

# *Honored Alumni*

**Homecoming Banquet  
and Awards Presentation**

**October 24, 2003**



UNIVERSITY of  
NORTHERN COLORADO



# Journal of the American Medical Association

Published Weekly, except on Sundays, Public Holidays, and Days of Mourning  
Subscription Price: \$5.00 per Annum in Advance

Published by the American Medical Association, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

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## **Homecoming Banquet and Awards Presentation**

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President, Alumni Association

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Kay Norton  
President

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Anna Osborn, Class of 1982  
Alumni Association Board Member



## **Linda Akers Humanitarian Service**

When Melanie George-Hernandez met Linda Akers more than 10 years ago, she perceived within minutes that Akers had a great deal of compassion for helping people and decided she was a person to get to know.

Since then, George-Hernandez has had ample opportunity to confirm her first impression. The Greeley Transitional House board member has watched Akers, whom she describes as "one of Weld County's most unsung heroes," work to provide hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of support services for the area's homeless families.

In 1992, Akers became executive director of Greeley Transitional House, an agency formed to provide emergency shelter, transitional housing and support services for homeless families in Weld County. At that time, the facility was on the verge of financial collapse, notes nominator Laura Stander Connolly, assistant professor of Economics. With Akers' hard work, the agency is now thriving and has been named a Model Agency by the United Way of Weld County.

"She has reached out to hundreds of families, giving them shelter, hope and the skills to become self-sufficient," says Jeannine Truswell, United Way of Weld County executive director.

Described as a tireless advocate for providing opportunities for the homeless and educating the public about the need for affordable housing, Akers is member of the State Housing Trust Coalition, the State Advisory Board for Homeless Prevention Check-off Funds, the Homeless Housing Task Force and the Federal Emergency Management Agency Advisory Board.

In 1985, Akers was the first graduate from UNC's Sociology Family Studies Program. Professor Pamela Hewitt remembers her as a highly motivated student who always did more than she was asked. Akers continues to support the Sociology Department, where she was an instructor for five years, by providing opportunities for students to volunteer and complete internships, serving as an advisor and doing classroom presentations for students considering human-service careers.



## **W. Keith Christy Outstanding Educational Leader**

Keith Christy's former students at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock describe him as mentor and friend, as a consummate professional, a skilled administrator and an expert relationship builder. For them, they say, he has proven to be a pillar of support, a challenging teacher and a godsend.

"I look at Dr. Christy as a mentor as well as an instructor," says Rebecca Austin. "His encouragement not only helped me to attain my doctoral degree, but to pursue other goals that I have set in my life."

They tout his kindness and patience, his vision, his broad expertise and his unique approach that guided them to take responsibility for their own learning.

"From the moment I first met him, I felt nurtured and loved," says former UALR graduate student Bernie Helliums. "He gave me tremendous confidence as he gently guided me through the uncharted path I had chosen for myself."

The same strengths endeared Christy to his professional colleagues, including former UALR education faculty member Bobby Altom.

"Keith was the professional glue in our program at UALR," Altom says. "He was our voice of reason, mediator of turmoil and the go-to guy when things had to get done."

Yolaundra Williams, now a high school assistant principal, attributes much of her former professor's success to the perspectives gained during his broad career in education.

After earning a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education in 1963 and a master's in Elementary Administration in 1967 from Colorado State College (now UNC), Christy worked 25 years in Colorado Springs Public Schools. His positions ranged from elementary teacher and principal to assistant superintendent of instructional services. He served as a professor and director of educational leadership at the University of Colorado-Colorado Springs and as superintendent of schools in Sterling, Colorado, RE-1 Valley School District.



## **Dr. Jay K. Hackett William R. Ross Award for Science**

Richard Moyer was a 25-year-old graduate student when he met his mentor, a man he describes as a "treasure" and "a truly gifted teacher."

A veteran junior high science teacher, Jay K. Hackett earned a doctorate in Science Education at UNC in 1972, then served on the Earth Sciences faculty from 1974-1998. His specialty was science education for kindergarten through eighth grade, and during his career he helped graduate students from across the United States and abroad prepare to be caring and capable science educators.

"It was clear that his concern for his students went beyond the classroom," Moyer says. "I learned from Jay why it is important for my door to always be open to my students. I learned that the most important reason I am a teacher is for my students."

Beginning in 1980, Hackett gained national attention by writing science textbooks for Merrill Science and Macmillan/McGraw Hill Science. He also revised a K-6 science textbook series for McGraw Hill in 2002, thus giving him the nation's longest career as an elementary science textbook author. Altogether, his hundreds of research articles, workshops and presentations have gained worldwide attention and attracted science educators to UNC.

The final three years of Hackett's tenure were spent in Washington, D.C., on loan from UNC to the National Research Council's Center for Science, Mathematics and Engineering Education. And he spent his first year after retiring from UNC as a curriculum development consultant at the American Geological Institute.

