

By Ruth E. Thaler-Carter

Meritorious Service Award Recipients and New APPA Fellow

Reflect on Value of Service



Familiar names in the APPA family are the proud recipients of APPA's highest-level recognition for individuals in 2016: the Meritorious Service Award and APPA Fellow. These honors, presented this July at the APPA/SRAPP/TNAPPA Annual Meeting and Exposition in Nashville, reflect decades of dedication to both the profession of facilities management and the association serving the profession—dedication that includes continuing to be involved with APPA even in retirement or at personal expense.



2016 MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

J. B. Messer of the Community College of Allegheny County has been CAPPAs' (Central Region) president; Finance Committee chair; Junior and Senior Representative to APPA; member of the CAPPAs and OACUPPA (Oklahoma Chapter) Inaugural Board of Directors; Membership chair/APPA Membership Committee member; and APPA Community College Engagement Group cochair. He received APPA and CAPPAs Emeritus Member status in 2014.

Messer brought all of the community colleges together within APPA. He led a task force on integrated membership between the international and regional levels.

According to nominator Sue-Anna Miller of University of Oklahoma Facilities Management, Messer "was consistently and highly involved at all levels of APPA.



Further, he encouraged others to also engage through his enthusiasm and positive outlook." He is credited with having "resurrected OACUPPA through his encouragement and engagement of others in the state of Oklahoma ... and overseeing the establishment of the organization as a not-for-profit corporation and the creation of associated bylaws and a leadership succession plan."

Despite the budget constraints of working for a small community institution, Messer also "was a strong encourager of other community colleges and smaller schools, promoting collaboration and cooperation as a means to growing a smaller school into a big leader.

J. B. himself epitomized this idea, being one of the boldest leaders on the CAPPAs Executive Committee for many years, always bringing new ideas and fresh perspectives," says Miller. He made sure that his staff attended APPA training and events, even if it meant he could not attend himself.

Messer's commitment to APPA is grounded in how membership has helped him personally and professionally. In his early years in the profession, he worked at institutions where there was no development budget. "Our institution was a member of APPA, but just contributing money—not even being a drain; not doing anything," he recalls. His APPA journey really began when funds became available and he went to a regional meeting. From then on, "I told everyone in our group to be a part of APPA," he says. "I wanted them to be involved, not just take."



APPA involvement “made us a better, more professional department,” says Messer. He gets “more gratification from seeing results in all the people around me” than in recognition for himself.

APPA colleagues may not know that Messer began his career as a nuclear engineer with the Navy, then served for years as the senior facilities officer at Oklahoma City Community College. A year after his initial retirement from higher education, “I knew I really loved what I had been doing,” says Messer, “so I accepted a job with the community college system of Pittsburgh. I can’t imagine doing anything else. It’s challenging, rewarding work with great people.”

Receiving the Meritorious Service Award means “I’ve stayed around long enough,” says Messer with a chuckle. “It isn’t just about me, but about bridges to all the people I have worked with and what they’ve achieved—it’s much bigger than myself.” ■

Glenn R. Smith, who recently retired as director of facilities services at Bryn Mawr College, reached APPA’s highest office, serving as APPA President in 2013-14. He previously served as APPA’s Vice President for Professional Development and dean of the APPA Leadership Academy; as well as Eastern Region’s president, then Junior and Senior Representative to the APPA Board; ERAPPA’s education chair; and president, Delaware Valley Chapter.



Smith “has received many awards through the years, and is deserving of those and many more, but his steadfast goal has always been about the greater good, not personal recognition,” according to nominator Dale DeBlois of Colby College. “His unwavering positive attitude in promoting the educational facilities field has been felt

from his chapter to his international influence as President of APPA. He has advanced our profession to a point that will be felt for generations ... He has proven to be a champion as well as a mentor to many fellow facilities individuals, as well as expanding programs ... so they will serve us all into the future.”

To Smith, APPA members “have certainly afforded me leadership opportunities that went beyond those in the job. What I’ve learned from APPA and other members has helped me be a better director of facilities.”

Having an APPA colleague (Fred Klee of Ursinus College) reach out and encourage him to run for APPA office gave Smith an early and lasting appreciation of “how important it is for each of us to do that for other members,” he says. Membership and constant service over the years has also “helped me better understand what we’re going through in APPA now and what institutions are facing, in terms of the number of students decreasing, more intense competition for those students, and how schools are competing, such as through constructing more buildings—all of which have to be maintained, and the importance of total cost of ownership,” he says.

The award came as a surprise to Smith. “I felt I’d been recognized enough, so this was kind of over the top, but it’s all about the service,” he says. “None of us had awards in mind when we volunteered with APPA. We did so for the true joy and happiness that comes with service, either [for] an institution or other people—this is for both.”

Smith is enjoying his retirement enough that he recently and “gracefully” declined the offer of an interim position in northern New Jersey. APPA friends and colleagues will be glad to hear, however, that “Lander (Medlin) doesn’t let you go easily,” so he is still involved in the Leadership Academy. “I’m looking forward to more time to present that locally,” he says. His wife Sue is also qualified to teach in the Academy, and they are looking for opportunities where they “can be in the classroom together, learn from each other, and make the classes better.”

