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Retiring employees to be feted at annual Faculty and Staff event

Summary:

(April 14, 2004)-Employees who are retiring with over 300 years of combined service to the University of Minnesota, Morris will be recognized during the annual Faculty and Staff Recognition Dinner April 29. The event, which will honor members of the UMM faculty and staff who have announced their retirement during the current academic year, will begin at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 29, in Oyate Hall of the UMM Student Center.

In addition to the retirees, recognition will also be given to Gwen Rudney, associate professor of elementary education, recipient of the UMM Alumni Association Teaching Award Pieranna Garavaso, associate professor of philosophy, recipient of the Horace T. Morse-University of Minnesota Alumni Award for Outstanding Contributions to Undergraduate Education John Husted, recipient of the College of Continuing Education Distinguished Teaching Award and Cyrus Bina, professor of economics and management, recipient of the Faculty Distinguished Research Award.

Recipients of the Mary Martelle Memorial Award will also be honored. They are Christina Pecheco '04, student recipient and Jennifer Lund, police officer, Campus Security, staff recipient. Outstanding Staff Awards will be presented to Marlys Buntje, manager of the UMM Bookstore Helen Kolden, building and grounds worker, Residential Life and Susan Schultz, principal accounts specialist, Office of Financial Aid. The Morris Academic Staff Award will be presented to Ferolyn Angell, director of the Academic Assistance Center and UMM dance instructor.

Tom McRoberts, associate director of Continuing Education and director of the UMM Center for International Programs, will serve as the program's emcee. UMM Chancellor Sam Schuman will provide closing remarks.

All faculty and staff whose service to UMM has exceeded 10 years will receive honorable mention.

Those who have announced their retirement from UMM are:

Marlys Buntje, senior bookstore manager, has been in the UMM text books business for 33 years. She joined the general services staff in 1971 with responsibilities for book orders and associated accounts payable. In 1982 she accepted the bookstore supervisor position, overseeing the entire operation and adding management responsibilities. She also supervised post office staff for several years. Two of many significant happenings in her career include the "point of sale" software addition to operations in 1999 and the bookstore relocation to the new science building in 2000. Marlys retires in June, and she knows what will be missed the most: "I'm going to miss the people, including the students. I've worked with people all my life, and the Bookstore staff members are the greatest. I've had good crews, and we've worked very well together." Marlys is a recipient of the 2004 Outstanding Support Staff Award.

Ron Cline, senior maintenance painter, kept UMM facilities, both inside and out, looking fresh and inviting for 30 years. Keeping the buildings in good condition was challenging, especially the historic buildings, but it was also very satisfying work. His most memorable project was renovating the main floor of Spooner Hall. "Harold Fahl, former plant

services director, gave me the ‘green light’ to put it back the way it was in 1915 when it was built. The solid maple in that building is beautiful. It was a lot of work but very rewarding.” Since his retirement in October 2003, Ron has devoted more time to a favorite hobby, restoring antique furniture.

Mariam Frenier, professor of history, joined the faculty in 1978. She introduced courses in women’s history and women’s studies, and she was one of the leading forces for the establishment of the women’s studies minor in 1979 and the major in 2000. Mimi served on numerous U of M and UMM committees as well as the Commission on Women’s first chair and the history discipline coordinator. She is the recipient of the Academy of Distinguished Teachers Award, the University College Distinguished Teaching Award and the Horace T. Morse Award. Mimi authored *Good-bye Heathcliff: Changing Heroes, Heroines, Roles and Values in Women’s Category Romances* as well as numerous published articles and papers.

Helen Kolden, residential life building and grounds worker, accepted a part-time position with UMM in 1992. She served in Food Service and Vending before beginning a full-time Gay Hall position in 1994. Helen enjoys working with her fellow staff members and getting to know the students, especially those who work with the staff during the summer months. Stated Helen: “It is really nice when the students come back to see you.” Helen is a 2004 Outstanding Support Staff Award recipient. She retires in June 2004.

Ardath Larson, technical services librarian, accepted a position as UMM cataloguer while still attending graduate school. When she arrived on campus the fall of 1966, then Provost Rodney Briggs informed Ardath she was acting director. Her “seat of the pants” first year began by cataloging 1000 backlogged books. During her UMM career, Ardath worked on every stage of the library’s automation. Briggs Library began utilizing computers as an important library tool in 1973, early in the technology explosion. In 1989 Ardath was instrumental in establishing UMM’s in-house library database, and she played a key role in the 2003 merger with the integrated U of M national database. Ardath remembers the move from the Dewey Decimal system to the Library of Congress system as an especially memorable library project. In 1989, most books in UMM’s collection received a new spine label and were moved to a different shelf under the new system. It took the entire summer to relocate all the books. “It was like a puzzle to be sorted out,” remembered Ardath, “and it was fun.” Ardath is the 2003 recipient of the Morris Academic Staff Award.

