KALAMAZOO COLLEGE
DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS
RECEPTION AND BANQUET
FRIDAY, MARCH 5, 1999

Invocation
The Reverend Pieter Kiwiet-Pantaleoni
Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church of Kalamazoo

Reception 4:30-5:30 p.m.
Stone Room, Hicks Center

Welcoming Remarks
Amelia (Amy) Courter ’83
President, Kalamazoo College Alumni Association

Presentation of Awards
Weimer K. Hicks Award
George H. Acker

Distinguished Service Award
Renee Askins ’81
P. Ronald Spann ’65

Distinguished Achievement Award
Albert (Al) Deal ’37

Closing Remarks
James F. Jones, Jr.
President, Kalamazoo College

Banquet 6:00-8:00 p.m.
Welles, Hicks Center

Kalamazoo College and the Alumni Association are pleased to recognize those whose acts and deeds, both personal and professional, have brought honor to the College, and those whose unselfish personal service to the College has contributed to excellence at Kalamazoo.
George Acker

GEORGE ACKER joined the faculty of Kalamazoo College in 1959 as a physical education instructor and tennis coach. Thirty-six years later, he retired as Professor of Physical Education and tennis coach. During that span at various times he coached wrestling, football and cross-country.

He left a teaching and coaching position at Northern Illinois University, where he earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees, to come to Kalamazoo College. “I was able to teach a greater number of activity classes at Kalamazoo College. And I loved them because I came to know most of the students in the school,” said Acker. “Kalamazoo College was the place where I wanted to be. The students were eager to learn, and the size of the College was conducive to excellent teaching.”

Acker estimates he recruited more than 800 students to the College. “And many who were unable to attend for one reason or another later indicated to me that Kalamazoo had been their first choice.”

Acker is best known for his accomplishments as a tennis coach. His tennis teams posted a 209-1 MIAA dual meet record and an overall 534-231-2 mark. His teams won seven NCAA Division III championships (including three consecutive, 1991-93) since the onset of national competition in 1976.

Acker coached 35 All-Americans, 19 MIAA Most Valuable Players, and 13 MIAA Stowe Sportsmanship Award Winners.

He was named NCAA Division III coach of the year in 1982 and 1991, and Division III coach of the decade of the 1980s. In 1986 he was named to Northern Illinois University’s athletic hall of fame and received the Lucasse lectureship for outstanding teaching at Kalamazoo College. A city street and a tennis court bear his name; he has been the subject of numerous articles in major sports publications; and his family was named the USTA tennis family of the year in 1974.

With that success came numerous opportunities to leave Kalamazoo College. He was offered management positions of indoor tennis facilities during the sport’s 1970s boom. He received many entreaties to coach at Division I schools. “I appreciated these offers because they tested my passion for Kalamazoo College,” said Acker. “I was always very happy to decline them.”

PAST RECIPIENTS OF THE WEIMER K. HICKS AWARD

Rolla L. Anderson (1997)
Laurence N. Barrett (1997)
Wen Chao Chen (1994)
Ruth L. Collins (1996)
Joe Fugate (1998)
Marilyn Hinkle ’44 (1995)
John R. McFarland (1994)
George M. Nielsen (1995)
Eleanor Humphrey Pinkham ’48 (1993)
Kathryn N. Stratton (1993)
Ruth Ziegelmaier (1994)
**Renee Askins '81**

RENEE ASKINS '81 credits her senior individualized project (SIP) and study abroad as the undergraduate experiences that most affected her career. Her SIP involved work with captive wolves and became a driving force behind her subsequent efforts to return wolves to the Yellowstone ecosystem.

"Many of the values and approaches that influenced my post-graduate work with wolves and people were shaped by my experience in Africa," said Askins.

"In Africa I experienced the real meaning of democracy," she said. "I lived among people who have endured the repression and poverty of dictatorships, and I witnessed their hunger for true representation and self-rule. The experience created my fierce belief in democratic principles."

Africa taught her much more. "My time there influenced my belief that democratic methods, like listening and consensus building, would, if approached with patience, prevail and benefit wolves."

