

April 20, 2005
Award Recipients

Dr. Deborah Muirhead

Deborah Muirhead has taught at the University of Connecticut since 1981. She teaches painting, drawing, and foundation studio at the School of Fine Arts, Department of Art and Art History and has served on many departmental, school, and University committees. Her work has been widely exhibited including many solo and group exhibitions across the country and is a permanent part of the collections of the Connecticut State Collection; Chemical Bank, NY; Aetna Life Insurance Company Middletown, CT; Meditech Corporation Cambridge, MA; Pepsico Company Ryebrook, NY; among others. Her work has been reviewed by the New York Times, the Boston Globe, Art News, and in the regional art publication, Art New England. Professor Muirhead has been a YADDO Fellow and has received numerous awards at the Art of the Northeast Silvermine Exhibition. Some of her other accolades include a Connecticut Commission on the Arts Individual Artist Grant, a Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Nominee, a Joan Mitchell Foundation Nominee, and a recipient of a Juror's Merit Award at the New American Talent Exhibition. Dr. Muirhead was awarded, in 1996 and 1997 respectively, a New England Foundation for the Arts/NEA Individual Artist Grant and a John Simon Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship. Recently, she received the William Randolph Hearst Fellowship and a visiting fellowship for Historical Research by Creative and Performing Artists and Writers. Professor Muirhead's work, specifically her abstract paintings, addresses history by bringing together elements of genealogical research and text. The artistic environment at the University of Connecticut has been significantly enhanced by Dr. Muirhead's teaching, creative activity, mentoring and service.

Dr. Bidya Ranjeet

Bidya Ranjeet is the Director of the University of Connecticut's Student Support Services (SSS) program in the Center for Academic Programs. Through her work at UConn she has been integral in providing access to higher education for students from Connecticut's urban centers. In collaboration with other departments, Bidya has made a significant contribution to the University's mission of promoting diversity through her involvement in programs such as Project Recruit, UConn Open Houses and early college awareness presentations. Her commitment to the students extends beyond just ensuring their success at the University; she is also the

primary force behind the creation of study abroad opportunities for students who normally would encounter too many obstacles, both financial and familial, to consider participating. Bidya is also an active member of the University community and is involved in varying capacities such as the Women's Center Advisory Board, the Diversity Committee, UConn Nepali Student Association, and the Asian American Faculty and Staff Association to name a few. Outside of the University, Bidya has devoted her spare time advocating and assisting on behalf of women of South Asia. Specifically she is involved in TSAT (The South Asian Tree) and is a board member for the Nepali Women's Global Network. Most notably Bidya is one of the first women to confront, through written publications and presentations, issues regarding domestic violence against Nepali women living in the United States. Dr. Ranjeet has made significant contributions to the betterment of the UConn community and beyond and her work has made a difference in the lives of many individuals.

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Dr. Bandana Purkayastha

Bandana Purkayastha has a joint appointment as an Assistant Professor with the Sociology Department and the Asian American Studies Institute. She has been recognized for her outstanding performance in teaching, research and publishing. Bandana is also an active member of University Community through her involvement in the Taskforce on Diversity, the Advisory Member for the Asian American Studies Institute, the Advisory Board of the Women's Studies Program to name a few. She also contributes her time to enhancing the lives of others through involvement in University student mentoring, the Bengalee Association and the Sneha Board which supports South Asian individuals involved with domestic violence.

Dr. Xae Alicia Reyes

Xae Alicia Reyes has a joint appointment as an Assistant Professor with the Curriculum & Instruction Department and the Institute for Puerto Rican & Latino Studies. As an instructor and researcher she has been honored for her work with students as well as for her research and publications. Xae also enriches the lives of individuals in her community through participation in her church's activities and her outreach efforts in the local school systems. She also has a public access program which provides information to the community. Xae plays an active role in the University Community as well

through her participation in the Puerto Rican Latino Cultural Center Advisory Board, the President's Athletic Advisory Board and the Academic Senate.

Aliza C. Wilder

Aliza C. Wilder is the director of the University's Human Resources Department. As the director, she has been praised as providing outstanding leadership in a highly diverse department. Beyond Aliza's involvement with the Taskforce on Diversity she serves as a liaison with the Department of Administrative Services and assists the University central administrative area. Aliza is also a key individual to the University and its employees through her activities with the Office of Diversity and Equity, the Job Classification Committee and as a representative in union business.

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Award Recipients

Angela Rola

Angela Rola entered the University of Connecticut in April of 1993 as the first Director of the Asian American Cultural Center. She has developed a variety of programs focusing on the diverse Asian American community in both the State of Connecticut and across the nation. Angela has developed two mentoring programs, Asiantation and K.U.B.E. (Killingly, UConn, Brooklyn Experience). K.U.B.E. was awarded a Connecticut Higher Education Community Service Award in April 2000.

