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Ahern and Granger receive University of Minnesota Outstanding Service Awards

Summary: Serving as faculty, administrators, mentors, and innovators, both played key roles in Morris campus history, and their work will continue to impact its successful future.

(May 25, 2010)-As the University of Minnesota, Morris celebrates its 50th year, two campus members, instrumental in establishing the college's foundation, received 2010 University of Minnesota Outstanding Service Awards. Honoree Stephen Granger served from 1960 until his retirement in 1994 as faculty, assistant provost, vice chancellor for student affairs, and special assistant to the dean. Honoree Wilbert Ahern, professor of history and American Indian studies and former Division of the Social Science chair, served from 1967 until his retirement this spring. The award recognizes exceptional commitment and service beyond the regular duties of a faculty or a staff member.

"It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Dr. Stephen Granger and Dr. Bert Ahern on receiving the President's Award for Outstanding Service," states Chancellor Jacqueline Johnson. "This honor, the highest service award in the University, is a much-deserved and fitting tribute to two members of the campus community who leave an extraordinary legacy for UMM's future. People like Steve and Bert, their persona, ideas, and commitment, make this place, the University of Minnesota, Morris, what it is."

Steve Granger

One of thirteen founding faculty, Granger was the first hired in 1960 by Morris's chief administrator, Rodney A. Briggs. He shared Briggs' passion for establishing a public liberal arts college in west central Minnesota. Serving as Briggs' counselor and second-in-command, Granger helped shape the new college as a major voice in institutional decision-making.

Granger designed the first version of the psychology curriculum and the initial Counseling Service. He directed Advising and established a student-centered advising program that continues to be a campus hallmark. As Scholastic Committee secretary, Granger defined and interpreted academic policy, and designed and managed the academic programs system. He played a key role in developing the Minority Student Program and set the standard for institutional written communication and research still in place today. As Granger's nominators state, "He was in the center of the action, centrally placed and equipped to use his talents on behalf of the college and its people."

"Whatever Steve was involved in or with, I knew would be a first quality," shares Edward Rewolinski, former vice chancellor for finance. "Whatever information he presented was accurate and unimpeachable. He also demonstrated quite often the unique skill of mentoring through modeling his own high professional standards of performance in the most unobtrusive, subtle ways. I always found him to be a generous and most hospitable colleague ever ready to help in navigating the ins and outs of the larger University community. In many ways, he was and continues to be an excellent teacher whose classroom is the entire campus and whose advanced seminar is a committee meeting."

Granger authored two monographs that capture campus history as told through its historic buildings. Historic Buildings of the West Central School of Agriculture Converted to use by the University of Minnesota, Morris in 1960, published

in February 1998. *New Buildings Constructed for the University of Minnesota, Morris from 1965 to 2002*, written with daughter Susan Granger '80, published in April 2002.

A graduate of the University of Minnesota, Granger earned a doctorate in counseling psychology, a master of arts in psychology, and a bachelor of arts in psychology.

Wilbert Ahern

At the urging of Rodney Briggs, Ahern, too, began his career at the still-new college in 1967. "He told me I'd be opening up liberal education to a wide cross section of society," recalls Ahern, who continues to embrace that vision. Known for his "generous cooperative spirit and deep civility," Ahern's nominators note four distinct areas in which he has been instrumental: support for American Indian and underrepresented groups in higher education, curricular and pedagogical innovation shared governance and institutional administration, and public engagement.

Soon after he arrived, Ahern began developing new African American and American Indian history courses. He played a key role in the Minority Student Program establishment and the American Indian studies major creation. Students and junior faculty, many from underrepresented groups, recognize Ahern's mentoring as a powerful force in their educations and careers. Ahern helped shape the first Freshman Seminar, and led a General Education Program major reorganization. He designed the Faculty Center for Learning and Teaching and served as director. Throughout his career, Ahern served in governance at campus and all-University levels. Beyond the University, Ahern was a pioneer in initiatives regarding civic engagement. He was the West Central Historical Research Center founding director and a Morris Human Rights Commissions founder.

"Professor Ahern's service to UMM is second to none," says Engin Sungur, professor of statistics, Ahern's colleague. "It does not involve only some aspects of the campus life but all. He is the memory of our institution, the key player of UMM's history, the protector of faculty, the voice of the faculty, and the leader and initiator of important and difficult academic issues. Every member of the UMM community is indebted to him for the future he has prepared for them."

In 1984, Ahern received the Solon J. Buck Award for best article in Minnesota History, "Indian Education and Bureaucracy: The School at Morris, 1887-1893." In 2002, the Minnesota Historical Society Press reprinted the article in *The North Star State: A Minnesota History Reader*. Currently, he is working on a book, *An Indian Heart and A White Man's Head?: Returned Indian Students in the Assimilationist Era, 1880-1928*.

A recipient of the Horace T. Morse-University of Minnesota Alumni Association Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, Ahern earned a doctorate and a master of arts from Northwestern University in Illinois and a bachelor of arts from Oberlin College in Ohio.

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.