

California University
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Alumni Address Class of 2011

Nearly 1,200 Grads Receive Degrees May 6

Inspiration and advice from three distinguished alumni highlighted Cal U's 172nd Commencement. President Angelo Armenti, Jr. conferred degrees on nearly 1,200 associate, bachelor's and master's degree candidates, including students whose diplomas were awarded in absentia.

"I invite you to return often and to keep in touch with us," President Armenti said.

"Be sure to let us know about your life after you leave here. Please know that California University of Pennsylvania is extremely proud of you and your accomplishments."

Daryl Zupan '77 addressed the master's degree candidates May 6 in Hamer Hall, and Raymond Milchovich '71 delivered remarks May 7 at the undergraduate event, which was held outdoors at Adamson Stadium for the second consecutive year.

Before the undergraduates received their diplomas, Provost Geraldine Jones introduced Charles S. Pryor '73, who was awarded a Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*.

Senior Gift

Before students received their diplomas, graduating senior Taylor Williams, chair of the Senior Gift Drive Committee, presented President Armenti with a check for more than \$6,700 contributed by seniors and their families.

In recognition of their generosity, President Armenti and First Lady Barbara Armenti contributed \$1 for each student donor and \$2 for each family donation to the Senior Gift Drive.

To date, more than \$14,000 has been raised for an endowed scholarship since this *Cal U for Life* initiative began with the first senior class donation at the spring 2010 Commencement.

Graduating seniors who donated to the 2011 gift



Kristin Ross celebrates after receiving balloons and confetti from faculty members of the Theatre and Dance Department and her diploma from President Armenti.

drive wore red tassels affixed to their caps.

"Those of us who worked on the senior class gift drive embrace *Cal U for Life*, which is an important initiative," Williams said.

"Even though we were not exposed to *Cal U for Life* as the incoming freshman are now, we take seriously the lifelong relationship we want to have with our alma mater."

At The Podium

At both ceremonies, speakers with local ties took the podium to address the graduates.

Milchovich, a leader in the energy industry, retired from Foster Wheeler AG in 2010. A native of Roscoe, Pa., he remains the non-executive chairman of the board for Foster Wheeler, a global engineering and

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Commission Honors Outstanding Young Women

The President's Commission for the Status of Women presented awards to two outstanding students during a luncheon May 4 in Kara Alumni House.

Graduate student Katie Mercadante and undergraduate Amanda Smith were recognized at the spring 2011 Woman of the Year event.

The awards are given each semester by the commission, which was established in 1990. President Angelo Armenti, Jr. and Provost Geraldine Jones were among those at the luncheon to congratulate the honorees.

This is the second Woman of the Year honor for Mercadante, who received the undergraduate award in fall 2009. She has earned three degrees in six years: a bachelor's degree in earth science with a concentration in meteorology; a bachelor's in secondary education: earth and space science; and a master's degree in mentally/physically handicapped education.

Mercadante has organized several residence hall programs geared toward women, such as a Think Pink program for breast cancer awareness and Walk a Mile in Her Shoes to help prevent domestic violence. She also writes curriculum for summer

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Amanda Smith (left) and Katie Mercadante received the spring 2011 Outstanding Woman of the Year Awards from the President's Commission for the Status of Women.

Alumni Weekend, Gala Set June 3-4

California University will honor alumni, recognize faculty and raise funds for student scholarships during the 2011 Alumni Weekend and President's Gala, set for June 3-4.

President Angelo Armenti, Jr. and First Lady Barbara Armenti will host the annual President's Gala, "Puttin on the Ritz," in the Grand Ballroom of the Omni William Penn Hotel in downtown Pittsburgh.

Proceeds from the fundraiser benefit student scholarships.

The Gala reception begins at 6 p.m. on June 4, followed by dinner at 7 p.m. A silent auction, casino games and dancing also are on the agenda.

During the festivities, President Armenti will honor Mrs. Gwendolyn G. Simmons, winner of the Lillian M. Bassi Core Values Award.

Also being honored are faculty members Dr. Christine Patti, of the Department of Educational Administration and Leadership, who will receive the President's Faculty Award for Teaching; Dr. Robert

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Alumni Address Graduates at Commencement

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construction firm with offices in 25 nations.

His advice: Have a plan, be yourself, embrace and confront failure, and form relationships.

