KATHY GEHRT MEMORIAL ECONOMICS VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD

Established in 2014, the Kathy Gehrt Memorial Economics Volunteer Service Award was named for alumna Kathy Gehrt (BA ’75, MA ’77), who passed away in April 2014 from complications related to a brain tumor and was the posthumous awardee of the inaugural 2014 award. The award seeks to recognize the efforts of a long-term department volunteer who has made a significant difference in the department through his or her involvement.

Nominations currently being collected for the 2019 Kathy Gehrt Memorial Economics Volunteer Service Award

Help us honor those who have given their time to support the people and programs of UW Economics by nominating someone for the 2020 Kathy Gehrt Memorial Economics Volunteer Service Award! Nominations are open to anyone and are anonymous.

The nominee should possess an outstanding commitment to the mission, programs, and people of the Department of Economics. This commitment may be demonstrated in a variety of ways, including service as an instructor, undergraduate or graduate mentor, alumni outreach, visiting committee member, regional representative, or other contributions of time, service, and philanthropy.

All nominees will be notified of their nomination. The awardee will be selected by a committee of faculty and alumni and will be presented at the annual Visiting Committee Summer Social event. THANK YOU for taking the time to recognize our outstanding volunteers.

Please send nominees name, along with a brief description of their volunteer involvement within the department, to Ellen Gregoire at browne5@uw.edu.

2019 Awardee: R. Tom Olson, BA ’61, JD ’64

Tom became involved with the department when he joined the Visiting Committee in 2003. He served as Chair of the VC from 06-08, and sat on the executive committee for over ten years. He remains active within the VC; he and his wife Carol hosted a beautiful Summer Social in 2017 aboard the historic Virginia V steamboat, for which Tom also volunteers. Tom has been one of the departments most dedicated mentors, having mentored nearly every year since the program’s inception, including participating in the mentoring pilot program, and helping to recruit other mentors.

With a talent of seeing things from other’s perspective, Tom has become an infinite source of wisdom within the VC. His sage advice has helped to shape the growth of VC. As a former chair, Tom also sits on the
committee to select new VC chairs when needed.

Tom Olson received his BA from the department in 1961, and soon after earned his JD, also from UW. Tom has spent his legal career working in business law and estate planning.

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2018 Awardee: Olga Yang, BA '82

Olga Yang joined the Visiting Committee in 2005, and has been an active member since. She served as Chair of the Visiting Committee from 2008 to 2010, and is a member of the executive committee. She is now recognized as a Chair Emeritus of the Visiting Committee.

Olga has been part of the mentorship program since its founding, and has helped lead the program for a good part of that time. Under her leadership, the program has grown from just a few student/alumni partnerships, to over 100 active participants. It was her idea to create the Zabriskie endowment, to ensure that the mentorship program would be supported in perpetuity.

In addition to all this, Olga provides volunteer leadership to the Women in Economics group and supports an undergraduate scholarship in the department named for her parents, Yanlan and Robert Yang. She has supported the department financially for many years, including sponsoring match funds and hosting a variety of events. Her unwavering support and dedication has made her an integral asset to the department.

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2017 Awardee: Robert (Bob) Richards, BA '61

Robert (Bob) Richards became a member of the Visiting Committee of the Department of Economics in 1990. He went on to serve as chairman from 2000-2002, and still serves on the Visiting Committee's Executive Committee today. In addition to this support, Bob and his wife Marilyn have contributed to the Economics Department's Distinguished Scholar program, providing financial support for research performed by Professor Shelly Lundberg and, subsequently, Professor Theo Eicher. Bob also currently serves as an advisor to the UW Economic Policy Research Center, as a lecturer in Economics 423, Financial Economics, as an instructor of Economics DL200 and DL201, Microeconomics and Macroeconomics, and as a mentor to recent graduates of the UW Department of Economics.

Bob currently serves on the Investment Committee of Global Partnerships, which oversees the placement of funds from American investors and financial institutions into micro-finance institutions in Latin America.

Bob received his BA in Economics from the University of Washington in 1961, and his MBA in Business Economics from the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University in 1964. In 1999, Bob was named the Economics Distinguished Alumnus by the University of Washington.

