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University of Minnesota, Morris Alumni Association announces 2012 Distinguished Alumni Award recipients

Summary: The University of Minnesota, Morris Alumni Association (UMMAA) Board of Directors announces four alumni who are recipients of the 2012 UMMAA Distinguished Alumni Award.

(July 10, 2012)-The University of Minnesota, Morris Alumni Association (UMMAA) Board of Directors announces four alumni who are recipients of the 2012 UMMAA Distinguished Alumni Award. The award honors alumni who have made noteworthy contributions in their professional lives, in public service, or in service to the University of Minnesota. This year's recipients are Robert Hansen '73, Puncy Heppner '73, Maddy Maxeiner '76, and Ronald McRoberts '69.

Robert Hansen '73 graduated with a theatre and English double major. He earned a master's degree in theatre while a student at Florida State University and, later, a doctorate in the same field from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. As an instructor of theatre at Bowling Green University in Ohio, Hansen also chaired the theatre department and served as managing director of the Huron Playhouse (Ohio's oldest continuing summer theatre). Afterward, he joined the faculty of the University of North Carolina, Greensboro (UNCG). There he served as the head of the communication and theatre department and later the broadcasting/cinema and theatre department.

Currently, he is an associate dean in the College of Arts and Sciences at UNCG his responsibilities include curriculum and teaching, freshman seminars, and the online bachelor of arts in liberal studies program. In 2007, he donated part of his extensive collection of theatre materials to the UNCG libraries, thus establishing the Robert C. Hansen Performing Arts Collection. Hansen has also served as officer in the North Carolina Theatre Association, the United States Institute for Theatre Technology—Ohio Chapter, the American Theatre Association, the Southeastern Theatre Conference, and the National Association of Schools of Theatre.

In addition to his theatre work, Hansen has been active in historic preservation of the Moravian community in Bethania, North Carolina. He is the star of the 60-minute documentary film *Saving the Hansen House*, broadcast on North Carolina Public Television. The film, by Deni and Will McIntyre, documents restoration of an 18th century Moravian farmhouse while investigating its history.

Puncy Heppner '73 graduated from Morris with a psychology major. He obtained a master of arts and a doctorate in counseling psychology from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. He currently holds a Curators' Distinguished Professorship—the highest distinction—at the University of Missouri (MU). Heppner is also a director of the Coalition for Cultural Competencies (an organization he co-founded in 1998). He has a long history of promoting American diversity issues and has played a significant role in providing multicultural and cross-cultural training in the MU Counseling Psychology program.

Heppner has published over 200 articles and book chapters, written nine books, made hundreds of presentations at national conferences, and delivered over 70 invited presentations and keynotes across 14 countries. His research focuses

on how people cope with stressful life events and, more recently, how culture changes those coping mechanisms.

His work in particular has examined people's perceptions of their abilities to confront and solve problems. In this endeavor he has created the Problem Solving Inventory (PSI), which is sustained by one of the top publishers in the U.S. for twenty years. The PSI assesses a person's appraisal of his or her own abilities to resolve stressful life events.

Heppner is the recipient of three Fulbright awards from Sweden, Ireland, and Taiwan. He is a fellow of the American Psychological Society and in three divisions of the American Psychological Association: Counseling Psychology, Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues, and International Psychology. Heppner served on several national and international editorial boards and as editor of *The Counseling Psychologist*.

From 2005 to 2006, he occupied the post of president at the Society of Counseling Psychology of the American Psychological Association, and he was distinguished with the Leona Tyler Award, the Society's highest award, in 2009. He is also the recipient of numerous other national, university, and community awards for his leadership, research, teaching, mentoring, international work, and promoting diversity and social justice issues.

Maddy Maxeiner '76, as a Morris philosophy alum, has used her numerous talents to benefit the University of Minnesota, Morris community. Beginning her career as a freelance writer, Maxeiner volunteered for state election campaigns and worked on campus through grants. In 1981, she became the coordinator of Alumni Affairs. Previously this part-time position fell under the duties of many other offices and positions.

Under Maxeiner's leadership, the office of Alumni Relations grew. Today, more opportunities for alumni to connect with one another exist than ever before. Profile is written and edited by the staff of Alumni Relations and University Relations as a means of displaying the achievements of Morris alumni, students, and faculty. It began as a newsletter sent to dues paying members of the Alumni association, written and edited solely by Maxeiner. When the dues system was taken out, the newsletter adapted and became a university magazine called "UMM to You" and was sent to all alumni, parents of students, faculty, and staff.

The Alumni Association gained more visibility on campus under Maxeiner's direction when Morris' 20th birthday was missed, she and several students planned events for a 21st birthday, in 1981, instead. She was also vital in procuring funds for the Student Center. Writing most of the communications to legislators, alumni, parents, and friends of Morris to gather support for the Student Center, her work was instrumental to the existence of this campus hub of student life.

Now the vice chancellor for External Relations, Maxeiner oversees the offices of University Relations, Alumni Relations, and Fund Development. She also served on several chancellor search committees, served as the Functions and Awards Committee chair, and as a member of the Campus Resources and Planning Committee. She earned her masters degree in philanthropy and development from Saint Mary's University of Minnesota in 1997.

Ronald E. McRoberts '69 is a mathematics alum. He received master's and doctoral degrees in biostatistics from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. Presently, McRoberts is a mathematical statistician at the Northern Research Station, U.S. Forest Service in Saint Paul. He has contributed to environmental science through his work on acid rain, sustainability, and climate change. His roles for the United Nations in international climate change studies include expert meetings, a review of satellite image-based methods for detecting deforestation, and co-authorship of the revised Good Practice Guidelines for forest monitoring under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

McRoberts has contributed to environmental assessments for the European Union, Guyana, Brazil, Russia, the Republic of Korea, and for non-governmental organizations such as the World Bank and the World Resources Institute. He has served on multiple panels for the National Science Foundation to evaluate funding proposals for climate change research. His contributions to sustainability in this country are through the National Forest Inventory and the Forests on the Edge project, which uses geographic information systems techniques to identify areas where private forest services are threatened by development, fire, insect pests, and diseases.

Elected as a Fellow by the American Statistical Association (ASA), McRoberts has received several national and international awards. He was elected to the International Statistical Institute in addition to the Italian Academy of Forest Science. The ASA selected him for their Distinguished Achievement Award and he earned the Honor Award for Excellence from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He was presented with a Visiting Scholar Award from the mathematics department of the University of Göttingen in Germany.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.