2008 Distinguished Achievement Awards

TEXAS A&M’S HIGHEST PROFESSIONAL HONOR
Since 1955, Texas A&M University and The Association of Former Students have recognized the most deserving faculty and staff members with the university’s highest professional honor—the University-Level Distinguished Achievement Awards.

This year’s 24 recipients were chosen for their stellar performances in teaching, research, student relations, continuing education, staff service and graduate student mentoring. They now join the ranks of the more than 800 members of the Aggie family who have been honored with the award since its inception.

The Distinguished Achievement Award is an award of excellence, and each of the 24 recipients is more than worthy of the distinction.

This year, for the first time in the history of the award, one of the recipients hails from Texas A&M University at Qatar, a reflection of Texas A&M’s growing presence of excellence across the world.

Please join us as we congratulate the recipients of the 2008 University-Level Distinguished Achievement Awards.

FOR TEACHING

Dr. Leland A. Carlson
Professor
Department of Aerospace Engineering

Carlson joined the Aerospace Engineering Department of Texas A&M in 1969. In addition to teaching and research, he has served as assistant and associate dean of engineering from 1981 to 1984, and as undergraduate advisor and director of undergraduate aerospace engineering programs from 1996 until 2004. In the endorsement letters, one student wrote, “I have never known a professor who could so easily keep my attention and show the importance of the subject matter. He brings real-world applications into the learning environment.”

Dr. Paul S. Busch
Professor
Department of Marketing

Busch joined the Texas A&M faculty in 1986 as head of the Department of Marketing. He’s taught in the Executive MBA program since its inception in 2000 and was named a Fish Camp namesake in 2002. Busch received The Association of Former Students College-Level Distinguished Achievement Award for Teaching in 2007. Busch’s innovative teaching is evidenced by his incorporation of a program into his courses that provides students and staff the opportunity to discover natural talents and gain insights into the development and utilization of those talents.

Dr. John Valasek
Associate Professor
Department of Aerospace Engineering

Valasek came to Texas A&M University in 1997 and is currently an associate professor of aerospace engineering and director of the Vehicle Systems & Control Laboratory. He is a member of the Honors Faculty, and is a Montague-Center for Teaching Excellence Scholar. He’s taught nine different undergraduate and graduate courses in his department—four of which he created. Valasek conveys to his students that the only thing they can really control is their attitude, and he challenges them to improve and get the very best out of themselves.

This year’s 24 recipients were chosen for their stellar performances...

Dr. Michael Willard ’74
Professor
Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences

Willard is a graduate of Texas A&M University’s College of Veterinary Medicine. He received The Association of Former Students College-Level Distinguished Achievement Award for Teaching in 1993, The Association for Former Students University-Level Distinguished Achievement Award for Teaching in 1995 and two national teaching awards. “We began his course scared, and finished it capable and inspired,” a student wrote.

Dr. Daniel A. Singleton
Professor
Department of Chemistry

Singleton joined Texas A&M’s faculty in 1987 and currently holds the rank of professor of chemistry and a Davidson Professor of Science. He received The Association of Former Students College-Level Distinguished Achievement Award for Teaching in 1995, was a University Faculty Fellow from 2001 to 2006 and is the associate editor of The Journal of...
Dr. James Herman
Clinical Associate Professor
Department of Veterinary Physiology and Pharmacology

Herman received The Association of Former Students College-Level Distinguished Achievement Award for Teaching in 2006 and was recognized as a Montague-Center for Teaching Excellence Scholar in 2004-05. He was also the choice for the 1999 Outstanding Professor of Biomedical Science Teaching Award and the 1997 Richard Davis Teaching Award. Herman feels that he can have the greatest impact on the world by challenging future veterinarians, physicians and dentists to think, understand and reason in their careers. He has been in the classroom fulltime for 12 years.

Dr. Luciana R. Barroso
Associate Professor
Zachry Department of Civil Engineering

Barroso joined the Texas A&M faculty in the fall of 1999. She received the 2003 Zachry Award for Excellence in Teaching from the Department of Civil Engineering as well as the 2003 ExCEEd New Faculty Excellence in Teaching Award for Zone III from the American Society of Civil Engineers. Barroso is known in the department as someone who will challenge her students to exceed their expectations. She is highly regarded both in and out of the classroom due to her dedication to her role as both teacher and mentor.

Dr. Charles W. Lafon
Associate Professor
Department of Geography

Lafon is a 2004-05 Montague-Center for Teaching Excellence Scholar and received The Association of Former Students College-Level Distinguished Achievement Award for Teaching in 2006. Lafon serves as the undergraduate director and chair of the undergraduate committee in the Department of Geography. He is currently leading the department’s efforts to revise and improve its undergraduate program. Lafon has taken numerous graduate and undergraduate students with him on field research expeditions to the Appalachian Mountains, northern Sweden and East Texas. He enjoys fieldwork and can think of no better way for students to learn and become excited about geography than to participate in field research activities.

The Distinguished Achievement Award is an award of excellence...

