

Distinguished Alumni Awards

BY RHASHAD PITTMAN



For more than half a century, the Pacific Alumni Association has recognized the achievements and contributions of its alumni at the Annual Distinguished Alumni Awards Dinner and Ceremony. Last November, Pacific honored four Pacific graduates and a three-generation Pacific family for their outstanding professional achievements, public service and volunteerism. The recipients included an artist, an advocate for people with developmental disabilities, a theater instructor, a public radio expert and the descendants of renowned naturalist John Muir.

“This year’s honorees represent a wide range of interests and achievements, personifying Pacific’s proud history of innovation and diversity,” says Denny Stilwell ’88, president of the Pacific Alumni Association. “By their professional endeavors, public service and dedication to the University, they epitomize the spirit of excellence that is Pacific.”



Outstanding Young Alumni Award



Travis Schlaht '97

When Travis Schlaht was an art student, his mentor, Professor Gil Dellinger, told him that if he was able to have a one-man art exhibit by age 40 he was doing very well. Since then, the 34-year-old painter and art teacher has had four one-man art shows. His first was at age 27 at the John Pence Gallery in San Francisco.

Now based in New York City, Schlaht has seen his paintings — which include still-life, landscape and floral works — shown in galleries around the world. To date, the former Pacific basketball player has sold more than 200 paintings. His inspiration comes from a connection he feels to the object, due to its color, shape, texture or simply the way light reflects off of it.

Schlaht '97 credits his success largely to Dellinger. The retired Pacific art professor pushed him to move to New York to immerse himself in his craft and study at the Water Street Atelier art school. Dellinger believed in Schlaht so much that he was reluctant to write him a letter of recommendation for a high school teaching job because it would take time away from painting. “Every day that I get to spend painting I consider a gift,” Schlaht says. “I feel like I haven’t worked for the past ten years.”

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—Travis Schlaht

Distinguished Alumni Award for Public Service



Jeanne (Olson) Farr '80, '07

Jeanne Farr '80, '07 has seen firsthand the transformation people with developmental disabilities make once they move from a state institution into a community-based home. It is as if they were freed from prison, she says. Farr recently led a successful campaign to have all institutionalized people in Oregon with developmental disabilities housed in community-based homes. In the homes, she says, people with special needs can take showers in private, sleep in their own beds and go for walks in their neighborhood. “They become just these full, vital members of society that these institutions prevented them from being,” Farr says.

Farr is the senior vice president of Developmental Disabilities Services for the Albertina Kerr Center, which serves children with emotional and mental problems and people with developmental disabilities. She oversees 650 employees, manages a \$30 million budget and is responsible for an array of services for 200 developmentally disabled people.

In 2008, she launched Coexistence Collaborative LLC, a Portland-based business that provides diversity training to organizations around the world. Most of the company’s net profits support social entrepreneurial initiatives that benefit people with developmental disabilities in developing countries. Farr also sits on Pacific’s School of International Studies’ advisory board.

Distinguished Alumni Award for Volunteer Service



Roberta (Bitcon) "Bobbie" Wallinger '64

For nearly two decades, Bobbie Wallinger '64 has taken her love for people with special needs and combined it with her love for theatre. It has been a magical, fulfilling union for her and her students. This past October marked the 19th year that Wallinger has written, directed and produced Stockton's longest-running show for students with special needs. Her annual musical production in tribute of Stockton involves more than 80 developmentally disabled adult students.

In addition to her annual theatre production, Wallinger has volunteered for the Stockton Symphony, Tidewater Art Gallery and Lady Bugs organization. She also wrote the script for Stockton's winning presentation at the National Civic League's 1999 All America City competition and produced a two-act play for the city's 150th anniversary celebration.

For her efforts over the years, the retired teacher has received the Susan B. Anthony Award for teacher of the year in 2007 and was named Arts Educator of the Year in 2008 by the Stockton Arts Commission. Wallinger says she feels blessed to have been able to serve the Stockton community for more than 30 years. "How many people can say, 'Every day I go into work I love my job,?'" Wallinger says. "I can say that."

Distinguished Alumni Award for Professional Service



David Giovannoni '71

David Giovannoni's professional accomplishments will echo in listeners' ears for years to come. His work in public radio helped the industry grow dramatically over the years. And his resurrection of old sound recordings has changed how we hear history.

Giovannoni began his broadcasting career at Pacific's KUOP.

He formed Audience Research Analysis in 1977 while a graduate student at University of Wisconsin, Madison. He served as National Public Radio's director of research and evaluation from 1979 to 1986. His 30 years of consultations, seminars and publications have significantly influenced how public broadcasters approach their listeners and their programming. His work has been recognized with the industry's highest honors, including

the Edward R. Murrow Award. He retired from radio in 2006.