“This is not rocket science, because I do not believe success in life is rocket science,” Milchovich said. “This isn’t complicated. It’s just really, really hard work.”

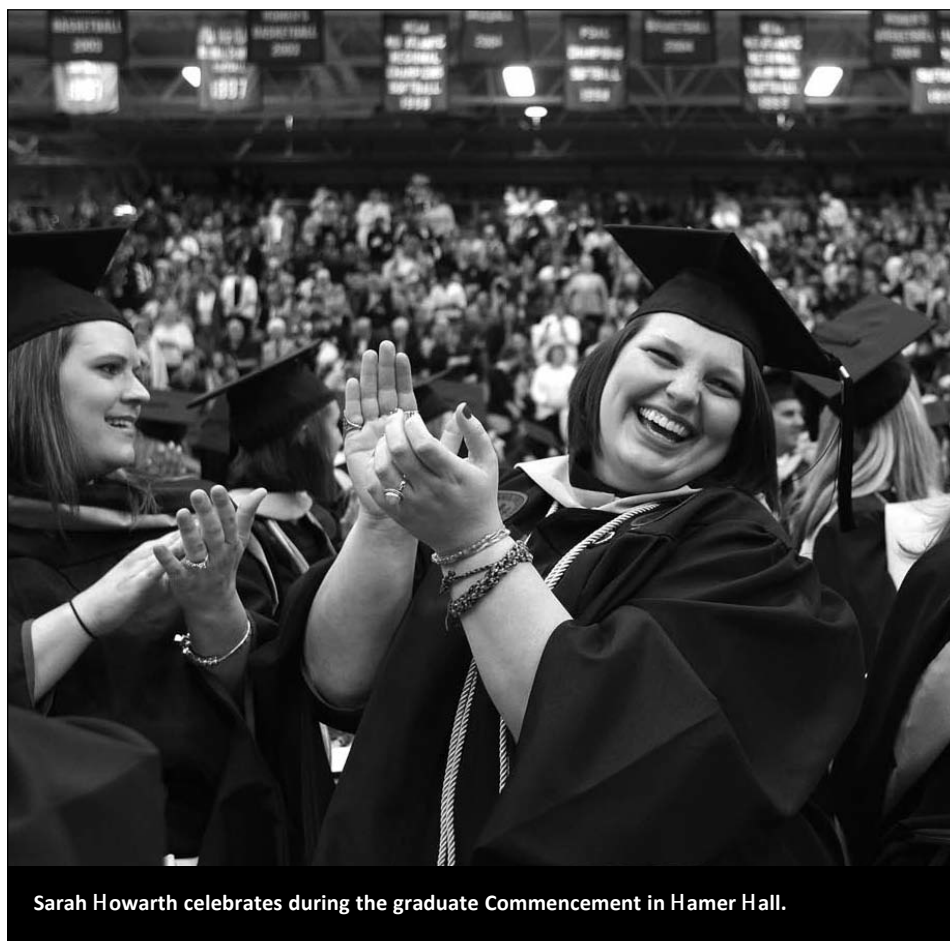
Milchovich traveled the world during his 40-year career, but he called southwestern Pennsylvania a unique region populated by honest, hard-working and caring people.

“You have been raised, nurtured and educated by these people,” he told the graduates. “I would suggest you use that edge to your advantage and begin building the life you always imagined.”

Zupan, who grew up in Charleroi, Pa., is president and CEO for the AFCO and CAFO brands and Prime Rate Premium Finance Co. of BB&T Corp., one of the largest and oldest companies financing property and casualty premiums in North America.

He used the final three letters of Cal U’s website address in his talk, noting that E stands for education, D is for determination and U represents the unexpected.

