

Presidential Coins



Dr. Travis Kibota steps forward to receive his Presidential Coin on Opening Day 2013. Typical of Kibota's spotlight-averse personality, he told President Knight he thought someone else probably deserved the coin more.

In 2007, Clark College President Bob Knight introduced a new honor at Clark College: the presidential coin.

The coin is given to faculty and staff members who provide exemplary service to Clark students, the college and the community. The honorees are decided by the president and are kept secret until the names are announced—generally on Opening Day in the fall or during the annual State of the College address.

Five Clark College employees received Presidential Coins during Opening Day 2013 on September 11. They were:

Karen Wynkoop

Before coming to Clark in 2005, Director of Business Services Karen Wynkoop had already had a distinguished career in higher education. She served as Assistant Vice President of Equity and Diversity and as Organizational Development Specialist at Washington State University; prior to that, she worked at The Evergreen State College in a variety of positions, starting as an accountant and concluding her time there as Associate Vice President for Academic Budget and Financial Planning.

Knight said that Wynkoop “has provided strong and steady leadership of the college’s financial management system and budget process during years of rapid growth as well as dramatic cuts in state funding,” adding that she “is widely recognized throughout the state as one of the premier business officers in the system.”

Dani Bundy

During her 10 years at Clark College, Dani Bundy has worked in Eligibility Programs, Credentials, Advising, the Vice President of Student Affairs Office, and Financial Aid. She is currently Assistant Director of Financial Aid. Knight commended Bundy for “never [leaving] a department without implementing a new enhancement that improved efficiencies.”

Knight added that because Bundy is a Clark alumna herself, “she understands the external and internal barriers that students encounter along their educational paths. Because of this, she is always thinking of solutions that will benefit students.”

Dr. Travis Kibota

Biology professor Travis Kibota has worked at Clark for almost

20 years. During that time, he has twice served as interim dean and is currently division chair of Life Sciences. "He has great vision, is a team player, and has a perfect handle on all of the dynamics of how Clark College works," said Knight.

Knight added: "He eagerly works with people throughout the college as a connector, which makes him successful in the roles he plays as a faculty member, in administration, on committees, and as a grant developer."

Cindy Heck

Planning and Effectiveness Administrative Assistant Cindy Heck began working at Clark while still a student here, interning with the Legal Secretary program in 1995. That led to a part-time position, which moved to fulltime in 1998.

"Cindy's ability to see the big picture, attention to detail, practical nature, outstanding work ethic, and sincere care for others all make her an obvious choice for the Presidential Coin," said Knight.

Heather King

Business and Health Sciences Administrative Assistant Heather King also got her start at Clark as a student, graduating in 1991 and returning, after receiving her B.A. from WSU, for a Certificate of Proficiency in Clinical Office Assistant in 1998. She began working at Clark as a fiscal specialist in the Office of Instruction, moving to BHS in 2009.

"She is the thread that hold the BHS unit together," Knight said. "Her years of dedicated service to Clark College in many areas of the institution; her commitment to students, faculty, and staff; her service on multiple committees are but a few of the reasons she is receiving this coin."

Honoring Excellence



On Opening Day 2013, Exceptional Faculty Award plaques were presented to, *left to right*, Darcie Thompson (accepting the award for her mother-in-law, Mickey Thompson), Patti Serrano, Bruce Elgort, Tony Chennault, and Mike Arnold.

Clark College President Bob Knight announced the recipients of the 2013 Exceptional Faculty Awards during the 2013 Commencement ceremony on June 20; they were presented with engraved plaques during Opening Day on September 11. This year, five faculty members—two part-time instructors and three full-time professors—received the award, which honors excellence in teaching.

The Clark College Exceptional Faculty Awards are presented

annually to full-time and part-time faculty members in recognition of exemplary work performance, positive impact on students, professional commitment, and other contributions to the college. Nominations are submitted by Clark College students, faculty, classified employees, administrators, alumni, Board members, and Foundation directors. The awards are made possible through an endowed trust fund established by the Washington State Legislature and the Clark College Exceptional Faculty Endowment Fund, which was established in 1993.