Angela serves on the Advisory Boards of UConn's Asian American Studies Institute and the Puerto Rican/Latin American Cultural Center, the Center for Academic Programs, the Retention & Graduation Task Force, and the Diversity Task Force. She has been the President of the UConn Asian Faculty & Staff Association from 1991-93.

Angela has served as a board member in the Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education, the Literacy Volunteers of America, and a member of the Connecticut Advisory Committee of the United States Commission on Civil Rights. Angela's outstanding leadership in the community has earned her an award last year from Sneha, Inc., a network of South Asian women in Connecticut, and

recognition at the 13th Annual Ball of the FFACT. She was honorably named the 2002 Higher Education Multicultural Faculty of the Year at the 7th Annual CT Conference on Multicultural Education.

Dr. Maria D. Martinez

Maria D. Martinez has been with the University of Connecticut since 1986, during which time she has been committed to making educational opportunities available to disadvantaged students. As Director of the Center for Academic Programs, she oversees three TRIO programs and a GEAR-UP initiative and maintains close contact with the United States Department of Education to secure funds for the three federally funded programs.

The Diversity Task Force and the Student Alcohol Policy Committee are among several University committees in which Dr. Martinez is involved. She also plays a key role in assisting the University with recruiting and retaining minority students and she is often called upon to provide leadership with issues pertaining to diversity and access to higher education.

Dr. Martinez takes a keen interest in advancing the issues that pertain to multiculturalism and diversity among the Latino community. She is Chairperson of the Women's Center Advisory Board and belongs to the Puerto Rican/Latin American Advisory Board and works very closely with the Latino Institute. In addition, she is the Vice President of the Connecticut Association of Latin Americans in Higher Education (CALAHE), a program that provides mentors and role models for Latino students wishing to obtain higher education, and is very proactive in fostering the growth and development of Connecticut's professionals in higher education.

Dr. Willena Price

Willena Price has been with the University of Connecticut for ten years. Her relentless commitment to the African American community is evident by her ten years of distinguished service to the African American Cultural Center, and currently its Director. She also serves as a leader among the Center Directors.

Dr. Price has been involved with all of the University's multicultural affairs including the AA Alumni Council and the African National Congress. She has contributed to the UConn community at large, having served on the

University Diversity Committees, the Resource Allocation Committee, and the Senate Scholastic Standards. She is a tireless educator, an advocate for students, and has actively participated in the Student Life Awards and the Senate Student Welfare Committee.

An educator for thirty years, Dr. Price herself excels within the ranks of academia. She returned to school and obtained her Ph.D. degree in 2000. Her enthusiasm for education has immensely benefited her students and she continues to serve as a role model among her colleagues.

May 1, 2002
Award Recipients

Wanda Little

Wanda Little, has a B.S. degree in Home Economics from Marymount College. She has participated in graduate course work in Counseling/ Human Resource Development at the University of Bridgeport.

Wanda has been employed since 1970 with the University of Connecticut as a Cooperative Extension Educator where she is responsible for the 4-H Youth component of the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program and is involved in various facets of the community programming initiatives.

Wanda has contributed to a number of 4-H Youth Development Programs throughout her career at UConn like the Tri- City Teen Weekend Retreats, The New Haven Spaces Initiative, and the 4-H Double Dutch Health and Fitness Program just to name a few.

She has contributed to the community through her efforts to aid and educate women, families and youth for improvement in their quality of life and educational opportunities. Wanda is a founding member of the City Wide Youth Coalition of New Haven, Inc., a past member of the board of Directors for the Special Olympics Connecticut, and Board member and Host family for Guilford's A better Chance Program.

Dr. Marysol Asencio

Marysol Asencio has a Ph.D and a Master's degree in Public Health from Columbia University School of Public Health. She also holds a Bachelor's degree in Anthropology and Biomedical Sciences from Hunter College.

Marysol is an Assistant Professor in Family Studies and Puerto Rican and Latino Studies at the University of Connecticut. She is also an Associate Faculty member for the Center for Latin American Studies. Additionally, Dr. Asencio is the Associate Director for the Institute of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies at the University.

Dr. Asencio has contributed to the Latino community through her work with Latino youth and educational programs concerning HIV awareness and prevention. She is dedicated to the health and well being of Latinos and works diligently to provide opportunities for education for all individuals including, youth, families and women.

Dr. Asencio serves as a committee member for the Core Group, Pan American Health Association and University of Connecticut, Office of International Affairs (UConn-INCAP-MOU). She is a member of a research group associated with the Center for HIV Intervention and Prevention. She also serves on the Board of Advisors for the Rainbow Center, Puerto Rican and Latin American Cultural Center, Community scholars and Puerto Rican and Latino Studies. She is currently the Faculty advisor for The Latino Students Association

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Dr. JoAnne Lewis

JoAnne serves as Director of Academic Skills Assessment and Services in the Institute for Student Success, Center for Undergraduate Education at the University of Connecticut. Over the past thirty years she has held positions at the University as Director of Counseling, and Director of the Office of Special Programs.

