



News Release

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WESTERN ANNOUNCES 2003 DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS

St. Joseph, Mo. — Sept. 10, 2003 — Missouri Western State College announced the recipients of the 2003 Alumni Association Distinguished Service Awards. The Alumni Award recipients are Patrick Conway, class of 1993; Dan Danford, class of 1978; Molly Pierce, class of 1977; all of St. Joseph; and Jeanne Webb, class of 1971, of Grand Island, Neb. The 2003 Faculty Award recipient is Dr. Todd Eckdahl, professor of biology.

The award recipients will be honored at the annual Awards Banquet on Oct. 10, along with 25 students who are recipients of Alumni Association scholarships. The reception begins at 5:30 p.m. followed by a 6:30 p.m. banquet in the Forrest D. Hoff Room (218) of the Nelle Blum Student Union. To make reservations for the banquet, mail \$18 per person by Oct. 1 to Western Alumni Office, 4525 Downs Drive, St. Joseph, MO 64507.

“The awards banquet is a great opportunity to meet alumni and faculty who are making a difference, and recognize the scholarship recipients who are future alumni,” said Julie Lawrence, director of alumni services. “The banquet, in its 21st year, has become a wonderful tradition.”

Conway attended the St. Joseph Junior College from 1965-1968 and Western from 1970-1973. He earned his bachelor of science degree in history in 1993 and has served as the Buchanan County clerk since 1982.

Conway serves on several boards, including the Family Guidance Board of Directors, the Missouri Association of Counties Board of Directors and the National Association of Counties Board of Directors. He has also been involved in recruiting new businesses to the St. Joseph area.

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Danford graduated with a bachelor's degree in marketing in 1978 and earned an MBA from Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville. He has started two investment firms, and is currently an independent Registered Investment Advisor for the Family Investment Center.

He is the author of *Million Dollar Management* (2002) and *Simple Handbook for Church Marketing* (1991), and has written over 100 articles for trade journals, magazines and newspapers. Danford frequently serves as an adjunct faculty member at Western and has made presentations at several conferences.

He has been an officer or board member of several local nonprofit organizations, and has served as the president of the college's Alumni Association.

Pierce graduated with a bachelor of science degree in elementary education in 1977 and earned her master's in education at Northwest Missouri State University. She is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Missouri - Columbia. Pierce has served in the St. Joseph School District since 1977, and has been the principal at Coleman Elementary School in St. Joseph for 10 years.

Pierce serves on both the national and state Associations for Elementary School Principals, and several professional boards. She has also volunteered on several local boards and organizations, including the college's Alumni Association Board of Directors and the Foundation Board of Directors.

Webb graduated with a bachelor of science in elementary education in 1971 and earned her master's from the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. She is an early childhood education instructor and the campus childcare center director with Central Community College in Grand Island, Neb.

Webb coordinates the Heads Up! Reading site for Grand Island, and serves on the south central and north central Nebraska Early Childhood Coalitions. She has served on many professional and community boards, including a state advisory committee for early childhood staff. For many years, she has served on the committee that provides in-service training for child care providers in the area.

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Dr. Eckdahl has taught at Western for 10 years. He has published eight peer-reviewed manuscripts in national professional journals on topics related to molecular genetics research and biology teaching, and has made presentations throughout the United States. He has received five federal grants totaling over \$330,000 to support research and teaching.

Dr. Eckdahl earned a bachelor of science in chemistry from the University of Minnesota, Duluth, and his doctorate in molecular genetics from Purdue University in Lafayette, Ind.

“My professional record reflects a focus on biology teaching and scholarship,” said Dr. Eckdahl. “I revel in the fact that my job is about helping students to succeed. My best experiences at Western are those that involve student achievement.”

To be eligible for the alumni award, nominees must be living and have graduated at least five years prior to the nomination. Factors to be considered are significant contributions to their community, state or nation; humanitarian services and contributions to society; and qualities which make all alumni proud to have attended the same institution.

Criteria for the faculty award include teaching excellence, actual and potential accomplishments in his or her field, availability to students and representation of ethical and philosophical excellence.

For more information, contact Director of Alumni Services Julie Lawrence at (816) 271-5650 or lawrence@mWSC.edu.

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Missouri Western State College is a four-year public institution providing a blend of traditional liberal arts and professional degree programs. The college offers student-centered, high quality instruction that focuses on experience-based learning, community service, and state-of-the-art technology. Western is located in St. Joseph, Mo. and is committed to the educational, economic, cultural and social development of the region it serves.