July 6, 2005

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Cal Poly College of Liberal Arts Names Award in Honor of Richard Simon; Faculty, Staff Recognized

SAN LUIS OBISPO - Cal Poly's College of Liberal Arts recognized outstanding faculty and staff at its recent annual reception.

Interim Dean Linda H. Halisky announced that the outstanding faculty awards were renamed the College of Liberal Arts Richard K. Simon Faculty Awards, in honor of the popular and innovative English professor who died of cancer in April. He had initiated the awards in 1997.

The college presented Richard K. Simon Faculty Awards to Mark Roberts, a lecturer in the English Department; Michael Miller, a professor in the Art and Design Department; and Don Ryujin, a professor in the Psychology and Child Development Department.

Roberts, of San Luis Obispo, won the Outstanding Teaching Award. The college recognized him for his exemplary teaching skills. English Department Chair David Kann says, "He has never failed us. He is an extraordinary, effective teacher who accomplished in his classes what we all hope to be able to achieve."

Roberts joined the English Department in 1989. He is an established expert in classical literature. He earned a master's degree from Cal Poly in 1990.

Miller, from Los Osos, received the Outstanding Scholarship Award. He earned a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Southern California in 1988. Miller has exhibited his visual arts worldwide at the Hanoi Fine Arts University in Vietnam, the Sun Valley Center for the Arts in Idaho, the POST Gallery in Los Angeles, and the Art Center, Silpakorn University in Bangkok, Thailand. Art and Design Department Chair Eric Johnson says, "Michael's work combines an anthropologist's intellect, an artist's sense of beauty, and a disc jockey's sense of shock value."

Ryujin received the Outstanding Service Award. An Avila Beach resident, Ryujin joined the Psychology and Child Development Department in 1989 and served as department chair from 2002 to 2005. Ryujin is honored in part for his work with the annual Cal Poly Summer Institute program, which helps incoming first-time freshmen, especially low-income or first-generation students, to successfully transition into university life. "He continues to advise many of them throughout their college years and gives them help, hope and a belief in themselves," says Dean Halisky.

The College Council, composed of the 15 Liberal Arts department chairs, selects the faculty award recipients from nominations made by the faculty. Staff members also select the College of Liberal Arts Outstanding Staff Awards through nominations.

This year's staff awardees were Administrative Support Coordinator Yolanda Tiscareño, for Continuing Excellence, and Administrative Analyst Steve D. Davis, for Outstanding Achievement.

Tiscareño, a resident of Atascadero, has been the administrative coordinator of the Ethnic Studies Department since its founding in 1992. She distinguishes herself by competence and her commitment to the well-being and
success of the department. Department Chair Robert Ku says, "Yolanda is friendly, welcoming and helpful to all. She has great personal integrity and leads quietly by example."

Davis, from San Luis Obispo, has demonstrated an exceptional level of achievement in his position as the College of Liberal Arts computer analyst. He earned this award because of his solid work ethic with technology troubleshooting, as well as his positive attitude. "He is a dependable, go-to person, who really listens and then addresses problems promptly," says interim associate dean Debra Valencia-Laver.

Associate Dean Susan Currier received special recognition for her years of service to the college. Currier began teaching in the English Department in 1983. She was promoted to associate dean in 1992. She stepped down as associated dean in June and will return to teach in the English Department in January 2006.

Currier leaves the dean’s office with a strong educational foundation for both general education and the majors. During her tenure as associate dean, the college added two new majors and revamped the general education program. She counseled countless numbers of liberal arts students while serving as associate dean. Currier also advised the college Student Council, the Ambassadors, and served as a member of the CLA Dean’s Advisory Board since it was established in 1995.

Currier was also recognized for her fund-raising work, which helped build, staff and equip a children's center at Kabul University in Afghanistan. Her goal was to enable women to study and work at the university and to provide good care in a developmental environment for the children of the university's students and employees. In 2002-2003 Currier and Ethnic Studies Professor Maliha Zulfacar raised over $25,000 for the project and received the praise and acclaim of the Afghanistan Minister of Higher Education.

The College of Liberal Arts also recognized several professors who will be retiring or starting the Faculty Early Retirement Program: Tim Barnes, who has been a member of the History Department faculty since 1969; Margaret Berrio, Psychology and Child Development, 1989; DavidEnglund, Psychology and Child Development, 1973; Phil Fetzer, Political Science, 1988; Dan Krieger, History, 1971; John Harrington, English, 1976; Larry Houlgate, Philosophy, 1979; Russell Lascola, Philosophy, 1970; Carl Lutrin, Political Science, 1970; Steven Marx, English, 1988; John McKinstry, Social Sciences, 1968; Patrick Munroe, Journalism and Graphic Communication, 1980; Max Riedlsperger, History, 1969; John Russell, Music, 1968; Habib Sheik, English, 1967; Harry Sharp, Dean's Office and Speech Communication, 1975; Chuck Slem, Psychology and Child Development, 1975; George Suchand, Social Sciences, 1971; and Bette Tryon, Psychology and Child Development, 1976.

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