



11600 Columbia College Drive • Sonora, California 95370
Public Information Office: 209.588.5361 • Fax 209.588.5367

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Doug Lau, *Director of Marketing & Public Relations*

Hamilton Named California's Professor of the Year

W. Ted Hamilton of Columbia College has been named as California's Professor of the Year by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) and The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

The U.S. Professors of the Year Program was created in 1981 and is the only national initiative specifically designed to recognize excellence in undergraduate teaching and mentoring. This year's winners were selected from a pool of nearly 300 nominees from across the country. There were four national winners named and 46 state winners. Award recipients will be recognized at a celebratory luncheon on Nov. 18 at the Willard InterContinental Hotel in Washington, D.C., followed by an evening reception on Capitol Hill.

College presidents, campus provosts and academic vice presidents nominated their top instructors for the prestigious honor. In addition, current and former students, as well as colleagues and peers from other institutions sent letters of support. Nomination materials included the professors' teaching logs and course descriptions. Also required were the nominees' personal statement describing their teaching and mentoring techniques, courses or curricula that they created, or their impact on

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teaching students at their campuses and beyond.

Both national and state winners were chosen on the basis of their extraordinary dedication to undergraduate teaching, determined by excellence in the following areas: impact on and involvement with undergraduate students; scholarly approach to teaching and learning; contributions to undergraduate education in the institution, community and profession; and support from colleagues and current and former undergraduate students.

Ted Hamilton's entire career has been a textbook on achieving greater goals. As a young student at Modesto Junior College, he played center field and shortstop for the Pirates baseball team. He earned an A.A. degree there in 1968, and then transferred to University of California, Berkeley. But his dreams of becoming a professional ball player were crushed when multiple injuries ended his participation in any future collegiate sports.

In June 1970 with a bachelor's degree in history, Hamilton accepted a position in Japan, teaching Japanese businessmen, graduate students, and English instructors the basic rudiments of the English language, American economics, slang/customs and American history. A year later found him back in California at Cal State Stanislaus, which led to a master's degree in history and a teaching post at MJC.

In the summer of 1973, faculty members at UC Berkeley recommended him for a position as historian and director of site archeology to the Imperial Iranian Court. While employed there, he traveled extensively in that part of the world and according to Hamilton, witnessed "the range of humanity from extreme poverty in the streets of Calcutta to the elegance of a Royal Court."

Hamilton returned from the Middle East in 1975 to pursue another master's degree in geography from Cal State Stanislaus. From 1976 until 1998, he taught economics, geography, history and political science at MJC. He joined the Columbia College faculty in the spring of 1998 where he has since instructed classes in geography, history, philosophy and political science.

What significant impact has Ted Hamilton made on his college students over the past 28 years? When asked, Hamilton said, "In my academic disciplines, you are usually not aware of the difference that you make in a student's life. It's not like presenting a beautiful work of art to students and seeing an immediate response in their faces. In fact, the time delay may take several decades until you discover that you had an impact on someone's life."

But Hamilton's teaching has created major transformations in the lives of many of his students, most notably Carol Baker and Sara Keene – both submitted letters in support of his nomination as Professor of the Year.

Baker enrolled at Columbia College in 1995 at age 46 with serious doubts of successfully succeeding in her college studies. "Over time, I worked my way through the required courses, avoiding those that I dreaded, namely political science and history," she said. "I enrolled in Ted Hamilton's political science class and as I read through the syllabus and essay questions that we would be required to respond to over the semester, I became terrified."

"In Ted's office, I tearfully declared that I was incapable of doing the work. I was too old, and I didn't know how. But Ted cheerfully replied that he thought I was capable, and promised a total commitment to my success if I was willing to work. I was being challenged to stretch beyond my limited notion of who I was, and a glimmer of hope broke through my despair. That first day in Ted's office was the beginning of my fundamental, radical transformation of self," she said.

After subsequently achieving an "A" grade in the class, Baker went on to graduate from Columbia College and at the urging of Hamilton, she applied to UC Berkeley where she graduated with

a B.A. in anthropology and a 4.0 grade point average.

Another former student of Hamilton, Sara Keene graduated this year from a University of California campus and is presently in graduate school at the University of London, researching violence and conflict resolution.

Describing her experience in Hamilton's class, Keene said, "My ability to read, write, and think critically increased by leaps and bounds. My world view was considerably altered and my desire to further my education and contribute to humanity had unleashed a new-found meaning in my life."

"Professor Hamilton's contributions have been invaluable to this transformation in several significant ways. His philosophy and innovative methods of teaching taught me how to learn," she said. "His expectations of his students are extremely high, as is the level of support in and outside the classroom."

"Ted Hamilton brings a passion and rock solid commitment to the classroom, as well as tireless work beyond the classroom that is absolutely remarkable and astounding," said Dr. Jim Riggs, president of Columbia College. "Each year, I receive many letters from former students of his, who would not have succeeded had it not been for Mr. Hamilton's assistance and belief in them."

Among Hamilton's postgraduate research credits are the University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies; American Institute of Iranian Studies; and British Institute of Persian Studies. His teaching awards include four nominations and two selections (2000 and 2004) for Who's Who Among America's Teachers, Faculty of the Year at Columbia College, and Tuolumne County Teaching Excellence Award.

His service recognitions are involvement as management consultant to the Yosemite Community College District for comprehensive planning; president and governor for the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges; president, Yosemite Faculty Association; chief negotiator, Yosemite Faculty Association; president, Columbia College Academic Senate; NASA Peer Review Board for Educational Programs; peer review board evaluator for the National Academy of Sciences, Board on Science and Technology; consultant to the L.S.B. Leaky Foundation; and consultant to the St. Galland Foundation (with Dr. R.M. Burrell).

Hamilton's other significant contributions are the Carnegie Mellon Foundation Summer Seminars on Japan (Stanford University); N.E.H. Summer Seminar on Amazonia (University of California, Berkeley); faculty representative on the California Education Code Review for Community Colleges; founding member of the Council of Faculty Organization in California; and faculty coordinator for International Education at Modesto Junior College.

Based on years of experience in the field, Ted Hamilton's advice for new teachers is to challenge students to be better than the standards. "Challenge them to go beyond expectations," he said.

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