Association announces 1996 Distinguished Alumni Award winners

Mary Rawlinson Creason, B.S. '44 and Neil Smith, BA '77 are the 1996 recipients of the Distinguished Alumni Award presented by the Western Michigan University Alumni Association.

Ninety-seven men and women have received Distinguished Alumni Awards, the association’s most prestigious honor, since the award program’s inception in 1963. This year’s recipients will be recognized at an October 5 awards dinner held in conjunction with Homecoming. Alumni and friends wishing to attend the dinner may make reservations using the Homecoming reservation form on page 2 of this issue of the Westerner.

Creason describes her admission to the professional aviation world as a “semi-retired aviation specialist” who works, most often as a volunteer, in the areas of aviation education and aviation safety. However, she also retains a connection with the business world through ownership of the Aero Technology Company, which is based in her hometown of Grand Haven and engages in aircraft sales and aviation consulting, teaching, writing, and publishing.

Creason’s distinguished and varied career in aviation dates back more than fifty years. It began when she took flying lessons while pursuing her bachelor’s degree in English at WMU. She earned her private pilot’s license in 1943 and was certified as a commercial pilot three years later.

She continued expanding her aviation expertise during the next two decades, earning her flight instructor license for both single and multi-engines and instruments in 1964 and the Airline Transport Rating (ATR) from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in 1966. Creason, who calls the ATR the ‘‘Ph.D.’’ of flying,” was the third woman pilot in Michigan to earn the rating. At the time she received it, less than eighty women pilots in the United States were qualified for the ATR.

Her endeavors branched out in 1968 when she opened Ottawa Air Training and Transport, the firm provided charter air service as well as flight instructor from Muskegon County Airport and charter expansion in 1974, also from Grand Haven Memorial Airport. The end of the 1970s saw Creason enter a new arena in aviation by business-government. She was appointed by President Richard Nixon to serve on the FAA’s women’s and citizen’s aviation advisory committees. Later, in 1977, she joined the staff of the Michigan Department of Transportation’s Bureau of Aeronautics as editor of Michigan Aviation.

The aviatrix then moved into management, becoming assistant administrator of the bureau’s Safety and Services Division, division administrator, and assistant bureau deputy director. And shortly after retiring in 1989, state Gov. James J. Blanchard appointed Creason to a three-year term on the Michigan Aeronautics Commission. Creason is credited with playing a major role in enhancing the state’s aviation safety and education programs, through efforts such as developing a school curriculum and helping found the Aviation/Aerospace Education Council of Michigan and the Michigan Aviation Education Foundation (MAEF).

Currently MAEF president, Creason devotes a great deal of time to raising funds for aviation education and to promoting the importance of air transportation and airports. In fact, she has always viewed aviation as a great motivator for students. “It makes science and math so much more interesting for them,” she says.

She also believes it’s important for everyone to understand the significance of aviation. “People often think of airplanes and airports as toys. However, without aviation, the country would be in dire economic straits,” she says. “Airplanes are as important as cars.”

Creason’s work in aviation as a pilot, instructor, educator, and safety promoter has been recognized on both the state and national level. She received the FAA’s Administrator Award for excellence in aviation education in 1987 and was enshrined in the Michigan Aviation Hall of Fame in 1985. And her love of flying continues. With more than 10,000 flight hours, she still participates in the annual Air Race Classic, a 2,606-mile transcontinental race for licensed women pilots. She has regularly placed in the race’s top ten, most recently taking fifth place in the 1996 race.

But Creason’s interests and service involvement extend beyond aviation. An active member of the Grand Haven community, she has served as president of the area’s League of Women Voters and as a trustee of her church.

Neil Smith, president and general manager of the National Hockey League’s New York Rangers, has become one of the most successful people to ever run the Rangers in the franchise’s seventy-year history. During his seven years at the helm, he has diligently built the team into a championship-winning club and broken record after record.

No stranger to the ice, Smith played junior hockey in Canada and was drafted by the New York Islanders before he enrolled at WMU. While at the University, he lettered in hockey four times in addition to being named an All-America defenseman as a freshman and Bronco team captain as a sophomore.