Dr. Behbood Ben Zoghi
Professor & Director
RFID Laboratory

Zoghi is a professor and director of RFID/Sensor Laboratory at Texas A&M University. He was Leonard & Valerie Bruce Leadership Chair Professor, director of the Thomas & Joan Read Center for Distribution Research & Education, and program coordinator in the industrial distribution program at Texas A&M University. A student said of his class, “I am experiencing the difference between wanting to be a great leader and actually becoming one. Dr. Z breaks the mold on traditional engineering education by including the emotional intelligence.”

Dr. Jerald A. Caton
Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Associate Department Head
Department of Mechanical Engineering

Caton joined Texas A&M’s Department of Mechanical Engineering in 1979. As a Fellow of both the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and the Society of Automotive Engineers, Canton blends results from his research with the subject material to illustrate relevance and provide motivation for his students. He received the 1990 Society of Automotive Engineers national Ralph R. Teetor Educational Award and the department’s Peggy L. and Charles L. Brittan ’65 Teaching Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching in 2000.

Dr. James C. Sacchettini
Professor
Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics

Sacchettini joined Texas A&M University in 1996 and currently serves as a professor of biochemistry and biophysics and holder of the Welch Chair of Science. His research program focuses on eventually abating one of the worst diseases afflicting the third world, tuberculosis. An undisputed leader in the area of structural biology of tuberculosis, Sacchettini co-founded the TB Structural Genomics Consortium in 2002. In the past five years, Sacchettini co-authored about 87 publications. His research grant expenditures during last fiscal year totaled more than $4.3 million. His research efforts have clearly benefited many students.

Organic Chemistry. Students commend him for excellence in teaching and for exceptional involvement in student mentoring activities.
Dr. David E. Bergbreiter
Professor
Department of Chemistry

Bergbreiter joined the Texas A&M faculty in 1974. He has more than 225 refereed research publications, more than 500 invited lectures at academic and industrial laboratories, meetings and symposia, and has served on numerous editorial boards, government panels and advisory committees. He’s trained 42 postdoctoral and 38 graduate students and supervised 48 undergraduate researchers. He is a 1983 winner of The Association of Former Students’ College-Level Distinguished Achievement Award in Teaching, and a 1997 winner of The Association of Former Students’ University-Level Distinguished Achievement Award for Teaching. Bergbreiter received the university’s most prestigious teaching award, the Presidential Professor for Teaching Excellence, in 2006.

Michael A. Hitt
Distinguished Professor
Department of Management

Hitt is a Distinguished Professor of Management at Texas A&M University and holds the Joe B. Foster Chair in Business Leadership. He is a former editor of the Academy of Management Journal and is currently co-editor of the Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal. He has received several awards for his research, including the Award for Outstanding Academic Contributions to Competitiveness and the Award for Outstanding Intellectual Contributions to Competitiveness Research from the American Society for Competitiveness. He received the Irwin Outstanding Educator Award and the Distinguished Service Award from the Academy of Management. He is the current president of the Strategic Management Society.

Dr. Leonard L. Berry
Distinguished Professor
Department of Marketing

Berry came to Texas A&M in 1982. He is a Distinguished Professor of Marketing and holds the M.B. Zale Chair in Retailing and Marketing Leadership in the Mays Business School. He is also professor of humanities in medicine in the College of Medicine, Health Science Center. Berry received the highest honor in the academic marketing discipline in 2007: the AMA/McGraw-Hill/Irwin Distinguished Marketing Educator Award. He also is a recipient of the Paul D. Converse Award, the Outstanding Marketing Educator Award from the Academy of Marketing Science and the Career Contributions to Services Marketing Award. This is Berry’s third Association of Former Students University-Level Distinguished Achievement Award. He has previously won in the category of Research in 1996, and in Teaching in 1990. The University also honored Berry by selecting him as a University Distinguished Lecturer for 2002-03.

Dr. Guoyao Wu
Professor, University Faculty Fellow and AgriLife Research Faculty Fellow
Department of Animal Science

An extremely prolific scientist, Wu has published more than 188 journal articles, and since 1991, secured more than $12 million in contract and grant funding. Wu’s research talent is seamlessly integrated into his graduate education program as evidenced by his record of service as chair, co-chair or member of more than 42 graduate committees. Wu’s peers selected him to membership on several editorial boards. Wu was recognized as an “Established Investigator” in 1998 by the American Heart Association and received the Nonruminant Nutrition Research Award in 2004 from the American Society of Animal Science.

Dr. Dorothy E. Shippen
Professor, University Faculty Fellow and AgriLife Research Faculty Fellow
Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics

Shippen is recognized for her pioneering research in the field of telomerase, an enzyme that has special significance to aging and cancer. In the last five years, Shippen has published 18 papers that chronicle a movement of her research focus using the simple plant organism Arabidopsis. An active member of the faculty of genetics, Shippen’s work is signified by her many invitations to speak at major scientific conferences as well as her 2001 publication in Science that essentially made the case for the relevance of plant telomeres to human health. She currently has more than $1.7 million in research grant support.

