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Faculty and staff will be recognized during May 1 event

Summary: Seven long-time staff and faculty members will mark their retirement from the University of Minnesota, Morris at the end of this academic year. Their combined service and dedication to the campus will be recognized during the annual Faculty and Staff Recognition Dinner on May 1.

(April 22, 2008)-Seven long-time staff and faculty members will mark their retirement from the University of Minnesota, Morris at the end of this academic year. Their combined service and dedication to the campus will be recognized during the annual Faculty and Staff Recognition Dinner on May 1. The UMM Retirees Association will host a reception at LaFave House from 4:30 to 6 p.m., followed by the dinner at 6 p.m. in Oyate Hall.

In addition to the recognition of retirees, the event will acknowledge the contributions and recipients of the following staff and faculty awards:

Janet Schrunk Ericksen, associate professor of English, and Barry McQuarrie, associate professor of mathematics, are recipients of the Horace T. Morse University of Minnesota Alumni Association Award for Outstanding Contributions to Undergraduate Education, Assistant Professor of Anthropology Julie Pelletier is this year's recipient of the UMM Alumni Association Teaching Award.

Elizabeth Spohr, actor technician, and UMM student Miracle Obeta will be recognized as the recipients of the Mary Martelle Memorial Award. Outstanding Staff Awardees are Darla Peterson, executive secretary in the Office of Academic Affairs and Dean, Civil Service recipient Joyce Amborn, executive office and administrative specialist, Campus Police, AFSCME (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees) recipient and Dave Raths, building and grounds worker, Teamsters recipient. The recipient of the Morris Academic Staff Award, LeAnn Dean, director, Rodney A. Briggs Library, will also be recognized.

Those who have retired within the past academic year or who will retire are:

David Dylla, building and grounds worker, Charles Grussing, police lieutenant, David Hoppe, professor of biology, Craig Kissock, professor of education, Andy Lopez, professor of computer science, Dian Lopez, professor of computer science, and Jean Sasek, executive office and administrative specialist in Continuing Education and Regional Programs.

Dave Dylla began working at UMM in 1974. He served in several locations including Physical Education and Humanities Fine Arts. He earned a UMM degree in economics and history in 1978. His favorite memories include playing poker with the "night crew" in Camden lounge, tea in Professor Vicky Wood's office and "refinishing" the assistant football coaches' old car along with the gymnasium floor. Dylla retired in October 2007, and he makes his home with wife Adele Smaill in Cooks Beach, New Zealand, where it rarely drops below 32 degrees. He doesn't miss shoveling snow. From the "most beautiful place in the world," he said: "I feel blessed to have found such a wonderful retirement life. Visitors welcomed." Dylla received the Mary Martelle Staff Award in 2000.

Chuck Grussing retires this spring after serving in law enforcement for 31 years, 27 at UMM. “It has been a wonderful career, a great profession,” he reflected. Illustrating “UMM serendipity,” the alumnus, a sociology and physical education major, shared: “I stopped in Morris in 1981 to pick up applications for city and county law enforcement departments and dropped in for a visit with former profs and staff. A custodian told me about a Campus Security opening. I went straight over for an application.” He noted computers, sophisticated software and communication technology as major advancements since beginning his career. He also appreciates the role his department now plays on campus. “Law enforcement’s capacity is not necessarily to just ‘catch the crook,’” stated Grussing, “but to educate and serve as a resource and as facilitators. We impact students in a positive way and help develop viable citizens.” He values campus collaboration and partnerships with the Morris police department and Stevens County law enforcement. Grussing will miss day to day encounters with friends, visiting with alumni at campus events, and, he said with a smile, the “engaging, stimulating, novel ideas” conceived by individuals to get out of paying parking tickets! After “taking the summer off,” he plans to be involved in the community in some fashion by fall. He’s considering several options—including late night blues and jazz DJ. Grussing received the Outstanding Support Staff Award in 2006.

David Hoppe figuratively and literally heard his scholarly calling. After graduating from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities in 1964 with a bachelor of arts and in 1968 with a master of science in zoology he taught cell biology at Mayville State College. A 1972 summer fellowship at Itasca State Park changed his focus. “All the class work was out in the field,” remembered Hoppe, “and we would hear the frogs. No one could identify them, not even the faculty.” He concentrated on amphibians and reptiles during a Colorado State University doctorate program. Hoppe began his UMM career in 1975, teaching Wildlife Biology, Principles of Biology, Genetics, Vertebrate Natural History, and Herpetology. In 1995, Hoppe documented and investigated the occurrence of deformed frogs throughout Minnesota. He and his research associates received major funding from the Minnesota Legislature, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to conduct populations surveys. Recalled Hoppe: “The ‘bandwagon’ and the publicity were hard to adjust to, but the attention was good in the long run. We educated the general public about environmental issues. The research dollars provided an opportunity to study the natural history of frogs and their distributions.” Hoppe will use his expertise as an ecological consultant to serve lake associations and their legal representatives in issues related to lake quality preservation and shoreline development. And, he said, “Like all retired professors, I have that book to write.” Hoppe received the UMM Faculty Distinguished Research Award in 2000.