"His grants with the National Science Foundation and his pioneering work at the NRC's National Center really put UNC on the map in science education," says nominator Bill Hoyt, chairman of Earth Sciences. "He was a strong advocate for UNC in Washington for many years, and he served to pave the way for a happy relationship between the National Science Foundation and the university."



## **Daniel Sprick Creative Achievement Award**

A group of fifth-graders on a field trip with their art teacher at a Denver art show was wowed by a Daniel Sprick still life depicting the interior of a room – textured tapestries, overgrown plants, a variety of containers and a table that on close inspection balanced impossibly on three legs.

“They were awe-stricken, as was I,” recalls nominator Julie Buderus, now major gifts officer at the UNC Foundation.

Sprick’s subjects might seem familiarly mundane at first glance – a table laden with fruit and flowers, eggshells, soup cans, a milk carton. But his works often have a surreal edge – a single cut rose floating in midair, a knife poised on the edge of a table pointing at the viewer, a skull tucked behind the fronds of a palm.

“I like my beauty austere and subtle; I like it to take a little time to observe. I hope that there’s more to it than can be absorbed in a flash,” Sprick told Kieran McConnellogue in an interview for a feature in the December 2001 issue of *Spectrum*.

Chip Coronel, who was Sprick’s advisor during his art studies at UNC, recalls that Sprick started selling his work when he was a senior at UNC, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in 1978. The Student Body Council bought one of his paintings, which still hangs in the Michener Library administration office.

Now the artist has a painting hanging in the National Museum of American Art at the Smithsonian Institution. His work has been featured in top galleries and art museums across the nation. He painted the official portrait of former Colorado Governor Roy Romer.

Still, he has returned to UNC, exhibiting his work in three shows in Mariani Gallery and lecturing and demonstrating his techniques for art students.

“He has become a role model to our students, encouraging them and demonstrating that they, too, have the potential to become successful,” says Coronel.





## **Noreen Heer Nicol Contribution to Health Award**

Noreen Heer Nicol is often willing to share her expertise with UNC Nursing students. Professor Jane Koeckeritz considers her as a warm, enthusiastic person and an accomplished professional. But recently Koeckeritz noticed that Nicol had written a chapter in the advanced pathophysiology textbook used by UNC's graduate Nursing students.

Only then did she begin to realize that in addition to Nicol's talent for making student nurses feel she is one of them, she is also one of a few internationally known dermatology experts.

"She truly makes the greatest difference through role-modeling warm and caring behavior in the classroom and in the clinical setting while practicing at the expert level," says Koeckeritz.

Nicol is chief clinical officer and chief nursing officer at Denver's National Jewish Medical and Research Center, where she has worked since 1990. Along with her administrative duties, she maintains a clinical practice as a dermatology nurse practitioner and donates after-hours time to consult on difficult cases, Koeckeritz says. Her passion is prevention and care of skin disorders, and she teaches both professionals and the public about the importance of caring for skin.

Nicol was one of six Colorado nurses chosen from among 249 nominees to receive the 2003 Nightingale Award for Excellence in Human Caring, established in 1985 by the Colorado Nurses Foundation as a tribute to the professional excellence of the state's registered nurses.

Nicol's success is no surprise to Phyllis Drennan, who was dean of UNC's School of Nursing and Gerontology from 1974-1981. She served as teacher, dean, mentor and friend to Nicol, who earned a bachelor's degree in Nursing in 1977. Drennan says she knew then that her student was headed for greatness.

"I vividly remember sharing with her in 1977 that one day I would be proud to relate 'I knew her when,'" Drennan says.





## **Dr. Sam Schauerman Public Service Award**

When he retired after 30 years at El Camino College in Torence, Calif., and more than 40 years in education, Sam Schauerman started what has become a very busy second career. Since 1995, he has filled top interim administrative positions at six California community colleges.

And, according to his supporters, he has done so with distinction.

Of Schauerman's eight-month tenure as interim president at San Joaquin Delta College, Karen Munro says, "He immediately became recognized as a dominant force in the community. He was forward-thinking and a strong contributor of ideas and energy."

"Sam brought calm and collegiality to a campus that a short time before was severely divided and toxic," says Robert Garber of Schauerman's yearlong stint as interim president at San Diego Miramar College.

"In short order, he established that he was worthy of the college's trust and ... he helped the college articulate a philosophy of shared governance and decision-making that endures to this day," says Harriett J. Robles, of Schauerman's year as interim president at West Valley College.

Perhaps Schauerman's success stemmed from his unique understanding of the inner workings of community colleges. He began his career at El Camino College as a part-time administrative intern in 1965. Less than a year later, he was dean of Physical Science. By 1977 he was vice president of instruction. In 1987 he was named president and superintendent.

Along the way, he remained very active in his community – continuing a practice that began at the Colorado State College of Education (now UNC), where he served as an active student leader while earning bachelor's and master's degrees in Mathematics in 1951 and 1952, respectively.

