

2005 Alumni Awards

OUTSTANDING ALUMNI

This year the Alumni Association is pleased to announce the selection of Marvin Mayes and Dennis Pollman as the recipients of the Outstanding Alumni Awards. Dennis and Marvin have followed two different career paths that have been successful and rewarding. They stand as examples of dedication and commitment to their professions as well as to their communities. They have achieved the highest levels of accomplishment through their perseverance.

■ Since graduating from then-SUSC **Dennis Pollman** ('68 Business) has embarked on a career path that has led him to be a major contributor to his community in virtually every aspect of community life. Dennis and his friends get together often in what they affectionately call AA (attitude adjustment) meetings. They discuss things that they like and don't like, but more importantly they discuss how to improve their surroundings whether it be business or community activities. The results of these AA meetings are outstanding.

In reviewing his activities and accomplishments, they are so numerous one has to list them in categories: business, community, political, civic.



Dennis has founded at least four businesses, and been involved in several others. He and two others founded the Long Beach, California Visitors and Convention Bureau in 1980. Dennis served as Executive Director and Board Member from 1980 to 1986. The Bureau is still operating today with a budget of more than \$1 million a year from city bed tax. Additionally he was active in the formation of the Long Beach Grand Prix in 1975.

At present he is an active, participating member of three Chambers of Commerce in Orange County. Pollman's Insurance has been recognized by the business community, the city, and county for numerous awards for its commitment to improving all aspects of life. He has received Best Business or Outstanding Business Awards several times, and his involvement in the Rotary, Elks, and Kiwanis clubs and others, has led to him serving in leadership capacities from president to board member. Dennis has been appointed to at least 11 commissions concerning business issues by the cities of Long Beach and Seal Beach.

Dennis has also been active in the political process, working on at least 11 campaigns from the local to the national arenas. In fact, his first experience was working on the Nixon campaign while at SUU. He and his wife Bette have continued to be active in the Republican Party in California. He was invited to take a tour of Air Force One while President Bush was on a recent visit to Southern California. While the list of accomplishments is long and the contributions to the community are impressive, the one thing in his

biography that he insisted be included, was that fact that he is an active member of the Southern Utah University, Southern California Alumni Association Chapter.

■ The SUU Motto states, “Learning Lives Forever,” and **Marvin Mayes** ('66 *Physical Education*) epitomizes that slogan. For 30 years he has been an active participant in his professional life as well as in the lives of thousands of young people as a teacher. It is common knowledge that a good teacher is a priceless commodity. It is also well known that the teaching profession is not a lucrative profession, but Marvin has made the most of his opportunities.



Graduating from Boulder High School in Nevada, Marvin attended CSU on an athletic scholarship. He graduated from CSU in 1968 with a BS degree in Physical Education with a minor in Psychology and History. He received a government fellowship to USU where he completed a Master's Degree in Special Education in 1968. It was during this time that he was drafted into the US Army and served in Munich, Germany. He was to return to Germany at two other times for the Department of Defense to set up a special day class in 1973-74 and again in 1994-95 to set up an elementary resource program. Each time, Marvin returned to teach in the Capistrano Unified School District in a junior high school until 1983 when he began teaching high school as a resource specialist until he retired in 1986. During his career, he distinguished himself both as a teacher and as a mentor, thrice taking his junior high school chess team to the national finals. The team placed third in 1973, second in 1974, and claimed the championship the following year. Other accolades include Coach of the Year, and the Junior High School and High School Special Education Teacher of the Year in 1986.

Marvin has also been a very successful and astute businessman making wise investments in real estate which now includes investment properties in three states. In his retirement, Marvin has a passion for travel and does so often, to such places as Russia, China, Southeast Asia and Central America as well as visiting his children and grandchildren as often as he can. He married **Marjorie E. Arbuckle** from Mahomet, Illinois, in 1968. They are parents of three children—Toby, Megan and Aaron—and they have all followed their father's footsteps and attended college at SUU.

D I S T I N G U I S H E D S E R V I C E

Alumni Distinguished Service Awards are presented annually at the Alumni Banquet during Homecoming Week. These awards represent service above and beyond expectation; service that is not seeking the light of recognition; service performed out of love and loyalty to SUU. Ralph E. Spence and Connie Pitt have been selected to receive the awards in September.

