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. Please join us as we congratulate the recipients of the 2009 University-Level Distinguished Achievement Awards.
Boettcher has been at Texas A&M University for 10 years and has been a Fish Camp and T-Camp namesake. She is known for seeking for the most effective teaching methods and ways to incorporate more student involvement into the classroom. One student commented, “Dr. Boettcher is my role model now, with her strong personality and ability to engage students into classroom discussions and activities.” Another student wrote, “This was a wonderful class with an incredible teacher. She is truly an amazing woman with a very giving and kind heart.”

Johnson, who joined the veterinary pathobiology faculty in 2000, incorporates his experiences from the armed forces, private practice and academia into his undergraduate, graduate, professional and continuing education courses. Part of Dr. Johnson’s teaching philosophy is “Make it relevant, make it practical, and make it visual.” A colleague described Dr. Johnson as “a caring professor who is interested in modeling life-long learning for his students” and “as an invaluable member of our basic science faculty.” One former student described Dr. Johnson as “an exemplary mentor, supporter, role model, and friend to all.”

Kerwin joined the Texas A&M faculty in January 2002 and was promoted to professor with tenure in 2007. She is a recognized expert and outstanding teacher in veterinary orthopedics and neurosurgery. One student called Kerwin “a true role model and a gifted teacher.” A colleague said, “Dr. Kerwin is an outstanding teacher, an excellent surgeon, an effective clinical researcher, and wonderful colleague.” And a former student who is now a colleague wrote that Kerwin “provided the knowledge, tools and ‘spark’ for students to push themselves and excel.”

Lynch joined the Texas A&M faculty in 1992 after teaching within the special education program for four years. She is known to maintain high rigor in her courses and is considered at the forefront of effective teaching methodology by using distance education and community-based courses. A colleague describes her as “a model of fairness and a leader from whom students have learned skills of independent problem solving, leadership and initiative.” A former student said Lynch “helps her students see beyond the immediate future and current reality, encouraging them to think more futuristically and globally.”
McAnally, who has been at Texas A&M for more than seven years, was named “Best MBA Professor” by the MBA Association in 2003, 2004, and 2007 and “Best Executive MBA Professor” from Mays Business School in 2007. Students comment on the energy and enthusiasm she brings to the classroom, and one former student said she was “like Mary Poppins as she made everything seem magical and interesting.” A faculty colleague from Mays called her “caring, demanding, organized, incredibly well prepared, concerned about the students, concerned about the program, and extremely generous with her time with students.”

Dr. Simon W. North
Professor
Department of Chemistry

Dr. North joined the Texas A&M faculty in 1997. Of his teaching philosophy, he says, “It is just as valuable to convey to students what is unknown as it is to teach what is known. My goal is to teach students to recognize scientific challenges and the limitations of knowledge.” One student commented, “His enthusiasm for the field is one of my main sources of encouragement and inspiration to continue on the path of higher education focusing on improving the state of science education.” Another said his teaching excellence “is surpassed by none in my undergraduate and graduate careers at Texas A&M University.”

Dr. Roger Reese '81
Professor
Department of History

Reese has taught at Texas A&M since 1990. He teaches a variety of courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, employing innovative methods to capture student interest by incorporating active learning methods such as panel discussions and mock trials. He is known for challenging students to think for themselves rather than just reciting course information. One former student called him “an exemplar of the ideals of undergraduate education.” Another wrote, “I benefited from every class and left each class period feeling mentally stimulated, richer in knowledge, and excited about what I had just learned.”

Dr. Jennifer L. Welch
Chevron II Professor
Department of Computer Science and Engineering

Welch has been at Texas A&M for more than 16 years and was interim head for the Department of Computer Science in 2001-02. She oversaw the complete overhaul of the undergraduate computer science degree and shepherded the revised curriculum through the approval process, culminating in approval by the Faculty Senate in early 2007. “With more people like Dr. Welch to help lead the way at Texas A&M, our computer science and engineering programs could grow to become one of the leading departments in the nation,” one former student wrote.

