



NEWS RELEASE

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Alumni Association to present seven awards

RELEASED: Dec. 11, 2009

EAU CLAIRE — Seven alumni of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire will receive awards from the UW-Eau Claire Alumni Association Dec. 19 at a luncheon and ceremony in conjunction with fall commencement.

"It's an honor to recognize the creativity, intelligence and diligence of these people and the myriad of ways they have found to serve society," said John Bachmeier, UW-Eau Claire director of Alumni Relations. "The university is well represented by such talented alumni, who give so much of themselves to their communities."

Michael Stone will receive the Alumni Distinguished Achievement Award, which recognizes distinguished service to the community, state or nation in a manner that brings credit to the recipient and UW-Eau Claire.

Stone, who is fluent in Japanese, completed a minor in East Asian studies at Sophia University in Tokyo, Japan, in 1981 while studying abroad as a UW-Eau Claire undergraduate. During a second year of study abroad, he studied at Yokohama College of Commerce in Yokohama, Japan. He earned a bachelor of business administration degree from UW-Eau Claire in 1984.

From 1991-2003, Stone was the Asia sales manager for Paper Converting Machine Co. in Green Bay, where he was responsible for strategic planning, opening overseas offices and establishing agents. He became director of the international division of American Foods Group Inc. in Green Bay in 2003. Stone managed and expanded markets in Japan, Korea, China, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Indonesia, the Caribbean, the Middle East and Mexico.

Stone started a sales and marketing company for the food and equipment industries, The Stone Group Inc., in 2005. He serves as president and CEO of the company, which provides sales, marketing and management for international companies in the United States and for American companies that export. The company has worked with the Wisconsin Cranberry Cooperative, Edco Foods, Kinetic Corp., CA Lawton and RA Jones Machinery.

Frederick Halfen will receive the Lifetime Excellence Award, which is presented to alumni who have demonstrated longtime and successful commitments to their careers and communities. Recipients have made a positive and dramatic impact through dedication to service and living their lives as a testimony to UW-Eau Claire's motto, "Excellence."

Halfen earned a bachelor's degree in geography in 1974. He began his career as a cartographer for UW-Eau Claire from 1974-76, preparing county land-use maps for regional planning commissions. He joined Alster and Associates in 1976 as a cartographer. In 1978, Alster and Associates merged with Ayres Associates. At Ayers, Halfen was project manager for photogrammetry until 1982, when he was promoted to manager. He became vice president of the photogrammetry division in 1987 and vice president of the Madison office in 1999. In 2007, he was named to the Ayres Associates board of directors and became vice president of the energy corridor group. He continues to serve in this capacity, developing and managing energy projects across the United States, including wind farms, transmission lines, pipeline and biomass engineering. He also manages the Madison office, which includes a staff of 50 engineers, surveyors, photogrammetrists, scientists and technicians. Halfen serves on the county board of supervisors, representing the 26th district of Sauk County.

Halfen has received the Wisconsin Newsmaker of the Year/Design Professional of the Year Award in 2006 from the Daily Reporter and Wisconsin Builder magazine.

Patricia Binder and Barbara Lee will receive the President's Award, which recognizes outstanding professional and personal achievement and service to UW-Eau Claire.

Binder graduated from UW-Eau Claire in 1973 with a bachelor's degree in comprehensive K-12 art education. She received a master's degree from the University of Minnesota in 1991.

Binder began her teaching career as a junior high art teacher at what was then DeLong Junior High School (now DeLong Middle School) in Eau Claire. She taught grades 7-9 until 1983. She was a substitute teacher in the Eau Claire Area School District from 1983-85 and was an elementary art teacher in the district from 1985 until retiring in June. She was a cooperating teacher and practicum pre-service supervisor for students from UW-Eau Claire and UW-Stout from 1978-09, and was the co-coordinator of the Elementary Art Program for the district from 1985-09. In 2008, she was named Outstanding Elementary Art Educator of the Year by the Wisconsin Art Education Association.

A senior scientist with the Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation, Lee directs the National Farm Medicine Center and the National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety, funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

Lee received a master of science in nursing degree from UW-Eau Claire in 1985 and a doctorate in nursing from UW-Milwaukee in 1995. She has authored journal publications and numerous reports related to children and farm safety. She led the initiative that resulted in a National Action Plan for Childhood Agricultural Injury Prevention, endorsed by the U.S. Congress in 1996 and funded through the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. She is a past president of the National Institute for Farm Safety, a professional organization for those involved in agricultural safety and health.

In 2006, with funding from the Farm Foundation, Lee worked with agricultural industry leaders to assess the feasibility of developing a national coalition based on the successful Canadian Agriculture Safety Association. In 2007, the Agricultural Safety and Health Council of America was established, and Lee serves as its administrative director. She serves on many national committees and scientific advisory boards.

The Rev. George Szews will receive the Honorary Alumnus Award, which recognizes distinguished service to the community, state or nation in a manner that brings credit upon the award recipient and UW-Eau Claire.

Szews received a bachelor's degree from St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn., and a master of divinity degree from the St. Paul Seminary in St. Paul. He was ordained a Roman Catholic priest for the Diocese of La Crosse in 1978. Szews served as an associate pastor for the St. Patrick Parish from 1978-85 and was an instructor for the Permanent Diaconate Program for the Diocese of La Crosse from 1984-94. He currently is the pastor for the Newman Parish at the Ecumenical Religious Center at UW-Eau Claire, where he has served since 1985.

Szews has written numerous articles in national Catholic periodicals such as *The National Catholic Reporter*, *U.S. Catholic*, *Celebration and Liturgy*. He is a member of the National Catholic Campus Ministers Association, Wisconsin Catholic Campus Ministers Association and the National Pastoral Musicians.

Stacey Hanke and Charles Howe will receive the Outstanding Recent Alumnus Award, which acknowledges the special achievements and great promise of alumni who are within 15 years of their graduation from UW-Eau Claire.

Hanke received a bachelor's degree in communication arts from UW-Eau Claire in 1993. She began her career as a regional training specialist with Target and later was employed by Wisconsin Credit Union League. She then moved to Chicago, where she worked for Decker Communications (now Novations) as a management consultant. Later she worked as a training specialist for Robert Bosch Tool Corp. Hanke established her own consulting company, 1st Impression Consulting, in 2003.

Hanke has trained and coached more than 15,000 individuals and delivered more than 500 presentations to business groups nationally and internationally. Her clients have included Coca-Cola Enterprises Inc.; the U.S. Army, Air Force and Marines; Kohl's; U.S. Food and Drug Administration; and Deloitte. Hanke was the featured author of the book "Conversations on Success" and is co-author of the book "Yes You Can! Everything You Need From A To Z To Influence Others To Take Action." She is a member of the St. Jude's auxiliary board for the Children's Research Hospital and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

Howe received a bachelor's degree in biology from UW-Eau Claire in 1993 and a doctorate from the University of California at San Francisco in 2000. Following graduation, he was awarded a research fellowship with the Stanford University Medical Center's department of neurology from 2000-01. Howe was a senior research fellow with the Mayo Clinic and Foundation's department of neurology from 2001-04. He was an assistant professor of neurology and neuroscience at the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine from 2002-09 and was promoted to the position of associate professor in October. Since 2007, he also has been an associate consultant in neurology and immunology.

Howe has published 73 papers, abstracts and book chapters. In addition, he has presented his work to diverse audiences ranging from the Stanford neuroscience community to the Society for Neuroscience and the American Association of Immunologists. His work is funded by the National Institutes of Health and by the National MS Society.

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