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4-28-2010

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University Relations, "Rudney, professor of education, receives the all-University Horace T. Morse Award" (2010). *Campus News Archive*. 1473.

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Rudney, professor of education, receives the all-University Horace T. Morse Award

Summary: The award honors faculty who excel in teaching, research, advising, and leadership.

(April 28, 2010)-Gwen Rudney, professor of education and Division of Education chair, is a 2010 recipient of the all-University Horace T. Morse—University of Minnesota Alumni Association Award for Outstanding Contributions to Undergraduate Education. The award honors faculty who excel in teaching, research, creative activities, advising, academic program development, and educational leadership.

“Dr. Rudney’s award nomination points to her long-standing commitment to educating the next generation of teachers dedication to students both in and out of the classroom skill in the science and art of teaching research on relationships between teachers, students, and parents and outstanding contributions through service and governance,” states Cheryl Contant, vice chancellor for academic affairs and dean. “She is an excellent example of the gifted, devoted, and enthusiastic educators we have here at Morris.”

Humbled and excited by the honor, Rudney states that she is especially touched to be nominated by those who know her well, fellow Morris faculty. “There are so many great teachers on this campus,” she says, “I share this with so many, and I am honored to represent our campus.”

A calling to teach and to teach teachers

The Horace T. Morse Award draws attention to the importance of excellent teaching. For Rudney, teaching is her calling. Rudney shares, “Teaching is what I’ve done since I earned my undergraduate degree from the University of California, Riverside. Teaching is what I value, what I know, and what I teach. It is my content. So, it is especially great to receive this award that honors teaching.”

As well as colleagues, students also recognize Rudney’s passion. “Dr. Rudney’s enthusiasm and love for teaching is truly contagious,” states Dori Minder ’10, Wilmot, South Dakota. “I feel extremely fortunate to have had her for a professor and an adviser.”

Teaching liberal arts students

Rudney began her Morris career with the 1991–92 academic year, and vividly recalls the students who served on the search committee for her appointment. “They asked such thoughtful, insightful, challenging questions,” she remembers, “I chose Morris because students drew me to this campus. It is still a pleasure to work with involved and interested students. Students who become teachers explore and succeed in courses across the campus, fascinated by all of these areas and by learning.”

Kellie Penn ’10, Kuna, Idaho, notes that Rudney’s admiration for students is reciprocated. “Professor Rudney has a genuine concern for her students, not only academically but personally,” says Penn. “She has a warmth that I feel regardless of the situation. She is knowledgeable regarding our field of study and uses her real life experience to illustrate meaningful lessons. She’s an engaging instructor who not only instructs us on how to be a great teacher but

models great teaching.”

“Professor Rudney was my supervisor during my student teaching experience,” shares Lindsey Senske ’10, Watertown, South Dakota. “She made me feel comfortable after the first visit. She was always pushing me to do my best and always had realistic goals for me to pursue. She always had more positive things to say rather than negatives.”

Research and writing

Rudney’s scholarly interest lies in relationships. Her research has led to two published books with another underway: *Maximum Mentoring: An Action Guide for Teacher Trainers and Cooperating Teachers*, 2003 *Every Teacher’s Guide to Working with Parents*, 2005 and the “flip side” of her second book, *Every Parent’s Guide to Working with Teachers*, in progress. She is also beginning a new project that will explore the lives of gifted women graduates who chose teaching above so many career options available to 21st century women.

Horace T. Morse Award recognition events

Rudney formally received the Horace T. Morse Award at the all-University Distinguished Teaching Awards Ceremony and Reception on the Twin Cities campus on April 26, 2010. She will be honored at the Morris Faculty and Staff Recognition Dinner on Thursday, April 29, 2010. Recipients are inducted into the University of Minnesota Academy of Distinguished Teachers and receive the title “Distinguished University Teaching Professor.” Academy members provide important leadership to the University community as mentors, advisers, and spokespersons for the University’s teaching mission. Rudney joins 18 fellow Morris professors who have received the award.

The 2004 recipient of the University of Minnesota, Morris Alumni Association Teaching Award, Rudney chairs the Minnesota Teacher of the Year selection panel and serves on the 2010 Reaccreditation Steering Committee, among other University committees. She earned a master of arts and a doctorate at the University of California, Riverside.

Photo credit: Patrick O’Leary, University Relations, Twin Cities

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