The Distinguished Achievement Award is an award of excellence...
the field of group theory, which has important applications to computer science, physics, chemistry, and many other disciplines. One of his colleagues describes him as “a world class mathematician and a very respected researcher most deserving of this award.” Misha Gromov, one of the world’s best known mathematicians, said Grigorchuk is “as special within his field as Albert Einstein is in physics.” During his tenure at A&M, he has attracted a world-class group of researchers, postdoctoral faculty, and graduate students to the Department.

Dr. Yvonna S. Lincoln
Distinguished Professor in Higher Education
Department of Educational Administration and Human Resource Development

Linear has published at least 117 scholarly products, including 16 books, 62 chapters or monographs and 39 articles. One of her colleagues describes her as “an intellectual’s intellectual—thoughtful, demanding, well-read, and engaging.” She is considered one of the world’s leading scholars in her field and “has been a major influence in shaping the content and direction of the body of knowledge” in naturalistic inquiry, interpretive research and ethnographic research, as well as in marketing and management.

Dr. George E. Lees
Professor
Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences

Lees, who joined the faculty at Texas A&M in 1979, is a recognized expert in veterinary nephrology with his primary research interest in renal and urinary tract diseases of small animals. Total funding for projects with which he has been the primary investigator or co-investigator has totaled more than $5 million. A colleague noted that Lees’ contributions are recognized by the international biomedical community, and praised Lees for asking basic research questions that “ultimately have led to fundamental advances in life-saving diagnostic and therapeutic options available to practicing veterinarians.”

Dr. William W. Sager
Professor
Department of Oceanography

Sager, who has been at A&M for the past 25 years, is a marine geophysicist who loves to explore the ocean and research Earth’s history, plate tectonics and the evolution of ocean basins. He has been on 38 research cruises (as chief scientist for 17 of those), published more than 90 refereed articles and won more than 40 research grants totaling nearly $4.5 million. A colleague expressed his admiration for Dr. Sager as a “hands-on and seagoing research geophysicist” and an excellent teacher of graduate and undergraduate students.

Dr. Herman B. Scholthof
Professor
Department of Plant Pathology and Microbiology

Scholthof joined the Texas A&M faculty in 1994 and is an internationally recognized plant virologist. Most notable among the awards he has received is the Ruth Allen Award for innovative research from the American Phytopathological Society. He an enthusiastic teacher and mentor of students and postdoctoral trainees and has a well-funded research program (more than $1.2 million). He is sought out by federal agencies to serve on grant panels and is frequently invited to present his research at scientific conferences and at other universities.

Dr. Bjarne Stroustrup
Professor
Department of Computer Science

Stroustrup holds the College of Engineering Endowed Chair in Computer Science.
Science and is the designer of the C++ programming language, which is pervasive in society and used indirectly by billions of people in applications areas ranging from large businesses such as Google, Microsoft, Apple, and IBM to embedded systems such as control systems for maritime engines and avionics. Dr. Stroustrup is a TEES Fellow, AT&T Fellow, ACM Fellow, and an IEEE Fellow, and named one of America’s 12 top young scientists by Fortune Magazine in 1990.

FOR STAFF

Mr. Fred Harrison
Custodial Supervisor
Physical Plant

Harrison has been the custodial supervisor for Crew J since 1991, working hand-in-hand with Texas A&M Athletics to ensure that the athletic facilities are clean, safe and functional. He started at A&M in the spring of 1979 and completed his 30th year of services to the University in April. He is known for his work ethic and his dedication to excellence. Many describe him as a father, pastor, mentor, and friend; others call him a “silent hero.” One person said Fred is “a role model for anyone looking to better themselves.” He never falters in his dedication to the University and continually touches the lives of his employees with kindness and generosity. Another staff member said Harrison “leads by example, and his example is one of excellence.”