Prior to joining UConn, she held positions as School Social Worker in Granville Co., N.C., Recreational Therapist for Newington Children's Hospital, CT., Caseworker, Catholic Family Services, Hartford, CT, and Counselor and Instructor, Manchester Community College, CT. An active member of the University community, JoAnne teaches two classes, is 2005-2006 Chair of the Women's Center Advisory Board and previously

served as Chair of its Diversity Committee. She is also a member of the Advisory Boards for the Center for Academic Programs and, the African American Cultural Center. Outside the University, JoAnne provides service to the community through Delta Sigma Theta Sorority where she is a member of the Scholarship Committee, and Nutmeg Big Brothers Big Sisters, where she served as Honorary Co-Chair of their 2004 annual Gala fundraising event.

JoAnne holds a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration, a Master's Degree in Social Work, both from the University of Connecticut, and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology and Social Studies from St. Augustine's College, Raleigh, N.C.

Dr. Karen Chow

Karen Chow is currently a professor of English at DeAnza College in Cupertino, CA. Before joining the faculty at DeAnza Karen was an assistant professor of English and Asian American studies at the University of Connecticut. She joined UConn in 1997 and during her time at here she was an active member of a great many projects and committees that worked to promote diversity. For example, she was involved with the Women's Studies Executive Committee and presented at the Women's Studies annual conferences where she co-presented (with Bandana Purkayastha, Sociology) on "Teaching Race" for the Feminist Pedagogy Forum. Karen also twice served as a panelist for International Women's Day. In addition to her involvement in women's issues she was a vibrant participating member of the Asian American community. For example, she was secretary to the Asian American Faculty and Staff Association, member of EDU (Education, Diversity, Unity), and was an active faculty member of the Asian American Cultural Center. This involvement was not short lived as you can see through her continued participation in gender and cultural centers at DeAnza College. During her time at UConn, Karen's interest in diversity and the concerns of women and Asian Americans extended into the classroom where she taught 'Introduction to Asian American Literature,' 'Asian American Women's Writing and Film,' 'Asian American Novels,' and 'Reading Asian American Drama' among others.

Dipa Roy

Since retiring from her position as Reserve Services Team Leader for the University of Connecticut Library System, after twenty years of service, Dipa Roy has moved to Shantiniketan, India where she continues to be actively involved in groups struggling with women's and Asian American issues. In her role within the university library system Dipa wore many hats including that of Head of Circulation/Reserve, Project Director for the Northeast Research Libraries' BYES Project, member of the USER Team and HOMER Access Services Task Team, and was the recognized expert on US Copyright issues, among many others. In addition to her work improving the research capabilities of the university she also served as a member of the advisory board of the Asian American Studies Institute where she also sat on their Faculty Search Committee, advisor for the Asian American Cultural Center, and member of the Chancellor's Committee on the Status of Women. Dipa played an active role in the community throughout her tenure at UConn. For example, outside of her UConn activities Dipa stayed involved in the community acting as a member of SNEHA a support group for South Asian Women, served on the planning committee for the Sari Katha event, served as a discussion leader for the Asian American Cultural Center Book Club, among others.

Dr. Diana Rios

Diana Rios is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication Sciences as well as the Puerto Rican & Latino Studies Institute (PRLS) at the University of Connecticut. In addition to teaching in the classroom, distance education, and online Diana has greatly contributed to academia through her scholarly work. She has served as a co-editor for two social science books, been published in scholarly journals, contributed chapters to edited volumes, and presented at a multitude of professional conferences. Throughout her work there are common themes focusing on issues of diversity in education and media, women's issues, and ethnic issues especially regarding the Latino population. Her professional memberships have included serving as a member and Vice Chair of the Standing Committee on Teaching Standards for the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication; Inaugural Fellow, Freedom Forum, Diversity Leadership Institute for Journalism Education Administrators; National Association of Hispanic Journalists (NAHJ); New England Association of Hispanic Journalists (NEAHJ); National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); Institute for Puerto Rican Policy & the Policy Division of the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund (PRLDEF); National Association of Latino Independent Producers (NALIP); and Connecticut Association for Latinos in Higher Education (CALAHE) among many others. In addition to her professional commitments, Diana's influence has been felt throughout the university community such as when

she served as the Associate Director and on the Advisory Board of the Puerto Rican & Latino Studies Institute, received the 2003 Outstanding Faculty of the Year Award, for Leadership, Dedication and Service to the University and Latino Community, and the Certificate of Appreciation from the UCONN Women's Center.