After graduation, he played two seasons for the Kalamazoo Wings of the International Hockey League, then in 1980 joined the Islanders’ scouting department.

Smith moved to another NHL franchise in 1982 when he joined the Detroit Red Wings. Shortly after being hired as director of professional scouting, he was named director of Detroit’s entire farm system.

In the latter part of his seven-year tenure with the club, he was director of scouting and general manager/governor of the Western Michigan University
Homecoming Registration
Name: ____________________________
WMU Class Year(s): __________
Phone: ____________________________
Address: __________________________
City: ____________________________
State: ____________________________
Zip: ____________________________
Number of guests: __________
Cell phone number: __________
Email: ____________________________

ATHLETIC TICKET ORDER
Each ticket order must be sent to WMU Athletics, Box 296, Kalamazoo, MI 49006-0296. Must be postmarked by October 30 or paid in full by October 30 for guarantee of seat. Those who order after October 30 must get tickets at the gate.

Name: ____________________________
Address: __________________________
City: ____________________________
State: ____________________________
Zip: ____________________________
Phone: ____________________________

Alumni Association Membership
Name: ____________________________
First: ____________________________
Last: ____________________________
WMU Graduation Year(s): __________
Phone: ____________________________
Address: __________________________
City: ____________________________
State: ____________________________
Zip: ____________________________

Academic Unit Activities
Academic units and clubs are open to all. Join us for department or student organiza-
tions, faculty, and staff at the following homecoming events.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3
Archives and Regional History Collections display
Contact: Sharon Carlton at (616) 387-8498
7:45 a.m.-midnight, front door, Waldo Library
Display runs September 30 through October 5. Fri., Sat., Sun. 9:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. Saturday, noon-midnight Sunday.

Friday, October 4
Archives and Regional History Collections display
Contact: Sharon Carlton at (616) 387-8498
7:45 a.m.-midnight, front door, Waldo Library
Display runs September 30 through October 4. Fri., Sat., Sun. 9:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. Saturday, noon-midnight Sunday.

Saturday, October 5
Archives and Regional History Collections display
Contact: Sharon Carlton at (616) 387-8498
7:45 a.m.-midnight, front door, Waldo Library
Display runs September 30 through October 5. Fri., Sat., Sun. 9:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. Saturday, noon-midnight Sunday.

Alumni registration/Homecoming Hospitality
7:30 a.m.-midnight, second floor lobby, Bernard Center, WMU
Alumni Locators Service
7:30 a.m.-10:00 p.m. at Waldo Hall, Bernard Center, WMU
Alumni Association Brunch*
10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., East Bernhard Center
Receiving guests Don Decker, Harry Hauswirth, WMU Marching Band, Ronald Redden, and the WMU Marching Band.

Student Tailgate
11:00 a.m.-11:30 p.m. at Fort Knox, Kalamazoo, WMU
Homecoming football game against Ball State*
11:30 a.m., Waldo Stadium, WMU
National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) Marchdown (stepshow)
1:45 p.m., Michelle Auditorium
Distinguished Alumni Awards Dinner*
6:00 p.m., Grand Ballroom, WMU
Green and gold hockey game*
Contact: Athletic Ticket Office at (616) 993-7841 or (616) 387-8500
7:00 p.m., Lawson Arena, WMU

WMU opens up facilities on Homecoming Saturday.
The gold carpet will be out in many of the University's buildings during Homecoming Saturday, providing returning alumni with a chance to visit newly constructed or restored facilities. Spraw and Recreth towers will be open from 8:00 a.m. until noon. In addition, the following buildings will be open from 11:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and again immediately following the football game until 5:00 p.m.:

- Gilmore Theatre Complex
- Wealthal Hall
- Schneider Hall (Reed College of Business)
- Lee Honors College
- Student Recreation Center
- Waldo Fieldhouse
- WCCM Business Office
- Waldo Library/Computing Center

Constituency Activities
CONFIRMED AS OF PRESS TIME
Cast metal alumni
Contact: Ch. Sue Kwiatkowski at (616) 387-4864
PRE-BRUNCH RECEPTION
9:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m., Saturday, October 5
Bernard Center, WMU