Today he pursues his lifelong passion for old sound recordings. His historic CD reissues have earned five Grammy nominations over the last few years, and "Lost Sounds: Blacks and the Birth of the Recording Industry" won a Grammy in 2007. He made international news in 2008 when his team of audio historians identified and played back mankind's first recording of its own voice, made in Paris in 1860, 17 years before Thomas Edison invented the phonograph.

"Skills learned at Pacific have served me well," Giovannoni says. "Without them, my endeavors might have been twice as difficult and half as effective."

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—David Giovannoni

Outstanding Family Award

Left to Right: Michael Hanna, Leonora Hanna, Bill Hanna '67, Claudia (Cummins) Hanna '67, Sally de Lipkau, Ross de Lipkau '72, Gladys (Stoevan) Hanna '47, Ross Hanna '49, Jim Hanna, Carol Hanna



John Muir's legacy will live on at Pacific for generations to come, thanks to an invaluable gift from his family. In 1970, direct descendants of the environmentalist agreed to store most of Muir's writings at Pacific. They serve as an essential part of Pacific's efforts for sustainability and creating a culture of environmental responsibility.

Researchers come from all over the world to study the Muir papers. "The legacy John Muir left us is of preserving special places on this earth," says Bill Hanna '67, Muir's great-grandson. "Many national parks exist because of one individual. One person can make a difference."

Eight family members — five direct descendants of Muir and three spouses — have graduated from Pacific. The Hanna, de Lipkau and Powell families have studied at College of the Pacific, the Conservatory of Music, the Eberhardt School of Business, Pacific McGeorge School of Law and the Thomas J. Long School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. The legacy began in the early 1930s, when Virginia Young '34 attended College of the Pacific and later married John Muir's grandson John Muir Hanna. Another Muir grandson, Ross Hanna '49, attended Pacific, where he was a member of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, Alpha Kappa Phi and the Pacific Library Associates. It was also where he met his wife, Gladys Stoeven '47. Ross was instrumental in bringing the Muir papers to campus.

Bill Hanna '67, one of Muir's great-grandsons, also found love on campus. He met his wife, Claudia '67, in a science lab class. "Not very romantic," says Claudia, "but the chemistry was right." Today the couple owns an award-winning winery in the Napa Valley and often participates in the Taste of Pacific Food and Wine Festival.

"The relationship between the family and Pacific is very good," says Ross de Lipkau '72, a graduate of Pacific McGeorge and great-grandson of Muir. "Where would we be if it weren't for Pacific?"

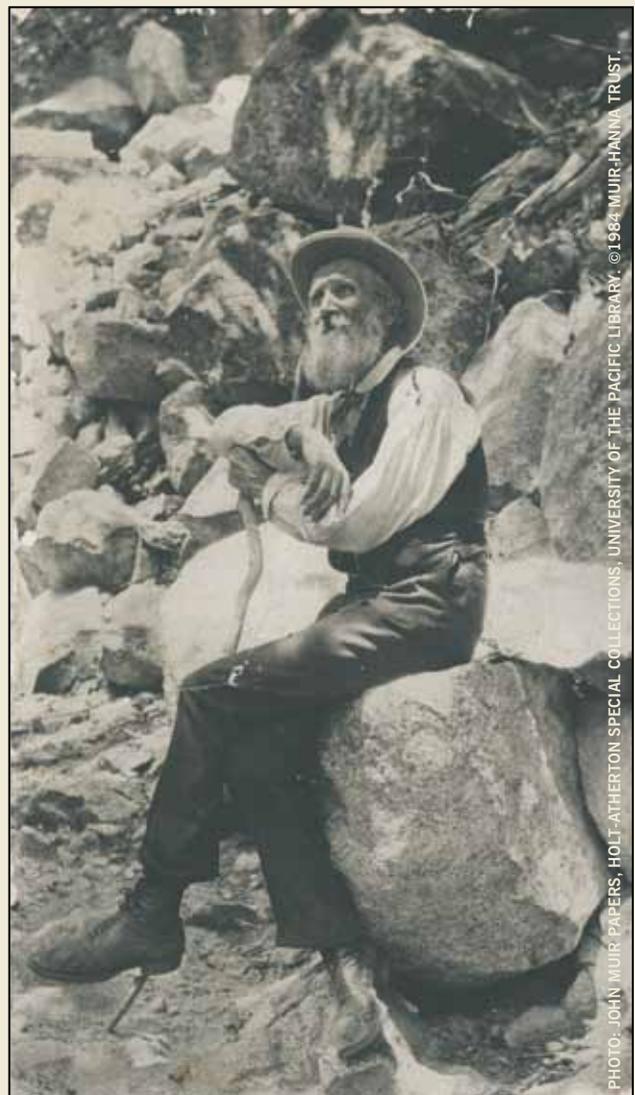


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