She graduated from Kalamazoo College with a bachelor's degree in biology and earned a master's degree in wildlife ecology at Yale University.

Askins dedicated 15 years of her life to returning wolves to Yellowstone National Park. She had to work often in the face of determined opposition. She founded The Wolf Fund, a non-profit organization solely devoted to the return of wolves to Yellowstone. Its charter included a unique sunset clause: upon achievement of the goal, The Wolf Fund would shut down.

The Wolf Fund's work included lectures, lobbying, program development, and general public education activities. Askins or other members of the organization appeared often in various media to educate the public about wolves.

The campaign reached fruition on March 22, 1995, when seventeen wolves were released from acclimation pens into Yellowstone. The Wolf Fund closed its doors within an hour of the first wolf's release.

A skilled practitioner of the delicate art of observation in the natural world, Askins also possesses a powerful and effective ear. "I listen very closely to others because it creates trust," she said. "When people feel heard, they are willing to listen."

She is currently at work on a book about the relationship between humans and animals.

Frances Carver '68 nominated Askins for the Distinguished Service Award. "Renee follows the tradition of "K" alumni involved in beneficial world shaping events. We should not underestimate her works on behalf of wolves and humans. That work represents a major shift in how we think about the West and about our natural world."
P. Ronald Spann '65 graduated from Kalamazoo College with a degree in Spanish/Linguistics, a pursuit that, according to Spann, contributed indirectly but helpfully to his decision to pursue ordination as an Episcopal priest.

"After my first two years of seminary, I took a year [1968-69] to live and serve in coastal Guatemala. As a volunteer in charge of a mission station in a Caribbean seaport, I learned a good deal about my pastoral skills and became convinced I would be happy doing pastoral work," said Spann.

"The K-Plan's language study and time abroad prepared me to immerse myself in Guatemala and gain value from my time there that would have escaped me without those undergraduate experiences." Spann was ordained and earned his master's of divinity in theology in 1970 from Episcopal Divinity School.

In 1971 Spann became Rector of the Church of the Messiah, a 122 year-old inner-city church in Detroit. Under his leadership, the members formed the Church of the Messiah Housing Corporation (CMHC). CMHC purchased and renovated two apartment buildings and kept the units affordable for low-income individuals and families. In 1993 CMHC completed renovation of two more apartment buildings. Combined, the four buildings provide nearly 200 apartments. CMHC has helped with the initial development of new housing construction (about 200 new units) for senior citizens and lower income families. It has completed construction of two new townhouses (about 30 units) and is developing plans for another 150 units.

Spann served as the first president of the Islandview Village Development Corporation (IVDC), which has enlisted four additional churches as well as several other non-profit and for-profit agencies as members. IVDC complements the work of CMHC to create affordable housing and encourage home ownership as well as business economic development.

Spann's work has been widely praised. His honors and awards include the Malcolm Dade Lectureship, an honorary canon from St. Paul's Cathedral Church, and the Community Builder of the Year Award given by the Schiffman Foundation and the Economic Justice Commission of the Diocese of Michigan. He has published many articles, including pieces in Sojourners, Liturgy, and The Witness. He was the interview subject of the chapter "Urban Theology," which appeared in the book Detroit Lives.

Luell Simmons '42 nominated Spann for the Distinguished Achievement Award. "Few people have been as successful as Ron in making genuine urban change that has benefited so many families and so many lives."
WHEN ALBERT DEAL '37 enrolled at Kalamazoo College, its motto was 'A Fellowship in Learning.'

"The rapport between students and faculty was extraordinary," said Deal. "Professors challenged us, but they also were understanding." At Kalamazoo, Deal played on the basketball team, and he was the trainer and manager for the College's 1936 undefeated football team.

According to Deal, Kalamazoo College planted and nurtured the seed that flowered into his lifelong commitment to learning.

He graduated from Kalamazoo College with a bachelor's degree in history and went on to earn his master's in educational administration from the University of Michigan. He was a commissioned officer in the U.S. Naval Armed Guard in World War II, during which he saw duty in both the Atlantic and Pacific war operations.