LUMNI ASSOCIATION BRUNCH
10:30 a.m., Saturday, October 5
Bernard Center, WMU

Indicate cast metal alumni on reservation form

Class of 1972
TwentY-five-Year Reunion*
PRE-BRUNCH COFFEE HOUR
9:30 a.m.-10:00 a.m., Saturday, October 5
Bernard Center, WMU

LUMNI ASSOCIATION BRUNCH
10:30 a.m., Saturday, October 5
Bernard Center, WMU

Football game
3:00 p.m., U.S. Football Field, Kalamazoo, WMU

FOOTBALL GAME
1:30 p.m., U.S. Football Field, Kalamazoo, WMU

Waldo Stadium, WMU
Gather tragically at the game

Delta Sigma Pi alumni
Contact: Clinton Bishop at (616) 387-3354

ALUMNI DANCE
7:00 p.m., Saturday, October 5
Lake City Country Club, Plainwell

Omeka Psi Phi alumni
Contact: Billie Jones at (616) 387-3354

ALUMNI DANCE
9:00 p.m., Saturday, October 5
Haworth Hotel, 555 S. Riverfront, Kalamazoo

Onyx Society
Contact: Joan Hentsch at (616) 387-5112

HOMECOMING DANCE
7:00 p.m., Saturday, October 5
Haworth College of Business

ALUMNI RECEPTION
9:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m., Saturday, October 5
Bernard Center, WMU

Engineering and applied sciences college Contact: Yvonne Galbreath at (616) 387-8829
PRE-BRUNCH RECEPTION
10:00 a.m., Bernard Center, WMU

Political science department Contact: Sharon Morin at 1-616-387-3865
PRE-BRUNCH RECEPTION
10:00 a.m., Bernard Center, WMU

Haworth College of Business
Contact: Darole Driffil at (616) 387-5096
PRE-BRUNCH RECEPTION
10:00 a.m., Bernard Center, WMU

WMU Band alumni
Contact: Jim Hilt at (616) 387-5042
or Dorothy Ramseyer Vande Kieft at (616) 478-0078, games before 9:00 p.m.

GENERAL REGISTRATION
7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Friday, October 4
On-Line Center, WMU

TAILGATE
10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Friday, October 4
WMU Recreation Center, WMU

BANQUET
10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Friday, October 4
Radisson Plaza Hotel, downtown Kalamazoo

"AILGATE LUNCHEON
1:00-4:00 p.m., Saturday, October 5
Tent near Bailey Chapel, WMU

EVENING SOCIAL
6:00 p.m., Saturday, October 5
140 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo, WMU

Western Alumnus Alumni Society
Contact: O’Brian Rockart at (616) 387-5130

WIDR Alumni Society
Contact: Bob Phillips at (616) 387-9872

Other Activities
* Free admission
** Must show WMU Alumni Association or college org. card
*** Contact WMU Athletics, Campus Center, Kalamazoo, MI 49008.
Membership entitles you to ‘out of this world’ discounts during 1996 Homecoming

Being a Western Michigan University Alumni Association member can make a world of a difference at Homecoming. Several discounts are being offered to association members, and many others could be easier!

**WMU BOOKSTORE**

Your association membership allows you to save on purchases at the WMU Bookstore on Saturday, October 5. Simply stop by the association’s locator table on the second floor of the Bernhard Center to get your graduation giftware. Members of the Alumni Association may purchase from the WMU Alumni Association membership card, when making a purchase. The discount you receive will equal the number of years that you’ve been an WMU alumni or alumni Bookstore hours are on 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**SPECIAL AIR FARE**

The Alumni Association has designated USAir as the official carrier for alumni returning to the “worldwide” Western Homecoming. 10% will be allowed for exclusive low fare valid only from October 2-8, 1996. This special fare will mean a 5 percent discount on all first class fares and any published USAir promotional round-trip fare. A 10 percent discount on unrestricted coach fares will apply, however, seven-day advance reservations and ticketing are required. The discount will remain even if expired restrictions are met and are applicable from the continental United States, Bahamas, Canada, and San Juan, Puerto Rico.

