EHE Alumni Society honors accomplishments of 2014 award recipients

For immediate release

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COLUMBUS, Ohio -- Colleagues, students, athletes, even entire communities have been changed for the better by the 2014 EHE Alumni Award recipients. Sometimes they made personal connections through teaching or service. Sometimes their research guided national policy, or their administrative skills created environments fertile for innovation. We honor all of them for their long-lasting influence on our society.

“These alums took the treasure they found at Ohio State and added to it. Their actions have built the fortunes of many – from intimate friends to millions who may never know whom to thank,” said Cheryl Achterberg, dean of the college.

ALUMNI AWARDS

AWARD OF DISTINCTION is presented to alumni who made a difference in the lives of others through outstanding professional, personal or community contributions.

Laurie Stenberg Nichols of Brookings, S.Dak.
’88 PhD Family and Consumer Sciences Education
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, South Dakota State University

Nichols is credited with revitalizing South Dakota State University, which has an impact on the economic growth and development of South Dakota, the Great Plains region and nationally. She led a rapid rise in student retention and a faculty strategic initiative to enhance academic quality. Distance education delivers a matriculation program to Native American learners. A coalition of land-grant institutions has been expanded to offer master’s and doctorate degrees in several disciplines.

A nominator noted, “Dr. Nichols has had a broad impact on education and diverse students at varying education levels and disciplines.”

Rick D. Niece of Hot Springs Village, Ark.
’68 English and Speech Education
President Emeritus, University of the Ozarks

At the University of the Ozarks, Niece raised more than $140 million, quadrupled the endowment, completed $35 million in campus construction and renovations, and balanced the budget for 16 consecutive years. His collaborative leadership resulted in moving the university
into the top tier of *US News and World Report* rankings, including No. 1 Best Value in the South for four years.

A nominator wrote, “Rick is a person of great integrity who always made sure everyone, from the most powerful board member to the newest custodian was treated with respect and value.”

**Gwendolyn Sneed O’Neal** of Greensboro, N.C.

'77 PhD Textiles and Clothing
Professor and Chair of the Department of Consumer, Apparel and Retail Studies, University of North Carolina-Greensboro

At a time when women of color faced resistance, she built a brilliant academic career. She was the first African American to be tenured in human ecology at Ohio State and the first to head a department at Kansas State University. At UNC-Greensboro her department has high research productivity, outstanding rankings and national scholarship winners.

A nominator writes, “She has never been afraid to move the discipline forward, such as addressing the gap in our knowledge of dress and aesthetics among African-Americans, as well as being among the first to employ interpretive research methods.”

CAREER ACHIEVEMENT honors alumni who have proven records and have made outstanding contributions to their professions.

**Joseph L. Davis** of Columbus, Ohio

'49 BS *cum laude*, '55 MA Education, '67 PhD Educational Administration
Retired Superintendent, Columbus Public Schools

Davis’s strength and composure as superintendent during court-ordered desegregation of Columbus Public Schools in 1980 led 73,000 students, their parents and teachers at 150 schools to a peaceful implementation. “His proficient action, calm demeanor and thorough professionalism were lauded by the entire Columbus community when he stepped down from service to the schools in 1982,” noted a nominator.

Davis went on to found Ohio State’s National Academy for Superintendents, where administrators continue to gain knowledge of pressing educational issues.

**C. Suzanne Mencer** of Littleton, Colo.

'68 BS Education
Founder and Senior Advisor, Colorado Emergency Preparedness Partnership

Mencer keeps Americans safe. After 10 years as a middle school teacher, she joined the FBI, where she investigated foreign counterintelligence and counterterrorism. At the Department of Homeland Security following the 9-11 attack, she delivered leadership, support and resources as the entire nation prepared for emergencies.
With the public-private Colorado Emergency Preparedness Partnership, she helps prevent, respond to and recover from disasters. Its safety net will catch and cradle victims, whether harmed by natural events or human interference.

**Jack T. Ryan** of Columbus, Ohio

'41 BS Education
Retired History Teacher and Coach, St. Charles Borromeo Preparatory School and Bishop Hartley High School

A member of Ohio’s football, basketball and baseball halls of fame, Ryan, who died in 1996, was the *Columbus Dispatch* Best High School Coach of the 20th Century. But first and foremost, he identified himself as a teacher.

For 52 years, in Western Civilization classes or on the playing fields, “Jack Ryan had the special touch of making each person feel that he had a special relationship that outlasted graduation,” a nominator said.

NEW LEADER recognizes alumni who, by the age of 36, have demonstrated significant professional accomplishments or have given outstanding service to the college.

**Ye ‘Angel’ Wang** of Springfield, Mo.

'00 MA, '05 PhD, both Integrated Teaching and Learning
Associate Professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders and Coordinator for Education of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Program, Missouri State University

Wang has demonstrated drive, dedication and acumen to improve evidence-based literacy education of deaf and hard-of-hearing pre-K–12 students. Her research has been widely read and well received. Since 2008, she has co-authored three books (one of which was cited 106 times) and 19 articles and presented more than two dozen papers.

Among her five research projects was a much-discussed exploration of phonics-based early reading curricula.