Ms. Gail Snook
Business Coordinator III
Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences

Snook has worked for Texas A&M University for more than 27 years, starting as a clerk/typist in the Biology Department. Her job in Large Animal Clinical Sciences is complex, with responsibilities ranging from managing the departmental budget and informing faculty and staff of A&M policies and procedures to oversight of personnel and managing contracts with multiple commodity groups. One colleague noted, “Her exemplary performance and dedication bring honor to the CVM and serve us all well.” Another faculty member commented, “It is not what she does, but how she does it that makes her exceptional.” Many people lauded her efforts during hurricanes Katrina and Rita, when the Large Animal Hospital was utilized as a surge hospital for human patients.

FOR STUDENT RELATIONS

Dr. Mary “Maggie” Gartner
Director
Student Counseling Service

Gartner has been with Texas A&M for a total of 13 years, having returned to the Student Counseling Service in 2001 to serve as its director, and was recently awarded the Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors Lifetime Achievement Award. Many people commented on the selfless service Gartner provides to A&M’s students. One person said her “lifetime of dedication to all students in their personal development has helped build future leaders of character. She is determined to help students find excellence in every facet of their life.”

Mr. Todd Sutherland ’90
Director
Student Life-Texas A&M at Galveston

Sutherland has served Texas A&M for more than 14 years and has completed all but his dissertation in his pursuit of a doctoral degree in Educational Administration at Texas A&M University. He is the recipient of the TAMUG Distinguished Service Award and also an advisor for the Student Government Association. Sutherland’s contributions to Texas A&M University at Galveston are defined by his passion to provide the students with the very best opportunities to develop into future leaders. A colleague described him as someone who “consistently demonstrates a unique combination of personal student relationships, solid theoretical understanding, and impeccable character values.”
FOR ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Jerry Strawser ’83
Dean
Mays Business School

Strawser has helped raise more than $60 million in commitments for faculty, student and program support, including support for named chairs, professorships, faculty fellowships, and graduate student fellowships. He led an overhaul in the Mays MBA program that resulted in higher rankings, improved curriculum and undergraduate experience, more faculty diversity and enhancement of research focus and culture. As one alumnus states, “He has demonstrated in many ways a magnificent ability to lead with vision and accomplish remarkable results.”

FOR GRADUATE MENTORING

Dr. Dudley L. Poston
Professor and George T. and Gladys H. Abell Professor of Liberal Arts
Department of Sociology

Poston joined the Texas A&M faculty in 1992 and served as the head of the Department of Sociology from 1992 to 1997. He is one of the most widely published and cited social demographers, especially for his research in China and East Asia. One colleague wrote, “He has a wonderful way of seeing the strengths in students’ work and pointing out ways of improving on weakness without shaking a student’s confidence.” A current student stated, “The truth is that sometimes I wasn’t sure that I would be able to get it done, but knowing that Dr. Poston thinks that I can gives me the confidence to finish it.

FOR EXTENSION, OUTREACH, CONTINUING EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Dr. G. Kent Carter ’82
Professor
Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences

Carter has taught at Texas A&M for 26 years and is one of the best known equine practitioners in the U.S. He is described as an “excellent teacher, clinician, collaborator, leader and creator” and a “tremendous asset to A&M’s outreach initiative.” A colleague said, “He has consistently through his expertise, intuition, experience, attitude and work ethic been what any institution would love to call its own—a shining star that reflects on all of us.

Dr. James Richardson
Regents Professor and Texas AgriLife Research Faculty Fellow
Department of Agricultural Economics

Richardson joined the Texas A&M faculty in 1978. His courses and simulation software have contributed greatly to the success and employability of his department’s graduate students, and his software is a commercial success used worldwide for risk analysis and teaching. A colleague stated, “James knows that learning comes by doing, and therefore his best attribute as a mentor is creating meaningful opportunities for students to contribute. But more than that, he cultivates their growth by encouraging, guiding, and most importantly, valuing their contribution.”