

# NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier  
University



## **Alumni awards presented to six members of Laurier community**

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WATERLOO – The Wilfrid Laurier University Alumni Association (WLAAA) will recognize the achievements and contributions of six members of the Laurier community by presenting them with awards of excellence at its annual awards banquet.

Two Laurier faculty members, Mercedes Rowinsky-Geurts from the department of languages and literature and Richard Playle from biology, will receive awards for excellence in their academic roles. Laurier’s alumni association is also recognizing the achievements and contributions of Fran Manson, director of accessible learning, Tom Allen, past president of the university’s 5<sup>th</sup> Quarter Club, Jay Taylor, a businessman who volunteers extensively in the Waterloo community, and Jason Huth, president of the Laurier Student Alumni (LSA).

“These awards recognize the accomplishments and contributions of outstanding alumni, faculty, students and staff,” says Brian Breckles, director of alumni relations. “The recipients have made significant contributions to the Laurier community.”

Rowinsky-Geurts will receive the WLAAA Faculty Mentoring Award in recognition of her dedication in supporting and assisting her students. With a specialization in Spanish studies, Rowinsky-Geurts has been teaching at Laurier for 11 years. She is described as generous with her time, selfless and inspirational in encouraging students to reach their potential. Rowinsky-Geurts has won numerous teaching awards and was a central figure in the development of Laurier’s new Mediterranean studies program.

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Playle will receive the Hoffman-Little Award, which honours excellence in teaching, research and professional endeavours. He is recognized as an exceptional professor and as an inspiring undergraduate and graduate student supervisor, and is internationally renowned for his research on metal interactions with fish gills. Playle is a past chair of the Laurier animal care committee and the senate library committee.

Manson, who has been at Laurier since 1987, will be presented with the Schaus Award in recognition of her outstanding contribution as a member of the administrative staff. She is currently a member of Laurier's joint university/association employment equity advisory committee. She is the past chair of numerous other committees in such areas as campus safety, university harassment and staff training/development. Manson volunteers at Victim Services of Waterloo Region, where she is a board member.

Allen, who is director of sales at Desante Financial Services, will receive the Alumnus of the Year Award, given for outstanding achievement by a Laurier graduate. Allen co-founded and is a past president of Laurier's 5<sup>th</sup> Quarter Club, an athletic alumni chapter that brings former Golden Hawk alumni and friends together in support of Laurier football. During his tenure as president, he established two fundraisers for student athletes and oversaw the club's newsletter.

Taylor, owner of Morty's Pub and Restaurant, will be named an honorary alumnus for his contributions to the Laurier community. His support of Laurier athletics is described as unwavering and he continues to be involved in such alumni events as the annual homecoming celebration. He also donates his time to local charities, including KidsAbility, the Knights of Columbus and the Kitchener-Waterloo Community Fund, and organizes the Morty's charity golf tournament.

Huth will receive the Student Alumnus of the Year Award, which acknowledges the volunteer work of a student who demonstrates leadership and has been instrumental in building bridges within the Laurier community. He has been active in the LSA, serving as recruitment and awareness co-ordinator and as president. Huth also volunteered as an icebreaker during Laurier's orientation week for new students and he participated in intramural sports and the annual student winter carnival.

The recipients will accept their awards at the annual banquet, which begins at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 12, in Laurier's science building courtyard.