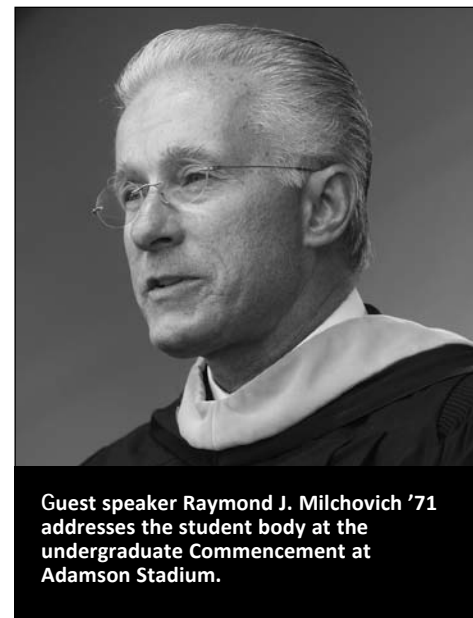
“Don’t forget that address,” said Zupan. “It has served you well up to this



Sarah Howarth celebrates during the graduate Commencement in Hamer Hall.

point, and it will continue to do so far into the future — particularly if you build on the education you received here, and add for good measure determination and confidence in meeting the unexpected.”

Pryor, the vice president of business development for L.R. Kimball, lauded President Armenti for transforming Cal U into the “flagship for the State System and the envy of the higher education community.”



Guest speaker Raymond J. Milchovich '71 addresses the student body at the undergraduate Commencement at Adamson Stadium.

A generous benefactor, Pryor said he was humbled by his selection to receive the honorary degree.

In his address, Pryor commented that when he was a student-athlete at California, the country was in an unpopular war and had both a flat economy and high unemployment.

“That sounds familiar, but ... the country survived and flourished. It will do so again because of you, the new leaders for the 21st century,” he said.

“As you leave here today to begin your journey, opportunities will present themselves to you. What you do with those opportunities will be up to you.”

Four Faculty Members Earn Merit Awards

Four Cal U faculty members with different areas of expertise are recipients of the 2011 Faculty Merit Awards.

Given by the subcommittees of the Faculty Professional Development Committee (FPDC), the awards recognize Cal U professors who are engaged in exceptional research, committed to teaching, using grants and contracts, devoted to service or exploring cutting-edge technology.

The awards were presented at a luncheon on May 6. Winners are Dr. John Confer (earth sciences) for research; Dr. Cheryl Hettman (nursing) for service and service-learning; Dr. Margo Wilson (English) for technology; and Dr. Carol Bocetti (biological and environmental sciences) for teaching and learning.

Along with wooden plaques, each recipient received a \$1,000 award and was recognized at Commencement. The

monetary awards can be used for professional activity such as travel, supplies, equipment, books or periodicals, publications, or professional memberships.

“There are many good things going on within the University,” said President Angelo Armenti, Jr., “and I believe the FPDC is the jewel in the crown of California University’s excellence.”

He commended the award winners for their efforts and said they should be proud to be honored by their peers, something that takes hard work and dedication.

Dr. David Argent, of the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences, received the Robert A. Vargo Lifetime Achievement Award.

Co-chairs of the FPDC for 2010-2011 were Drs. Ali Sezer and Craig Smith. The Faculty Center coordinator is Dr. Kurt Kearcher.



Among those taking part in the FPDC Merit Awards presentation were (standing, from left) Dr. Ali Sezer, FPDC co-chair; President Angelo Armenti, Jr.; Provost Geraldine Jones; and Dr. Craig Smith, FPDC co-chair; (seated, from left) Dr. Margo Wilson, Technology Merit Award; Dr. Carol Bocetti, Teaching and Learning Merit Award; and Dr. John Confer, Research Merit Award.

Campus BRIEFS

Say It In Spanish

Health care professionals from the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, the Veterans Affairs Pittsburgh Healthcare System and the Cal U faculty attended Survival Spanish for Nursing, a workshop held April 30 at Cal U’s Southpointe Center.

Andrea Cencich, an instructor in the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures, presented the workshop with the assistance of students Margaret Fike, Justine Fartini and Valerie Wortley.

Participants learned about the culture of the Hispanic/Latino community as it relates to medicine and practiced techniques that health care workers who are not fluent in Spanish can use to communicate with Spanish-speaking individuals.

In addition to workshops, Cal U is serving the needs of a diverse community with certificate programs in Spanish for business and for law enforcement.

Staff Recognition Dinner Set

Staff members should mark their calendars for the 30th annual Staff Recognition Dinner on June 10. The event will include dinner, entertainment, and door prizes provided by the Foundation for California University.

The President, Trustees and vice presidents look forward to celebrating the work of staff members and recognizing their employment anniversaries.

Staff members should reserve their seats now for what promises to be a memorable evening.