■ **Ralph E. Spence** ('72 *Education*) was born in Long Beach, California, and currently resides in Yorba Linda. At the completion of his degree at then-SUSC, he completed an additional degree in Psychology at Pepperdine University in 1974.



Recently Ralph completed his 33rd year as a 5th grade teacher in the Norwalk-La-Mirada Unified School District in California. In his usual humble way he says that after 33 years he is still learning to become a good teacher, which echoes the “Learning Lives Forever” hallmark of SUU. And, he takes great pride and satisfaction in seeing the fruits of his efforts as his former students graduate from high school and college.

When Ralph was in the second grade he fell in love with Jane and when they got old enough, after he graduated from college, they were married. He considers his students his kids, since he and his wife have no children of their own – though they have a Sheltie named “Hershey” who they consider to be part of the family.

“At the first organizational meeting of the Southern California Alumni Chapter, I knew I was in the right place when I saw the personalized California license plate which read ‘SUSC 72’”, said Marlo Jensen, Executive Director of Alumni Relations.

While a student in Cedar City, Ralph was very active in campus life enjoying the football and basketball games. His involvement also included working for the college radio station on campus for two years. In addition to teaching, Ralph enjoys other diversions and jobs. He works as a bell man at the Anaheim Marriott Hotel near Disneyland.

Ralph was drawn to SUSC for several reasons; among them are the personalization of his education from professors who took an interest in his success in the classroom, the beautiful campus, and the friendliness of the Cedar City residents.

The past three years Ralph has been very active in promoting SUU to future students by representing the University at college fairs in Southern California and heading up the efforts of the Southern California SUU Alumni Chapter.

■ **Connie Pitt** ('84

Education), a native of Salt Lake City, first came to school at Southern Utah State College in 1974, with her husband Greg, four days after they were married. While attending school, Connie enjoyed playing the viola, and had the opportunity to be part of the orchestra for many musical productions. She and her husband both played in the orchestra for Mikado, the first performance of a non-Shakespearean play during the Festival. After having two children, and after her husband had graduated, Connie returned to school graduating in 1984 with a degree in Elementary Education. She enjoyed teaching for 14 years in the public school system of Utah. After her graduation, Connie and her husband Greg served as admissions advisers for SUU while they lived and taught in Summit County, Utah. After moving to Las Vegas, Nevada, they continued to serve as admissions advisers, helping with open houses and encouraging young students to attend SUU. Connie continues to visit with prospective students about SUU, its wonderful programs and faculty, and encourages them to make their decision to attend SUU.

Connie was instrumental in helping and supporting the organization of the Southern Nevada SUU Alumni Chapter and served as its first secretary. She continues to serve as an active member of the board. Connie chaired the inaugural Annual Scholarship Fund Raising Dinner held last year at the top of the Stratosphere Tower in Las Vegas and is an active committee member. Funds raised at the event are used to award scholarships to students from southern Nevada wishing to attend SUU. Connie also serves as a member of the National Alumni Board of Directors and enjoys the time she spends with the alumni and helping to promote the university.

Professionally, Connie is a top producing loan officer with Direct Access Lending in Las Vegas. She and Greg enjoy spending time with their three sons, two daughters-in-law and three grandchildren. She possesses a passion for travel, golf and church service.



Y O U N G A L U M N I

Three years ago the Alumni Association introduced a new Annual Award to be presented at the Alumni Banquet during Homecoming Week. This award recognizes the dedicated efforts of younger former students of SUU who are making valuable contributions through their loyalty and service to the University and their communities. "They represent the younger generation of our Alumni who are beginning their careers professionally, and are enthusiastic about sharing their experiences and the university's vision," said Pennie Copley, Assistant Director of Alumni Relations. "They bring a lot of energy to our chapters and to the organization as a whole." The 2005 recipients are Sandra Lord Thomas and Kristian Olsen.

■ **Sandra Lord Thomas**

('93 *Communication*, '98 *Masters Education*) holds a Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) in Educational Leadership from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Thomas served as Southern Utah University's Director of School Relations for five years and as one of the Directors of the Governor's Honors Academy for the state of Utah for seven years.