This year's Exceptional Faculty Award recipients are:



Mike Arnold

Mike Arnold, Health and Physical Education

Mike Arnold began teaching at Clark College in 1989 and over that time has taught everything from archery to weight lifting, as well as coaching athletic teams. His students praise him for helping them improve not only their bodies, but their minds and characters as well. "Not only does he want you to do well in his class, he wants you to do well in life," wrote one student in his nomination.

Another student wrote, "Mike Arnold is one of the most caring,

respectable, honest and genuine people I have ever met. He is willing to help any student that is in need. ... He is more than a teacher; he is a friend and a mentor.”

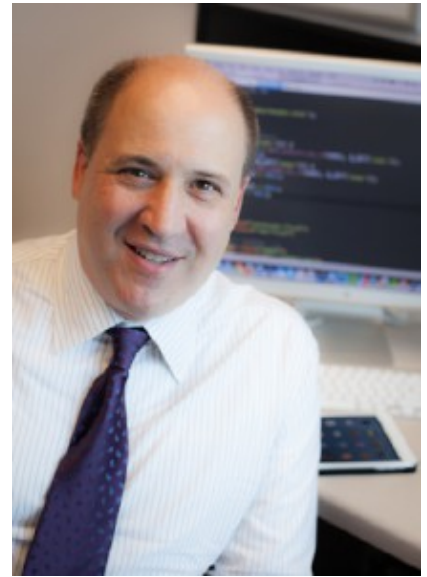


Tony Chennault

Tony Chennault, Biology

“Simply put, Tony Chennault is the best professor I have ever had,” wrote one student in nominating Chennault for the Exceptional Faculty Award. Many students praise Chennault for making a notoriously difficult series of classes—namely, Human Anatomy and Physiology—fun and understandable.

Chennault, who also teaches Human Biology, began teaching at Clark in 2008 and received tenure in 2011. He strives to make his students feel comfortable as they tackle challenging material, providing them with helpful study tips and mnemonic tricks for learning anatomical terms. “I believe this award is a reflection of having a job that I truly love and am passionate about, and I take pride in bringing that passion and energy to class every day, trying my best to make learning the science of the human body fun for the students as I have fun, too,” he said.



Bruce Elgort

Bruce Elgort, Computer Technology

Bruce Elgort has only been teaching at Clark since winter quarter 2013, but already he has made a huge impression on his students. “I was worried when I started his class that I wouldn’t be able to learn the material or properly grasp the concepts, but after I was in Bruce’s class for an hour, I felt confident and comfortable and able to learn anything,” wrote one nominator.

While Elgort is relatively new to teaching in a college setting, he has a long career in computer technology. He has worked for major technology companies, including Sharp and Underwriters Laboratories, and launched his own successful software company. When he teaches courses about programming, HTML, and PHP coding, he brings real-life experience from the work world into his classroom—a classroom that extends into the virtual realm through help sessions conducted via social media. “In today’s hyper-connected, ‘always-on’ world, the ability to extend the physical classroom is something that has become an integral part of all my work at Clark,” Elgort says.



Patti Serrano

Patti Serrano, Business Administration

Patti Serrano has had plenty of time to develop fans at Clark College—she began teaching here in 1981, beginning by teaching Fashion Merchandising before transitioning to Business Management and Marketing courses. During that time, Serrano has demonstrated leadership at the college time and again. She helped draft the college's Strategic Plan and participated in the college's last three accreditation efforts, as well as serving on countless committees to improve college functions; she has also served as head of the college's Business Department and chair of the Business Division. Additionally, she is a committed educator.

"Having known Patti Serrano for over thirty years, I have personally seen the many, many hours she has devoted to helping her students with guidance in professional and personal advice," said one coworker. "She has been a positive force for hundreds of students."



Mickey Thompson

Mickey Thompson, Paralegal

Mickey Thompson entered the legal profession in 1977, and she brings both a depth of knowledge and a great enthusiasm about paralegal work to her teaching. Students point to the countless hours she has spent serving as the advisor to the Clark College Law Club and to her patience when guiding them through the thicket of legal terminology.

“She’s compassionate, organized, strict, and funny all at the same time,” wrote one student in her nomination. “Legal procedure is tough and complicated, and Mickey makes sure that all of her students understand the course material and have a good grasp on the concepts.”

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley