



NEWS

University Relations • 800 Hotz Hall • Fayetteville, AR 72701
479-575-5555 • FAX 479-575-4745 • <http://dailyheadlines.uark.edu>

For Immediate Release

Arkansas Alumni Association Honors Distinguished Alumni and Faculty During Awards Celebration

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. – The five distinguished alumni, three faculty members and one honorary alumnus the Arkansas Alumni Association recognized during the 64th annual awards banquet on Oct. 31 at the Janelle Y. Hembree Alumni House all personify the University of Arkansas' tradition of excellence through service and leadership. The Toller Celebration Bell rang in their honor as the awardees accepted their awards.

Three alumni were honored with the Citation of Distinguished Alumni Award, which recognizes exceptional professional and personal achievement and extraordinary distinction in a chosen field. The awardees included:

- **James B. Blair, BA '55 LLB '57**, retired general counsel of Tyson Foods Inc. and attorney, Fayetteville. In addition to his years of service to Tyson Foods, Blair also helped his friend, Bill Clinton, campaign for the presidency and served as his private legal counsel. He served on the University of Arkansas Board of Trustees and the Arkansas State Board of Higher Education. Blair's philanthropy is evident in Northwest Arkansas, including generous contributions to the University of Arkansas and to The Blair Library in Fayetteville.

- **J. Thomas May, BSBA '72 MBA '73**, chairman and CEO, Simmons First National Corp. and Simmons First National Bank, Pine Bluff. Since 1994, May has been at the helm of Simmons First, overseeing \$2.6 billion in assets with 87 offices scattered across 48 communities. Prior to landing the top leadership position at the firm, May was president and CEO of Simmons First Bank in Pine Bluff beginning in February 1987 after working 11 years at El Dorado's Exchange Bank & Trust. He is a member of numerous boards including previously serving as chairman of the University of Arkansas Board of Trustees.

- **Dorothy Stuck, BA '43**, educator/publisher/entrepreneur, Hot Springs. Leaving her job as a high school history teacher to help at her husband's newspaper, the Gravette native became the

co-owner and publisher of three newspapers in eastern Arkansas – *The Marked Tree Tribune*, the *Trumann Democrat* and the *Lepanto News-Record*. Switching gears, Stuck served as regional director of the U.S. Office for Civil Rights, Department of Health, Education and Welfare for a five-state region from 1970-79. At that time, Stuck served as vice president of magazine publisher Briggs Associates and then became a partner with Stuck & Snow Resultants, a management and publications consulting firm from 1981-1994. Stuck is a founding member of the board of Southern Bancorp of Arkadelphia and continues to serve as a board member.

Other alumni honored during the awards celebration included:

- **Benjamin Craig Noble BS '95**, principal and board of directors, Troutman Sanders Strategies, Washington D.C., who was presented the Young Alumni Award for his exceptional achievements in his career and public service. Noble serves as the Washington representative to Fortune 500 companies, municipal and county governments, universities and a number of other business interests. He previously served as a policy advisor to both U.S. Sen. Blanche Lincoln and U.S. Sen. Dale Bumpers. As vice president of Government Affairs for the USA Rice Federation, he established an in-house government relations office for the nation's largest rice trade association.

- **Rosemary Fairhead, BSPA '75**, managing director and senior portfolio manager, U.S. Bank, Ballwin, Mo., received the Andrew J. Lucas Alumni Service Award. Fairhead has more than 30 years of experience working with investment management and financial services. She credits Walton College Professor John Dominick with landing her first job at Mercantile Trust Co. (now U.S. Bancorp), where she worked for 19 years, becoming vice president and senior portfolio manager. In 1999, she co-founded Scudder Private Investment Counsel's St. Louis office, growing the company's Midwest portfolio to more than \$1 billion in assets. After Scudder was bought by Deutsche Bank, Fairhead eventually returned to U.S. Bank, part of U.S. Bancorp.

- **Robert P. Evans**, independent geologist/oil and gas producer, retired, Hot Springs, received the Honorary Alumni Award. Evans is a long-time supporter of the University of Arkansas, having served on the Campaign for the Twenty-First Century Steering Committee and now on the Advisory Board. He is a gold and charter member of the Chancellor's Society. With his late wife, Carolyn, Evans endowed a music scholarship in the Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences. In 2002, he established the Robert P. Evans Endowed Chancellor's Scholarship to encourage outstanding undergraduate students to attend the University of Arkansas. Together

with his second wife, Sunny, the couple's contributions helped complete several projects at the university's Garvan Woodland Gardens in Hot Springs.

Each year the Alumni Association also presents three Distinguished Faculty Achievement Awards for outstanding success. The 2008 recipients were:

- Vikas Anand, associate professor of management, Sam M. Walton College of Business, for teaching. Anand was the primary designer of a capstone course, which integrates the six functional areas of business into one advanced course offering.

- Alan Ellstrand, associate professor of management and director of MBA programs, Sam M. Walton College of Business, for teaching and service. Ellstrand is credited with leading the redesign of Walton College's full-time MBA program and creating the part-time Managerial MBA and the Executive MBA program in China.

- Justin Morris, BSA '58, MS '61, food science, Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food & Life Sciences, for research. For the past 20 years, his research on vineyard mechanization has been the major thrust of his academic work, leading to an international patent for a total mechanization system, the Morris-Oldridge System issued to the University of Arkansas in 2002.

-30-

CONTACTS:

Tammy Tucker, communications director
Arkansas Alumni Association
479-575-2801, twtucker@uark.edu

Debbie Blume, executive assistant
Arkansas Alumni Association
479-575-2801, dblume@uark.edu

KEYWORDS: Alumni, Media,