold it in 1984.

Quinton's most influential invention is probably the lightweight cardiac treadmill. Before Quinton, treadmills were too cumbersome to fit into a medical setting. His streamlined model, fitted with a two-horse-power motor, became the diagnostic standard — not only revolutionizing the approach to cardiac disease diagnosis, but fueling the aerobic exercise boom.

Of his career-long collaboration with physicians, Quinton said, "I think because I kept asking the question 'Why?,' I taught them a little about engineering and they taught me a little about medicine."

Alumni Association Distinguished Service Award

Kay Larson

By Courtney Acitelli
UW Alumni Association

In the 55 years since she graduated from the UW, Kay Larson has had her sleeves permanently rolled up in service to her alma mater.

Need an alumna adviser for the UW's Kappa Kappa Gamma chapter? She'll do it, and eventually serve as the sorority's international president, too. Need someone to help round up classmates for the Class of 1954's 25th and 50th reunions? Help field phone calls in the Tyee office, including during a busy Rose Bowl season? Perform various roles for the UW's Panhellenic organization? Serve as vice president of the UW Alumnae Board?

Larson has done it all — and more. In a gesture of gratitude, the UW Alumni Association has recognized Larson with its 2009 Distinguished Service Award, the highest honor bestowed upon UWAA volunteers and members.



Today, Larson continues to volunteer for the UW from her home in Rancho Mirage, Calif. She recently served as the volunteer coordinator for the Chow Down to Washington dinner, part of the Dawg Days in the Desert event featuring President Emmert and head football Coach Steve Sarkisian. Her idea to raise funds for UW Alumnae Board scholarships has grown into the annual Coffee and Conversation luncheon there.

“Just like I always knew I wanted to go to the UW, I always knew I would be a volunteer afterward,” she said. “I want people to feel good about the University. I want to be that connection for them.”

Husky connections seem to be Kay Larson's specialty. Who else could help create a grassroots UW fundraiser a thousand miles from Seattle, and grow it from 14 attendees

to more than 100 in four short years?

“I am just thrilled with what we're doing here,” she says. So is her alma mater.

President's Medal

Pavran Vaswani

Pavan Vaswani has been selected as a President's Medalist for the Class of 2009. The selection is made based on overall academic achievement but is not limited to grade point average.

Vaswani is majoring in computer science, neurobiology and biochemistry. His decision to come to the UW was heavily influenced by the assurance that he could become involved in research the day that he arrived on campus. Indeed, his experience working with faculty in a research setting caused him to broaden his degree ambitions, which had begun with computer science.

Vaswani is a Goldwater Scholar, a Mary Gates Scholar and a Washington Scholar. He also has received the Research Fellowship for Advanced Undergraduates and is a Space Grant Scholar. He is



currently working in a laboratory in the Department of Neurological Surgery, where he is developing a device to measure brain pressure non-invasively using ultrasound.

After completing his undergraduate degree, Vaswani plans to attend The Johns Hopkins University, in an M.D.-Ph.D. program. He is ultimately planning a career in medical research.

He says doing research has provided his most memorable experiences at the UW.

“Conducting research has allowed me to find and explore what I love doing; to hone my skills and sharpen my understanding of all that medical research involves; to apply the knowledge I am gaining in my classes, giving my lectures perspective, depth, and import; and finally to meet and work alongside doctors and researchers who are experts in

their fields, learning from their wisdom and perspective.”

President's Medal

Laura Hinton

Laura M. Hinton, who is receiving a bachelor's degree in anthropology, has been awarded a President's Medal for scholarship as a transfer student.

The UW awards a President's Transfer Medal to a student who entered the UW with at least 60 transfer credits from a Washington community college.

Hinton, who came to the UW from North Seattle Community College, was recognized not only for her grades but for overall scholarship. In addition to other academic honors, she has been selected as a member of Phi Beta Kappa, the academic honor society that recognizes excellence in the liberal arts.

Hinton says that what has impressed her most about the UW is the University's commitment to promoting civic responsibility. "When I entered the UW, I had volunteered very minimally. Today, as



a consequence of my experience there, service has not only become integral to my identity, it has also fostered my self-perception as a member of my local and global communities. I now envision my place in the world as a person prepared and excited to cultivate social justice, a future I consider both a responsibility and a privilege."

Hinton has worked as a volunteer with the People's Harm Reduction Alliance, providing clients with sterile injection equipment, referrals to social health and social services, as well as information describing safe drug consumption practices and the health risks associated with drug use.

After graduation, she plans to complete the prerequisites to apply for a master of science in nursing program, with the eventual goal of promoting marginalized populations' access to health care.