To obtain the discount and restriction information, call USAir’s Meeting and Convention Reservation Office at (800) 332-1900 or (616) 381-1900 for general information or (616) 387-2000 for development. Then in June 1994, the Rangers captured professional basketball glory. Under his tutelage, the AHl Wings won Calder Cup that year and were the first to also hold the title of general manager.

The Alumni Association is pleased to announce an additional membership benefit being offered for the first time to WMU Alumni Association members. Through the cooperative and magnanimous efforts of Miller Auditorium and the WMU Alumni Association, members may enjoy professionally staged entertainment at a 15 percent discount.

The discount is available to single ticket purchases for the regular 1996-97 season. Just present your Alumni Association membership card at the time of your purchase. Both Miller Auditorium and the University Theatre have outstanding seasons planned. The variety of choices is sure to please everyone’s theatrical appetite.

In addition to the 15 percent discount available to Alumni Association members, other discount plans offered by Miller include: Season Series, 40 percent off all sixteen shows; Mini-Season Series, 25 percent off ten shows; Broadway Series, 15 percent off five Broadway hits; Dance Series, 15 percent off five dance shows; Patron’s Choice Plan, 15 percent off any five different shows.

Season performance dates are listed in the calendar to the right. Contact the Miller Auditorium Ticket Office at (616) 387-2000 or (800) 387-9508 for details and tickets prices and dates. Ticket office hours are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday until Labor Day and 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. after Labor Day.

The University Theatre, which is housed in the Irving S. Gilmore Theatre Complex, has a marvelous array of productions scheduled for the 1996-97 productions planned. They are also listed to the right.

**Contact the University Theatre Ticket Office at (616) 387-6222 for details on subscription series and reservations. Ticket office hours are noon to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and noon to 4:00 p.m. Saturday.**

**NEW WMU ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BENEFITS ANNOUNCED**

**MILLER AUDITORIUM**

**SEPTEMBER**

1-3, 9-11, 28-30 The Beatles—The Musical

15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 24 Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat

**OCTOBER**

1-23 Flyin’ West

24-26 The Prodigal Son

27-29 Ten Little Indians

30-31 The Prodigal Son

**NOVEMBER**

2-5 Real Men Don’t Marry

6-8 Dumb and Dumber

9-16 Beauty and the Beast

17-20 All My Children

**DECEMBER**

3-6 A Christmas Carol

7-11 Annie

12-16 Phantom of the Opera

17-21 The Nutcracker

**FEBRUARY**

1-2 How the West Was Won

3-6 The Day of the Locust

7-10 The Prodigal Son

11-14 Fiddler on the Roof

15-18 The Prodigal Son

**MARCH**

1-5, 11, 12, 17, 20 The Secret Garden

12-14 Carousel

15-17 The Prodigal Son

18-20 Fortunes of the Moor

**APRIL**

15-17, 19, 20 Aladdin

**Swiss winter escape scheduled for adventurers**

The WMU Alumni Association is proud to offer a fabulous week in the winter wonderland of Switzerland from January 20-27, 1997. Snow-covered Nendeln, a charming winter landscape, excellent skiing, and great shopping and cultural opportunities make this an exciting adventure. Alumni travelers will spend six nights in Interlaken at the first class Royal St. Georges Hotels. Interlaken is the gateway to the Bernese Oberland, the magnificent heart of the Alps, and lies in the center of the Jungfrau Region, a paradise for skiers.

But the trip isn’t just for skiers. Non-skiers can choose from an abundance of activities, such as skiing, tobogganing, and magnificent winter walks in an unspoiled mountain environment.

There is a wonderful town for shopping and it serves as a central departure point for optional excursions to Berne, Lucerne, and Montreux.

The cost of the trip is $1,095 per person, which includes scheduled transatlantic flight via Swissair to and from Zurich, six nights lodging, daily Swiss buffet breakfast, and transportation.

For more information about this Swiss winter escape call, you can contact the WMU Alumni Association at (616) 387-8777.

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