Student Marketers Win Awards

The Student Marketing Association at Cal U won three awards at the 33rd annual American Marketing Association International Collegiate Conference, held recently in New Orleans, La.

The chapter won Outstanding Efforts in

Community Service, Outstanding Efforts in Communication and Overall Efforts in Chapter Planning.

More than 160 collegiate chapters participated in the competition.

SMA president Katy Ostronic and executive vice president Matthew Roos, both of whom graduated this month, gave presentations to the international membership about how to recruit and retain members effectively.

Roos, who was nominated for International Student Marketer of the Year, was the first Cal U student to serve as a student judge for the selection of the Hugh G. Wales International Collegiate Faculty Advisor of the Year Award. Last year, Dr. Shirley Lazorchak was the recipient of this award.

Cody Foster has been elected president of the SMA for 2011-2012.



Camp-O-Ree

Dr. Michael Hummel, director of the Linda and Harry Serene Leadership Institute, talks with Boy Scouts from troops in the Greater Pittsburgh Council during their spring Camp-O-Ree, held May 13-15 at Cal U. The Scouts camped outdoors at Roadman Park and spent a full day enjoying workshops and career exploration activities on the main campus. Despite rainy weather, about 150 Scouts and troop leaders attended.

GIS Students Help Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy

For students in Dr. Tom Mueller's Environmental Applications of GIS class, the spring semester literally was a walk in the park.

Along with their coursework, the students divided into six groups and worked on geographic information systems projects for the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy.

After Mueller and his colleague Dr. John Confer arranged the work with the Conservancy, senior restoration ecologist Erin Copeland visited the class, presented data and suggested a few project ideas.

The students then devised their own projects. They used equipment at Cal U's GIS Laboratory, visited the parks and looked at spatial data to analyze their information. Then they created detailed posters and presented their results to members of the Parks Conservancy at Riverview Park.

"Their projects covered everything from the slopes of recreational trails to ... what soils were good for planting trees to demographic analysis of the populations around the parks to crime mapping," Mueller said.

Grant Eaton, a junior GIS major, headed a group that used ArcInfo and ESRI software to relate crime data to weather. They analyzed crime patterns in



Standing in front of a poster presented to the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy are GIS students (from left) Grant Eaton, Vicki Dulnikowski, Fred Smith and Joshua Alderson.G

certain areas, looking at times of the year when crime rates were higher or lower.

"Using the equipment for this project was really helpful and a good experience," Eaton said. "After our presentations we also received excellent feedback from the people at the Parks Conservancy."

Vicki Dulnikowski's group conducted a demographic analysis of all four major parks in Pittsburgh — Frick, Highland, Riverview and Schenley.

"We focused on what should be brought to the parks and taken away," she

said. "Our emphasis was more on attracting youths to the parks, because they will return to the parks for the rest of their lives and later bring their families."

Her group's findings suggested that elementary school children could get involved by designing tiles and creating mosaics to enhance the parks' appearance. The group also cited a need for basketball courts at Riverview Park.

Another project, led by student Fred Smith, analyzed the parks' wooded areas and found that Schenley Park had a 160

percent gain in woodland.

"We thoroughly valued the time and work the students put into the GIS analysis, map creation and presentations," Copeland said. "There were many things our staff learned."

Mueller consulted with Drs. Tom Wickham and Harrison Pinckney before and during the process. He said he was impressed with the diversity of the projects students devised.

"These projects really gave our students a real-world experience," he said. "They had to deal with real data, real questions and real methodology on how to solve those problems, and then analyze the data they received. This was a complete project, and I am proud of them and pleased with their results."

Cal U's relationship with the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy is apparently just beginning. Copeland said the Conservancy looks forward to future collaboration with the University to conduct projects such as a spectral analysis of sections of Highland Park, plus mapping and data creation, editing and analysis.

"It is very exciting to us that every semester we have access to classes, interns or work-study projects that will help us with our GIS needs," she said.

Alumni Weekend, Gala Set

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Whyte, of the Biological and Environmental Sciences Department, who will receive the President's Faculty Award for Research; and Dr. Ralph Belsterling, of the Communication Disorders Department, recipient of the President's Faculty Award for Service.

Retired professors Dr. Donald Thompson and Marsha Nolf will receive the President's Emeriti Faculty Awards.

Honorary chairs are Robert '66 and Suzanne Lippencott.

