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University of Minnesota, Morris Alumni Association announces 2011 Distinguished Alumni Award recipients

Summary: The 2011 recipients illustrate contributions by alumni impacting the campus community and the global community.

(June 7, 2011)-The University of Minnesota, Morris Alumni Association (UMMAA) Board of Directors announces that four alumni have been chosen for the 2011 University of Minnesota, Morris Alumni Association 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. The recipients are David Eckmann '78, Gary McGrath '68, the late Thomas McRoberts '68, and John Tavis '85.

David Eckmann '78, chemistry major, graduated from the University of Minnesota School of Medicine and completed a residency in diagnostic radiology. His area of expertise is neuroradiology. A radiologist at St. Paul Radiology and an American College of Radiology Fellow, Eckmann's contributions to his profession are significant. Active at both the national and state level of the American College of Radiology and the Minnesota Radiology Society, he has served in numerous leadership positions and is viewed as the state "mentor" of radiology residents. Eckmann was instrumental in establishing the St. Paul Radiology Foundation, the only radiology group in the nation that has its own foundation for philanthropic support. He has served as a board member for the East Africa Medical Assistance Foundation for five years. The foundation supports the radiology department at Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Center (KCMC) in Moshi, Tanzania. The foundation coordinates donations of radiology equipment and supplies, sends hundreds of consultants and teachers to the hospital, and founded a training program that places radiology practitioners throughout East African areas that have previously never had radiology services available. Eckmann is currently involved in an alliance between the foundation, the Atomic Energy Commission in Vienna, and the Tanzania government to build a KCMC cancer center, so that patients in Tanzania will have the same treatment options as patients in the United States.

Gary McGrath '68, history major, earned a master of science in student personnel administration at Western Illinois University and a doctorate in higher education administration from Indian University. He served the Morris campus for 17 years of his higher education career, first as director of activities from 1968 until 1972, then as vice chancellor of student affairs from 1986 until 1999. He also coached Cougar golf teams. Many of the college's distinguishing characteristics, both in educational philosophy and physical space, can be traced back to the years that McGrath served Morris. He led the successful lobbying effort to secure capital funding for the Student Center in 1992. His strategies, in particular using students' voices to tell the campus story, became the foundation for the successful lobbying effort to secure capital funding for Science and Math and the Regional Fitness Center, and for significant improvements to campus buildings. McGrath built strong student development and support services. He encouraged new programs supporting diverse and inclusive learning environments. He added support for the recruitment, retention, and success of students of color. He advanced women's athletics including securing legislative special funding for gender equity to establish the women's soccer program. In 2010, McGrath retired as dean of student affairs from Arizona State University Polytechnical Campus, where he helped lead the establishment of a new campus. During his leadership, the student body grew from 1,400 students in 1999 to more than 9,000 students in 2010, and student activities, residential life programs and facilities, health and wellness programming, and diversity programs were created. He has served as a

leader in the National Association for Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education.

Thomas McRoberts '68 (1946–2010), history major, continued to be a student advocate and campus leader long after he served on Morris Campus Student Government as a student leader himself. After graduating, McRoberts earned a master of arts in history at the University of Oregon. He returned to Morris in 1975, taught history, and served as first assistant and then associate director of continuing education. In 1988, he coordinated Morris's first common freshmen course, "Inquiry: Values in the Changing World." His contributions to the University's masters in elementary education program resulted in Recognition of Service Awards in 1986 and 1988. In 1991, the University honored him with the John Tate Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Advising. In 1993, he received the all-University Academic Staff Award. In the early 1990s, McRoberts helped establish the Center for International Programs, a program that has significantly benefitted Morris international and study abroad students, as well as faculty. He served on the committee that developed the Gateway program in 1995 and invented the Summer Scholars program. In 2003, McRoberts was honored with the University of Minnesota President's Award for Outstanding Service. In 2006, McRoberts was appointed director of Continuing Education, Summer Session, and Regional Programs, and the Center for Small Towns (CST) after serving as interim director for one and one half years. In that same year, CST in partnership with the city of Morris won the Carter Partnership Award for Campus-Community Collaboration. In total, McRoberts contributed 34 years of loyalty, innovation, wisdom, compassion, kindness, gentle influence, dedication, and graciousness to the Morris campus. McRoberts served all people in all avenues of life, on campus and in the community. He was an active member of the Morris Human Rights Commission.

John Tavis '85, chemistry and biology, earned a doctorate in molecular and cell biology from Pennsylvania State University. He completed two post doctorates, first at Pennsylvania State University and then at the University of California, San Francisco. He is professor of molecular microbiology and immunology at St. Louis University School of Medicine, where he is known as a gifted teacher and strong leader. His research focuses on hepatitis B and C viruses. His research has received support from the National Institutes of Health and the American Cancer Society (ACS). His work, ranging from detailed biochemistry of replication enzymes and their substrates to the use of the antiviral regimen of interferon and ribavirin in Hepatitis C patients, will "ultimately translate to benefit cancer patients around the world," according to his ACS nominator. In addition to his research, Tavis is an avid volunteer leader with the ACS. He began serving as a volunteer peer reviewer serving on the Molecular Cell Biology and Microbial Pathogenesis peer review committees and later served as chair and vice chair. He is currently a member of the Council for Extramural Grants at the ACS, a position offered to only a small number of cancer research leaders from around the country. The council oversees all peer review panels and is responsible for setting pay lines and for review of grant policies. Tavis is also the academic editor for the journal PLoS One.

The 2011 recipients will formally receive the award during the Distinguished Alumni Award Banquet to be held during Homecoming 2011, September 30 through October 2. "We look forward to recognizing the 2011 honorees," says Carla Riley, director of alumni relations and annual giving. "These admirable alumni represent the many Morris graduates who continue to make outstanding contributions to our communities and our world." All alumni and friends are invited to the awards banquet.

From left:

David Eckmann '78

John Tavis '85

Gary McGrath '68

Thomas McRoberts '68 (1946–2010)

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

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