His distinguished career in Michigan public education spanned 40 years. He served with four Michigan public school districts as superintendent.

For 20 years he was commissioner of the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association.

Deal served the Representative Council of the Michigan High School Athletic Association as member, vice president and president. He has been a member of various committees of the Michigan Association of School Administrators. Presently, he is treasurer of the School Administrators Political Action Committee.

In 1987, Deal was presented an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Olivet College. The following year he was inducted into the Michigan Education Hall of Fame.

Throughout that career, Deal always gave back to the College from which he believed he had received so much. He earned the Kalamazoo College Emeritus Club's "Citation of Merit" in 1988. He became a member of Emeritus Club board of directors in 1991, and in 1993 served as its president.

In 1995, he was voted into the College's Athletic Hall of Fame. Deal continues to serve as class agent for the Class of 1937.
PAST RECIPIENTS OF THE
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Harold B. Allen '21 (1983)
Hugh V. Anderson '43 (1976)
Larry B. Barrett '64 (1988)
Elinore Hoven Basnett '43 (1982)
Marie S. Burbidge (1989)
Stanley J. Chalmers '51 (1984)
Wen Chao Chen (1990)
Ruth Scott Chenery '24 (1978)
Joyce Kirk Coleman '66 (1996)
Gene R. Conrad (1987)
Maynard M. Conrad '36 (1979)
Helen I. Coover '33 (1985)
Joan Story Copeland '56 (1995)
Eleanor Hootman Dewey '45 (1987)
Robert D. Dewey '47 (1987)
Mary Joslin Discher '50 (1991)
Gordon L. Dolbee '50 (1991)
Donald C. Flesche (1991)
Samuel Folz '47 (1987)
Marlene Crandell Francis '58 (1976)
Charles E. Garrett, Jr. '42 (1988)
Alfred J. Gemrich '60 (1980)
Caroline Richardson Ham '48 (1988)
I. Frank Harlow '39 (1982)
Lois Stutzman Harvey '29 (1977)
Marilyn Hinkle '44 (1979)
Marian Monteith Hudson '18 (1975)
Joanne Lent Hyames '60 (1983)
Jane Schaafsm A Iannelli '58 (1981)
Vincent L. Iannelli '58 (1981)
James H. Ingersoll (1993)
Thomas W. Lambert '63 (1985)
William J. Lawrence, Jr. '41 (1988)
Delbert D. Long '34 (1987)
David R. Markin (1997)
Elizabeth Upjohn Mason (1979)
Ralph W. Mckee '34 (1985)
Gary L. Miller '61 (1992)
James W. Morrell '53 (1990)
Jon R. Muth '67 (1991)
Louise Barrows Northam '36 (1994)
Preston S. Parish (1998)
Burke E. Porter (1993)
Jane Meyer Rapley '37 (1983)
W. Harry Rapley '38 (1983)
Marion Johnston Schmiege '45 (1984)
Luel P. Simmons, Jr. '42 (1977)
Marian Wilson Simmons '42 (1977)
Stuart H. Simpson (1985)
Charles E. Starbuck '48 (1982)
Marian Hall Starbuck '45 (1982)
Virginia Johnson Stone '47 (1978)
Betty Heystek Thompson '44 (1985)
Edward P. Thompson '43 (1985)
Royena Hornbeck Tice '26 (1993)
Paul H. Todd, Jr. '42 (1992)
Charles J. Venema '33 (1980)
Marilyn Barton Wilhelm '39 (1975)
J. Rodney Wilson '60 (1989)
Nancy Southard Young '67 (1975)
NOMINATION PROCESS

Nominations for Alumni Association awards are judged on the basis of the information provided in the nominating statements, which should present a concise justification of the nomination and as much supporting information as possible. All nominations are judged without regard to the nominee’s race, creed, age, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, or physical disability. Nominations may be made at any time and should be sent to the Office of Alumni Relations, Kalamazoo College, 1200 Academy Street, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49006-3295.