Distinguished Alumnus Award

Established in 1985, the Department of Economics Distinguished Alumnus award recognizes an alumnus or alumna whose professional achievements and cumulative contributions have brought personal distinction, enhanced the profession, improved the welfare of the general public, and brought honor to their alma mater.

The award is presented each June at the economics undergraduate graduation celebration, at which time the awardee delivers the commencement address. The selection committee, comprised of Department leadership and members of the Economics Visiting Committee, strive to distribute the award equally between academic and industry leaders.

The Department is proud to have many distinguished alumni among its thousands of graduates. Collectively, our alumni have had a profound impact in the public and private sectors of the state, the nation, and the world. Indeed, the following list includes leaders from all walks of life representing the breadth and depth of a liberal arts education in training future trailblazers.

2017 Economics Distinguished Alumnus

Gita Gopinath, MA ‘96
Harvard University John Zwaanstra Professor of International Studies and of Economics
Economic Advisor to Chief Minister of Kerala State (India)
Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Member of Economic Advisory Panel
Research Associate for the National Bureau of Economic Research

Past Awardees:

2016 Timothy Jenkins,
UW Economics BA ‘86
Co-Founder, Point B

2015 Dr. Richard Sutch
UW Economics BA ‘63
Edward A. Dickson Distinguished Emeritus Professor of Economics University of California, Riverside and Berkeley

2014 Dr. George N. Carlson
UW Economics BA ‘64
Former Director, Deloitte Tax LLP
2013 Dr. Suzanne Scotchmer (deceased)  
UW Economics BA ’70  
Professor of Economics, Law, and Public Policy, UC Berkeley

2012 Dr. Charles C. Cox, BA ’67  
Senior Vice President, Compass Lexecon

2011 Dr. Curtis R. Taylor, BA ’86  
Professor of Economics, Duke University

2010 Robert M. McKenna, BA ’85  
Former Attorney General, Washington State

2009 Dr. Robert J. Willis, PhD ’71  
Professor of Economics, University of Michigan

2008 Haruyuki Niimi (deceased), BA ’59  
Chairman & President, Showa Shell Sekiyu, Tokyo

2007 Alan D. Frazier, BA ’75  
Managing Partner, Frazier Healthcare

2006 Stanley Savage, BA ’67  
Chairman, President, & CEO, The Commerce Bank  
Founding member, Economics Visiting Committee

2005 Dr. Robert L. Joss, BA ’63  
Former Dean, Graduate School of Business, Stanford University

2004 Kathy Gehrt (deceased), MA ’77, BA ’75  
Executive, AT&T

2003 Dr. Thomas E. MaCurdy, BA ’73  
Professor of Economics, Stanford University

2002 Bryan C. Cressey, BA ’72  
President, Cressey & Co.

2001 Gary L. Waterman, MA ’68, BA ’65  
President, Waterman Limited

2000 Stanley H. Barer, BA ’61, JD ’63  
Chairman Emeritus, Saltchuk Resources Inc.

1999 Robert R. Richards, BA ’61  
Founder, President, and CEO of The Commerce Bank

1998 Stanley G. Freimuth, BA ’70  
Executive Officer, Ragen Mackenzie Group (retired)

1997 Hon. R. B. Hutchinson, BA ’63  
Justice, Supreme Court of British Columbia

1996 Dr. Andrew F. Brimmer (deceased), MA ’51, BA ’50  
Governor, U.S. Federal Reserve Board

1995 Hon. Helen Sommers, MA ’70, BA ’69  
House Representative, Washington State Legislature

1994 Dr. Douglass C. North, Faculty  
Professor of Economics, Nobel Prize in Economics

1993 J. Parker Sroufe, BA ’64  
Chairman, WebSea Group
1992 Dr. Grover W. Ensley, BA ’37
United States Senate

1991 David Williams, BA ’64
Vice-chairman, Security Pacific Bank Washington

1990 Norman K. Maleng (deceased), BA ’60
Seattle City Prosecutor

1989 James O. York (deceased), MA ’50, BA ’49
Real Estate Developer

1988 H. Jon Runstad, BA ’65
Co-founder, Chairman & CEO, Wright Runstad and Co

1987 Bruce A. Nordstrom, BA ’55
Chairman, Nordstrom Inc. (retired)

1986 Robert J. Behnke (deceased), BA ’43
Chairman, R.E.B. Enterprises

1985 John D. Mangels, BA ’50
Former Chairman & CEO, Security Pacific Bank Washington

You may also be interested in our notable alumni.