Roger McCannon, director of Continuing Education, Regional Programs and Summer Session on the Morris campus since 1975, is also the director of the Center for Small Towns. Under his leadership, the staff of Continuing Education have developed programs such as the Regional Advising Service, the Center for International Programs, GenEdWeb and the Center for Small Towns. He directed several major regional outreach projects including the Small Business Resource Center, the Western Minnesota Consortium for Higher Education, the Minnesota Rural Leadership Program and the Sisseton-Wahpeton College Center. Roger played a key role in the establishment of the West Central Minnesota Initiative Fund. He has researched adult learning in rural areas, published articles and reports on community development and authored or coauthored over 100 successful grant proposals resulting in major funding for the University and regional organizations. Roger is the 2000 recipient of the University-wide Academic Staff Award.

Vernon Mohr, senior maintenance plumber, appreciates the many benefits received through his UMM employment—steady paycheck, paid vacations, 40-hour work week, but more importantly he values the friendships made with staff and students. Stated Vernon: “I’ve enjoyed working with some really swell guys, and I’ve come to know a lot of students, some who still look me up when they are back in town.” Vernon began working at UMM in 1978 under the mentorship of Leroy Krueger, then senior plumber. His last day of service was July 1, 2003. He is enjoying four favorite activities: spending time with his grandchildren, fishing, hunting and golfing.

Virginia Schmidgall, residential life building and grounds worker, started working part time in Food Services in 1988 and transferred to Turtle Mountain Café when it opened. Virginia began custodial work in 1993, first in Gay Hall and then in Humanities Fine Arts and Behmler Hall. After a few years, she had an opportunity to return to Residential Life. She’s been on staff at Independence Hall ever since. Virginia loves working among the students and finds it very rewarding. Her most memorable recollection of her UMM years happened on Commencement Day. A soon-to-be graduate she befriended in Gay Hall sought her out in HFA where she was then working. He thanked Virginia for all she had done for him saying, “Virginia, if it hadn’t been for you that first year I attended UMM, I would have quit. You

listened to us, and you were like a mother away from home. It meant a lot to all of the students.” Virginia cherishes the memory.

Ray Sibul, assistant professor of German, began his career at UMM in 1966. He was coordinator of foreign languages for 10 years and served as the German discipline coordinator until his retirement. Ray was director of the language lab from 1970 until it changed over to the Language Teaching Center in 1997. He developed several new German courses, among them the popular German Literature in Film course, which for many years was one of its kind at UMM. From 1978 to 1993, Ray conducted and directed the UMM winter quarter in Germany study abroad program, teaching German courses to UMM students in Kassel, Germany, for 10 weeks, every three years. This study abroad program was initiated in 1975 by former UMM Professor of German Vicky Wood and supported by former UMM Chancellor Jack Imholte. Ray served three years on the U of M Senate Judicial Committee, as well as on numerous UMM committees. Above all, Ray loved teaching and advising at UMM.

Rose Thompson, principal administrative specialist, began working in Continuing Education in 1989 in a temporary position. She enjoyed getting to know the Humanities faculty—“over 60 different personalities”—when she job-shared with former and current UMM staff members Kathy (Cooper) Murphy and Jayne Hacker in the Humanities Division office before accepting a full-time position in the Office of Residential Life in 1994. The residential advisers and directors made each day interesting. “I’ve always been so amazed by their maturity,” said Rose, “And they liked to have fun, too.” Rose remembers a spring break during which several students traveled to Hawaii. She teased the students saying the staff was going, too. Before the students left, they found a way into “Res Life” and decorated the office with handmade posters of tropical birds and palm trees. “They brought Hawaii to us,” she remembers with a smile. Rose enjoyed working with the residential life staff, especially the custodians, and with staff members Dave Aronson, Henry Fulda and Larry Christenson. She retired in February.

Barbara Valnes, principal accounts specialist, began her 33 years at UMM working with former UMM staffers Vern Brown and Charlie Jones in the general services/Campus Security office that included transportation, vending, bookstore, duplicating, food service and security. Barb coordinated vending reports, and billing and accounts payable for these service areas. For many years she scheduled vehicles, which provided an opportunity to become acquainted with many members of the campus community. The task had interesting challenges, like calls as early as 5:30 a.m. because a vehicle wasn’t available as arranged. After several campus office reorganizations, Barb became a member of the current business office team in 1985 and handles accounts payable for the entire campus. Barb feels blessed to have worked with such wonderful coworkers and said, “It’s been remarkable.”

Bruce Wakefield, building and grounds worker, began his work at UMM in 1991 in the Science building and completed his tenure in July of 2003 in the Humanities building and the lower level of Briggs Library. Bruce remembers well how satisfying it was at the end of the summer to see all the floors finished and ready for the new academic year. He’ll miss the camaraderie enjoyed with faculty and staff, and also getting to know the students and following their progress throughout their years at UMM. His favorite memories include a student who played several flute selections for him when he expressed an interest in her music, and also a parent who after commencement thanked him for befriending her daughter. For Bruce, these examples illustrate “why we are all here—for the students.” Bruce is a 2003 recipient of the Outstanding Support Staff Award.

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.