As an economics alumni, Visiting Committee Chair, and continuing his membership and support of the Visiting Committee, Bob is one of those individuals who have the heart, the vision, and the energy to continually contribute to the Economics Department. Bob's contributions when the VC was in its relative early years are recognized today to be very important in the development of the VC. Bob's good advice to the committee and the department have formed the basis of something very solid and very good for the department.
2016 Awardee: J. David Griswold, BA ‘79

UW Economics alumus J. David (Dave) Griswold has been an integral member of the department’s Visiting Committee and alumni outreach efforts for many years. Dave joined the Visiting Committee in 1998 and was asked to become a member of the executive council in 2007. He served as Chair of the Visiting Committee from 2010 - 2015, the longest term of any committee Chairperson. During his time as Chair, Dave was instrumental in recruiting vibrant and engaged new members to the committee, bringing much-needed diversity to the group and helping to ensure the future financial success of the department by extension. Dave volunteered to be a part of the pilot program of the undergraduate mentorship program in 2011 and has been mentoring our undergraduate students since, additionally participating in various career seminars and workshops designed to assist students with their personal and professional development.

As General Counsel and CCO of Pacific Current Group, David serves as the internal legal advisor on all major business dealings and transactions, and also oversees compliance and risk management for the firm. Prior to joining Pacific Current Group, David was General Counsel and CCO at Global Index Group, a start-up developing financial indexes for use in ETF’s and similar products. Prior to Global Index Group, David spent 19+ years at Russell Investments as the firm’s Associate General Counsel and Director of Global Regulatory policy. During his time at Russell, David represented a number of the firm’s business lines, including aspects of the firm’s 1940 Act mutual fund products, brokerage firms and Asia-Pacific offices. He graduated with a BA in Economics from the University of Washington and holds a JD from the University of Chicago.

2015 Awardees: Gabe Hanzeli (BA ’76) and Walt Zabriskie (BA ’71).

Gabe Hanzeli is a 35-year aerospace and IT veteran executive who retired from The Boeing Company in 2010 as Senior Director of Corporate Enterprise IT Architecture, having worked in both commercial and defense programs. Gabe completed his BA in economics at UW (with Honors) in 1976 and was on the team of students responsible for the NSF-grant funded study, under Professor Judy Thornton, of the preservation of historic Pioneer Square.

Gabe became actively involved with the Department in 2006 when he was recruited by Kathy Gehrt to join the Economics Visiting Committee. He was a volunteer during the pilot year of the Economics Mentorship Program and has been a mentor to several students every year since then. Gabe is a member of the VC’s Executive Committee, and continues to be an active participant in the department’s mission.

Walt Zabriskie earned his BA in economics at UW in 1971 (with Honors), an MBA from Seattle University, and participated in the Senior Executive Education program at Harvard Business School. Walt spent the majority of his career in closely-held and family owned enterprises with revenues ranging from $10 - 150 million, serving as a member of the board of directors and in various C-level positions (CEO, COO, and CFO).

Walt became actively involved with the Department in 2008, when he was asked to join the Economics Visiting Committee. After listening to a presentation from the Economics Undergraduate Board about undergraduates’ wish for more access to professional mentors, Walt founded the Economics Undergraduate
Mentorship Program in 2012. Walt's vision for and leadership of the program led it from modest beginnings to a flourishing model of student-alumni engagement replicated in various departments and divisions across campus.

Walt died in December of 2017, due to complications with pancreatic cancer. A group of dedicated alumni then pulled together to create the Walter J. Zabriskie Endowment in Economics for Mentorship and Career Development. This endowment currently supports the Mentorship program that Walt founded, and has allowed the program to continue to grow. Please click here to learn more about Walt's life and accomplishments.

2014 Awardee: Kathy Gehrt (BA ’75, MA ’77) was an active volunteer and supporter of the department. In addition to serving on the Economics Visiting Committee from 1998-2014 – serving as the first female chair of the committee – Kathy was also an undergraduate mentor and spoke frequently at student career seminars. Kathy was honored by the department in 2004 as the Economics Distinguished Alumna, an award that recognizes an alumnus whose professional achievements have brought personal distinction. In recognition of her dedication to UW Economics, department leadership agreed that renaming the award the Kathy Gehrt Memorial Economics Volunteer Service Award following her death in 2014 was a fitting tribute to Kathy, providing a lasting reminder of her inspiring volunteerism and commitment to UW Economics.