Continuing to serve even in retirement is yet another way that Smith gives back to the association and the profession. “APPA’s done so much for us that I can’t imagine not being involved,” he says. If this behavior becomes a trend, APPA may need to create a whole new award! ■



appropriate backgrounds, but we needed help with addressing issues. We became more aggressive about APPA, which led to a whole new series of resources focusing on the same issues as at larger schools.”

Young sees this recognition as one to share rather than belonging only to himself. On receiving the award, Young recalls that “the first thing I said was, ‘I thank my God for giving me the ability to do this work. Second, I thank my wife for the same reason. Third, I thank the members who made it possible.’” ■

F. Daniel Young

has been MAPPA representative (Midwestern Region) to the APPA Membership Committee, served on the GAPPA Board of Directors (Georgia Chapter), and as SRAPPA president (Southeastern Region), APPA Junior and Senior Board Representative, APPA Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Committee member, and FLAPPA president (Florida Chapter).



“Dan was the driving force in the formulation of the Florida Chapter, and because of his direction, it has flourished since being established,” says nominator Rebecca Griffith of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. “Dan has attended International, Regional, and Chapter meetings throughout his career for the past 47 years, and has supported APPA International from the moment he joined. You will

not find a more loyal member.”

According to Griffith, “If anyone from APPA or SRAPPA asked him to serve in any capacity, he would do so without a moment of hesitation ... (his) current school does not ... support his travel to the SRAPPA and APPA meetings, but he still attends, paying the costs personally. Now that’s commitment.”

Young is also renowned as a mentor: “When we worked together, I considered him my Book of Knowledge,” says Griffith. “He taught me many, many valuable facilities and life lessons that you cannot learn anywhere else. Dan Young is one of a kind. He can be counted on to make the best decision possible for whatever institution he is working for.”

Throughout his career, Young has seen APPA grow in its range of services and its inclusion of different kinds of higher education institutions. “When I was starting out as a physical plant director before APPA started to spread its wings, there were a number of affiliated smaller colleges,” Young recalls. “We were finding that the larger the institution, the bigger the hat, but the smaller the institution, the more hats we wore. A lot of us had



2016 APPA FELLOW

John P. Morris, associate vice president of Northern Arizona University and the 2016 APPA Fellow, has been in APPA for 25 years, during which he graduated from the Institute for Facilities Management and Leadership Academy; produced a Center for Facilities Research (CFaR) project entitled *The RMA 14ers Club: A Model for Facilities Mentoring*; and wrote two booklets for Rocky Mountain APPA (RMA), *Fifty Years of RMA: A History of the Rocky Mountain Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers*, and *A Sixty-Year Celebration: The History of Rocky Mountain APPA 2003 to 2012*, as well as several articles for *Facilities Manager* magazine, including “A Study on Mentoring within APPA” (July/August 2015). He has been historian, secretary/treasurer, and lead climber (program coordinator) on the RMA board of directors; Senior Representative to the APPA Executive Board of



Directors; member and chair, APPA Credentialing Board; chair, APPA Mentoring Task Force; a member of three regional annual conference host committees; and participated in the Thought Leaders Series and on six Facilities Management Evaluation Program (FMEP) teams.

“As with many people in our profession and members of APPA, I started my APPA journey by going to the APPA Institute for Facilities Management,” Morris says. He later went to the APPA Leadership Academy in 2001, and started going to regional RMA meetings in the early 1990s. He has been so involved because “I love our business—we do not directly teach students on a daily basis like faculty, but facilities management plays a large part in the student’s experience,” he says, “and it is



cool to be around all the research and culture that takes place on campus.”

Morris also has a passion for APPA and RMA. “There are some very intelligent, dedicated, and passionate people in these organizations, and who doesn’t want to be a part of that?”

While he belongs to other organizations, APPA is Morris’s

network of choice. “I have received a lot from these organizations and feel compelled to give back whenever possible,” he says. “I also had plenty of encouragement to step out of my comfort zone to get more involved, and I have never regretted saying ‘yes’ when called upon.” In large part, that is because “I saw the advancement in my career parallel my involvement in

RMA and APPA,” he explains. “I knew more about our business from reading what others in the organization wrote or talked about, I made contacts that helped me professionally, and I gained a personal level of confidence that I may not have had if I had not stepped out of my comfort zone when encouraged—and sometimes nudged.”

Longstanding APPA involvement has had more than professional benefits, Morris adds: “I can honestly say that many of the people I have met in RMA and APPA have become lifelong friends as well as peers and colleagues.”

For Morris, “the Fellow Award is the pinnacle of my professional development. Being recognized by your peers is very rewarding, although I never really was in it for the recognition. I just sort of stepped up when asked.”

Like his fellow award recipients, Morris has no plans to reduce his involvement in APPA, despite reaching this apex of recognition. “I hope to continue contributing to APPA, its regions, and our profession to the best of my abilities,” he says. “I had many people help me along my APPA journey, and I only hope that someday someone looks back and thinks of me helping them with their achievements. What a legacy that would be!” ☺

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