As Director of School Relations, Thomas was responsible for recruitment, and played a significant role in public relations, enrollment management and marketing processes. She directed and founded the Admissions Adviser Program, the Sanctuary Scholarship Competition, Quest Leadership Seminars, and the Spring Leadership Competition.

Before joining Southern Utah University, Thomas served as an educational representative in Minsk, Belarus, a country once part of the former Soviet Union. In 1992-1993 she served as the Student Body President at SUU. She also served on the Board of Trustees and as a member of the Utah Council of Student Body Presidents.

Currently, Thomas is a member of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), American Association for Higher Education (AAHE), and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE). She serves on the ASHE Advancement Committee and contributes writings to the ASHE newsletter and other national publications. Her research interests include public policy and practice, organizational theory and leadership, governing boards

and presidencies, education demographics and persistent patterns, and student learning and assessment. Thomas is a mixed methods researcher; she enjoys both the quantitative and qualitative sides of scholarly exploration.

Thomas teaches as an adjunct professor for Northern Arizona University's Educational Leadership Department and functions as an independent researcher and consultant for various public and private entities. As a consultant, she belongs to the facilitation team of Strategic Planning Seminars and specializes in organizational planning and progression. She volunteers with the Make-A-Wish Foundation, spends considerable time organizing programming for the youth of her church, and is an avid reader, writer, black and white photographer, artist, and dreamer.

■ **Kristian J. Olsen** ('00
Business Management)

currently is the Student Activities Director at the University of Connecticut - Stamford. Kristian also just completed his master's degree in Higher Education and Student Affairs at the University of Connecticut. At UConn he is very active serving on several University committees. He also co-created and is the Director of the University of Connecticut Student Leadership Retreat which serves



to teach leadership skills to students from all of the five regional UConn campuses.

Prior to working for UConn-Stamford, Kristian served as the Director of School Relations at Southern Utah University.

He served as the Student Body President, '99-'00, and was also selected as the Male Contributor of the Year. During his tenure as Student Body President, he was instrumental in the creation of what he believes is the greatest club on the SUU campus, The Alternative Spring Break Club (*see page 2*).

Though Kristian currently lives on the East Coast, his connection to the University remains strong. He was active in the creation of the New England Alumni Chapter and currently serves as the President. In that capacity he also serves as a member of the Southern Utah University's National Alumni Board of Directors. He says he also is constantly trying to persuade high school students he knows to choose SUU.

Being on the East Coast, Kristian says he has come to gain a greater understanding of the quality of education that he received at SUU. "Working for the number one public university in New England and one of the top public universities in the country, I have the opportunity to interact with fantastic professors. However, I feel that the professors at SUU are every bit as good, and in many cases, better than the professors at UConn. I would put the education I received at SUU up against anyone. SUU truly is one of the great higher education institutions in this country." **SU**

50-Year Club to welcome the class of '55 on September 23

The annual reunion of the 50-Year Club will take place on the campus of Southern Utah University, Friday September 23, 2005. "The 50-Year Club is the most distinguished group of our Alumni," said **Mary Macfarlane MacDonald**, ('38), and 2005 Club President. "We will be welcoming the class of '55 into the club. Each year the club gets together with old friends, to share fond remembrances of by-gone days at BAC and CSU. Additionally the committee invites one or two members of the "new" class to represent their class by sharing personal remembrances and lessons learned while on campus, that have helped them in their

professional lives.

Keith Tattersall and **Charles Cooley** have been selected to share their stories and experiences this year. Keith will be traveling from Vida, Oregon, and Charles has to travel all the way from Enoch, Utah. Their classmates may remember that both of these men were active in athletics and



Keith Tattersall



Charles Cooley

other campus functions, and have gone on to distinguished careers.

Both Charles and Keith boast impressive resumes and have been valuable contributors in their respective communities and professions. We invite all members of the 50-Year Club to join us!!!

Activities begin with an informal reception at 10:30 a.m. in the Whiting Room of the Hunter Conference Center, continuing in the Gilbert Great Hall at 11:00 a.m. with a luncheon and program. This year in addition to remarks from Keith and Charles, there will be a short program and a welcome from SUU President Steven D. Bennion.