Craig Kissock said: “One lives the liberal arts at UMM.” In 1969, he was attracted to a UMM teaching position by the opportunity to redesign the secondary education program with the late Arnie Henjum and Dean Hinmon, professors of education. He’s been shaping and creating UMM programs ever since, enjoying the interdisciplinary nature of the campus community and tapping into Universitywide resources. Working with Jack Imholte, former chancellor, and Bert Ahern, professor of history, among others, and through the “Training Teacher Trainers” program in the early 1970s, the foundation for the Multi-Ethnic Student Program was established. He helped create the Academic Assistance Center in 1986. A 1987 sabbatical allowed Kissock to direct Minnesota State University Moorhead’s Student Teaching Abroad program, which led to the establishment of the Global Student Teaching program at UMM in 1989. Discussions with Lin Bing and Yang Ji Ling, Chinese professors teaching at UMM in the early 1990s, inspired the creation of the English Language Teaching Assistant Program. Kissock credits Continuing Education’s partnership and flexibility in making these programs possible. Kissock stated: “Having colleagues around the world who consider me a friend and having an impact on the lives of students who use the opportunities we have created at UMM are personal and professional joys in life.” Kissock served as Division of Education chair from 1983 until 2003. He, along with others, received the University of Minnesota Technology Enhanced Innovation Award in 1999 for creating the GenEd Web program. Having received a University of Minnesota bachelor of science in history, a master of science and doctorate in social studies curriculum and instruction, and having served UMM for 39 years, Kissock’s retirement marks the end of a 48-year history with the University.

Andy Lopez was introduced to computers and computer programming as a North Dakota State University undergraduate participating in a mechanical engineering summer internship at IBM in Rochester. He earned a master in engineering mechanics from Michigan Technological University in 1968 and a doctorate in 1970. Encouraged by wife Dian, Andy pursued a teaching career and accepted a UMM math position that included responsibility for developing UMM computing facilities. When they arrived, the only campus computing device was in a janitor’s closet on Science third floor, a teletype terminal connected to a Chicago commercial service. In 1974, the title director of the Computer

Center was added to his appointment. He earned a master in computer science in 1979 from the University of Arizona, Tucson. His research in the 1970s included investigation of the role of computer science programs at small liberal arts colleges, which provided data and credibility for establishing a new UMM discipline. A Department of Education Title III grant supported the development of a new major approved in 1984—computer science. Andy has been teaching computer science full time since 1994. He served as assistant to the associate vice chancellor for enrollment in 2003-04. While looking forward to retirement, Andy noted: “I will miss working one on one with students, formally advising and informally conversing ‘heart to heart.’” Andy received the University of Minnesota President’s Award for Outstanding Service in 2002.

Dian Lopez graduated from Moorhead State University with an undergraduate degree in math in 1966 when computers didn’t exist at her alma mater and before the computer science discipline emerged in higher education. Yet, her entire academic and professional career has been shaped by the exploration, implementation, and application of computing. In 1969, she completed a master of science in math at Michigan Technological University. In 1970, husband Andy accepted a UMM position, and Dian was invited that fall to teach a math course. She’s taught at UMM ever since. In the 1970s, her “courses taught” list grew to include introductory computer science for students and fellow faculty. Reflecting UMM’s awareness of an advancing need, husband Andy was granted a sabbatical in 1978 to pursue advanced studies in computing science, and Dian took a leave to also pursue more computing courses. UMM’s computer science major was established in 1984. Dian completed a master of computer science in 1986 and a doctorate in 1992 at Texas A & M University. Throughout her career, Dian authored numerous publications, many with colleagues and often with students. Her fondest memories will be working with students on research and witnessing their presentations at national conferences. “I am the most proud of our graduates,” reflected Dian. “It really makes one feel good to see what our students have accomplished.” Dian received the University of Minnesota John Tate Award for Undergraduate Academic Advising in 2002. The Lopez definition of retire—”to put on new tires and go again”—may be realized in the future as teaching positions in China or a South American country.

Jean Sasek worked four years at UMM in part-time and temporary positions beginning in 1985. In 1989, she began her permanent position in Continuing Education (CE). When she first started, her Texas accent was misunderstood by many. “That resulted in many good laughs by me as well as others,” she recalled. There were many changes throughout the years, mostly for the better she notes, including memorable adjustments to registration. “When I first starting doing CE registrations, they were done by hand on five-part NCR registration forms,” she remembered. “Then we went to a computerized system through Twin Cities CE, and finally, Universitywide PeopleSoft.” Sasek will not miss the challenge of “too much to do and not enough time,” but she will miss colleagues and the work ethic modeled by Director Tom McRoberts. “My fondest memories will be of the extraordinarily kind and thoughtful people I have worked with,” she said. While no immediate plans have been made, Sasek and husband Jerry plan to move to Texas in the future to be near their children, grandchildren and extended family.

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.