Schauerman's volunteer involvement, which nominator Gil Hause describes as "legendary," is broad, ranging from United Way and YMCA to economic development organizations, chambers of commerce and Rotary.

## **CREATE A LASTING LEGACY AT UNC BY BECOMING PART OF THE PATH OF CLASS.**

The UNC Alumni Association offers you the opportunity to be included in the Path of Class. This permanent, decorative sidewalk of engraved bricks, which starts at Michener Library, provides a meaningful addition to campus landscaping while creating funds for campus beautification and upkeep of existing monuments and landmarks. You can participate in this lasting legacy by purchasing an 8" X 4" laser-engraved brick for \$95. Students may take advantage of the reduced cost of \$65 for up to one year following graduation. To be included in the next phase of construction, please contact the Alumni Association to order your brick by February 15.

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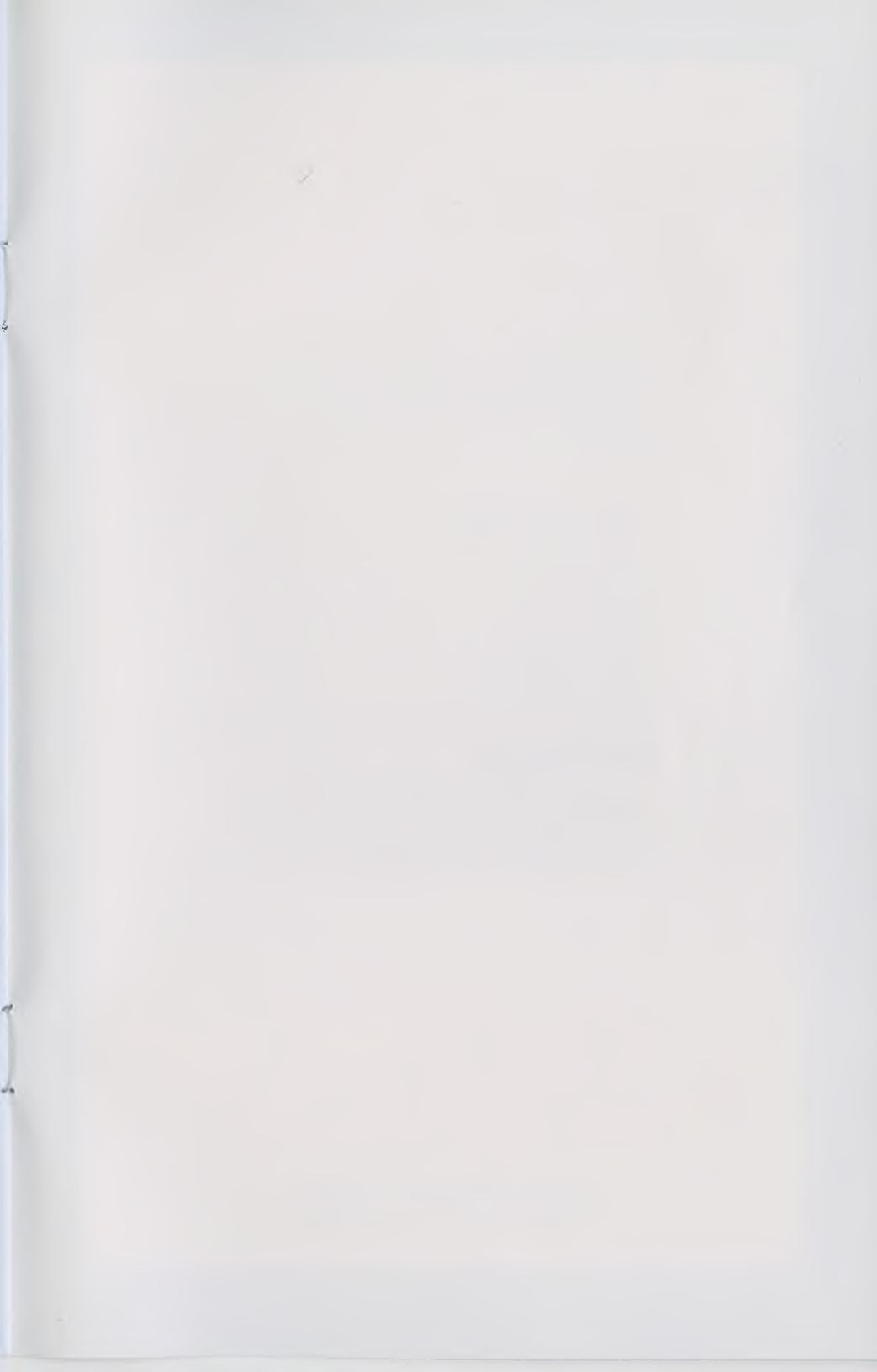
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If you know of an outstanding UNC graduate who has made significant contributions to the university or the community, please consider nominating him or her for the Honored Alumni award. Nominations are due April 30.

**UNC Alumni Association**

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