FOR STAFF

Marguerite Van Dyke
Clerk III
Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences

As the department’s “unofficial goodwill ambassador,” Van Dyke’s role extends far beyond a support staff function. Van Dyke’s contributions in recruiting make the department one
of the top programs in its field. In fact, numerous graduate students have cited Van Dyke’s “sincere concern for their well-being, her warmth and her friendship” as key factors in their electing to come to Texas A&M. In recognition of her selfless service and dedication, two departmental graduate student and international student alumni groups established $25,000 named endowments in her honor.

Patricia Collins
Coordinator of Counseling and Wellness
Department of Student Affairs
Texas A&M University at Qatar

Over the last eight years, the past three years being in Qatar, Collins has helped Aggies grow and develop. Collins’ dedication and determination to always do what is best for the students shows in her every day interactions with students from various cultures. She is on the forefront of developing Aggies in Qatar and works to connect them to the university while at the same time giving of herself to TAMUQ Aggies, creating the space for safe, holistic self exploration and growth.

They now join the ranks of the more than 800 members of the Aggie family

TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE

The Distinguished Achievement Award is part of Texas A&M’s history, and along with it, a Fort Worth company is part of the rite.

Diamond H Recognition, a division of Halton Jewelers, is the creator of the watch that each recipient receives when chosen as an award winner.

Each timepiece is custom outfitted with two 10-karat gold emblems mounted next to the face of the watch—“Distinguished Achievement Award,” the emblem reads.

The watches are one of a kind, the emblem specially designed by artists at Diamond H Recognition. Hank Billman has been part of the process since 1974.

He’s worked in a variety of roles at Diamond H, from sales representative, sales manager, vice president of sales and the vice president of merchandise.

“Over the years I have had several opportunities to transfer that business to other Diamond H sales reps, but I have always held onto this account,” he said.

Working with Texas A&M and The Association of Former Students is different than his corporate accounts. It’s more personal, he said.

The dynamic has kept him involved with The Association of Former Students.

“The Association of Former Students and A&M have always been a pleasure to work with and I have made many lasting friendships in College Station. Currently, one of my nieces is a sophomore at A&M and another one will be a freshman there next year.” The company has an Aggie connection too. The store’s owner, E.P. Halton, attended A&M, and though he didn’t complete his studies, both his sons graduated, and the youngest, Bob Halton ’47, returned to manage the store.
**FOR ADMINISTRATION**

Dr. Joe D. Townsend ’67  
Associate Dean and  
Director of Student Development  
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Townsend actively serves the academic, advising and development needs of more than 5,400 undergraduate students in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. During his 11-year tenure in the dean’s office, Townsend has administered the college’s scholarship program, directed the Agricultural Career Exposition and coordinated student recruiting, career planning and internship experiences. He has received numerous accolades, including the John J. Koldus Award; Honor Professor by the Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences Council, and the Texas A&M Association of Former Students Distinguished Achievement Award for Individual Student Relations.

**FOR EXTENSION, OUTREACH, CONTINUING EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Dr. Joe Outlaw  
Professor of Agricultural Economics and Extension Economist  
Texas AgriLife Extension

Outlaw is a leader in agricultural and renewable energy policy analysis and education. He also consults with Congress on the consequences of agricultural policy changes. Outlaw is on the leading edge of farm-level agricultural policy analysis, biofuels, alternative technology assessment and the development of risk-based farm management decision aids. In 2002, he led a team of Extension economists who received awards for their 2002 Farm Bill education efforts from the American Agricultural Economics Association, the Southern Agricultural Economics Association, the National Public Policy Education Committee, USDA-FSA and the Texas A&M University System Vice Chancellor for Agriculture.

**FOR GRADUATE MENTORING**

Dr. John L. Junkins  
Distinguished Professor  
Department of Aerospace Engineering

Junkins holds the Royce E. Wisenbaker Chair and the title of Regent’s Professor. He is the author of more than 370 publications, including six textbooks and several patents. He is a prolific mentor, having directed more than 100 graduate students and post-doctoral researchers. More than a third of his 38 doctoral students are on leading faculties worldwide. His former students constitute a significant school of thought in industry and academia. He is a Fellow of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics and the American Astronautical Society. He has received a dozen national and international honors, including the AIAA Pendray Aerospace Literature Award and the International Astronautical Federation’s Frank Malina Medal.

Dr. Bernd Würsig  
Professor  
Department of Marine Biology

Würsig joined the Texas A&M at Galveston faculty in 1989 and was invited to start a new marine mammal research program as director of the Texas A&M University’s Institute of Marine Life Sciences in the mid-1990s. Würsig has been a leader in the field of marine mammal science for nearly three decades. His involvement in the development of the field includes pioneering field research, helping bring rigor to cetacean behavioral studies and teaching and serving as president of the Society for Marine Mammalogy. He is well loved by all former students for his dedication, highest integrity, and promoting the development and potential of young scientists and students. In November 2006, he was voted a Regents Professor, Texas A&M System.