The President's Gala is the highlight of Alumni Weekend festivities that begin June 3 with campus tours at 3 p.m., Cal U trivia at 4 p.m. and a 5 p.m. reception for members of the Class of 1961 in the Kara Alumni House.

The annual Pioneer Dinner follows at 5:45 p.m. in the Kara Alumni House. Special



Gwendolyn Simmons

recognition will be given to the Class of 1961, but all alumni may attend; ticket price is \$15.

On June 4, the annual meeting of the Alumni Association will open at 8:30 a.m. in Room 206/207 of the Natali Student Center. At 11 a.m. guests will convene for the annual Alumni Association Awards of Distinction Luncheon in the Performance Center inside the student center. Cost is \$15.

Alumni award recipients are Dr. Stan Komacek '80, recipient of the John R. Gregg Award for Loyalty and Service; Dr. Kate Mitchem, the C.B. Wilson Distinguished Faculty Award; Margaret Lappan Green '70, the W.S. Jackman Award of Distinction; Dave Robey '77, '80, the Michael Duda Award for Athletic Achievement; Dr. Emily Sweitzer '92, the Pavlak/Shutsy Special Service Award; Fred Gladney '92, the Professional Excellence Award; Oliver Comstock '08, the Young Alumni Award; and Adele Lynn '74, the Meritorious Award.

Young Women Honored

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camp programs at the Carnegie Science Center and volunteers at Old Economy Village in Ambridge, Pa.

Mercadante, who graduated May 6, has accepted a position as assistant director of residence life at Gannon University in Erie, Pa.

Smith graduated May 7 with a bachelor's degree in psychology and a minor in women's studies. She completed an internship with the Women's Studies program at Cal U in spring 2010.

Smith's outstanding contributions as an intern and then a work-study student were particularly evident while Dr. Marta McClintock-Comeaux was on maternity leave this semester. Smith was one of the keys to the success of the recent Audrey-Beth Fitch Women's Studies Conference.

A member of Pi Gamma Mu honor society, Smith worked with other undergraduate students to start Social Justice Activism Now — So Just Act Now. She is a member of the women's hockey team and was named its most valuable player during the final game of the season.

Also at the luncheon, Dr. Lisa McBride was announced as president of the President's Commission for the Status of Women. She had been serving as interim president.

Rhonda Gifford will be vice president of the organization. She served on the spring semester's nominating committee, along with Dr. Melanie Blumberg, Dr. Emily Sweitzer, Rose Markovich and Sheleta Webb.

Alumnus to Enter Sports Hall of Fame

For the fifth consecutive year, a California University graduate will be inducted into the Mid-Mon Valley All Sports Hall of Fame (MMVASHOF). This year's inductee is Paul Zolak '69.

A graduate of Donora High School, where he was a multi-sport star, Zolak earned a degree from California State College and enjoyed a distinguished career in athletic administration.

Zolak was the starting kicker and backup quarterback on Cal's 1968 PSAC co-championship team. He made all four extra points in the Vulcans' 28-28 state championship tie with East Stroudsburg.

After college Zolak taught for eight years in Ringgold School District and served as an assistant football coach for nine years. He was Ringgold's athletic director for 20 years, and then served in that same capacity at Bethel Park High School for nine years before retiring in June 2006.

During his nearly 30 years as an athletic director, Zolak established himself as one of the premier athletic administrators in the WPIAL. In 2004 he received the Pennsylvania State Athletic Director Association's Distinguished Service Award. He was a member of the WPIAL's basketball, football, baseball and softball committees, and the athletic directors' representative on the WPIAL Board of Control.

He founded the Tri-County Athletic Directors Association, and under his leadership Ringgold was the first school in the nation to install FieldTurf on its football field.

Zolak also helped with the successful merger of the Monongahela and Donora campuses into the unified Ringgold High School in 1979.

Zolak credits Cal U and the late President Emeritus Dr. Michael Duda — also an MMVASHOF inductee — for instilling in him the importance of academics. During his initial meeting with Duda, Zolak recalled, the college president challenged him to make the dean's list.

"He was instrumental in me developing a desire to strive for success in academics and ultimately to parallel that with athletics," Zolak said. "I was so proud when I was able to report to him that I had made the dean's list."

Zolak said that Dr. Duda and California made him look at academics and athletics as partners in excellence.

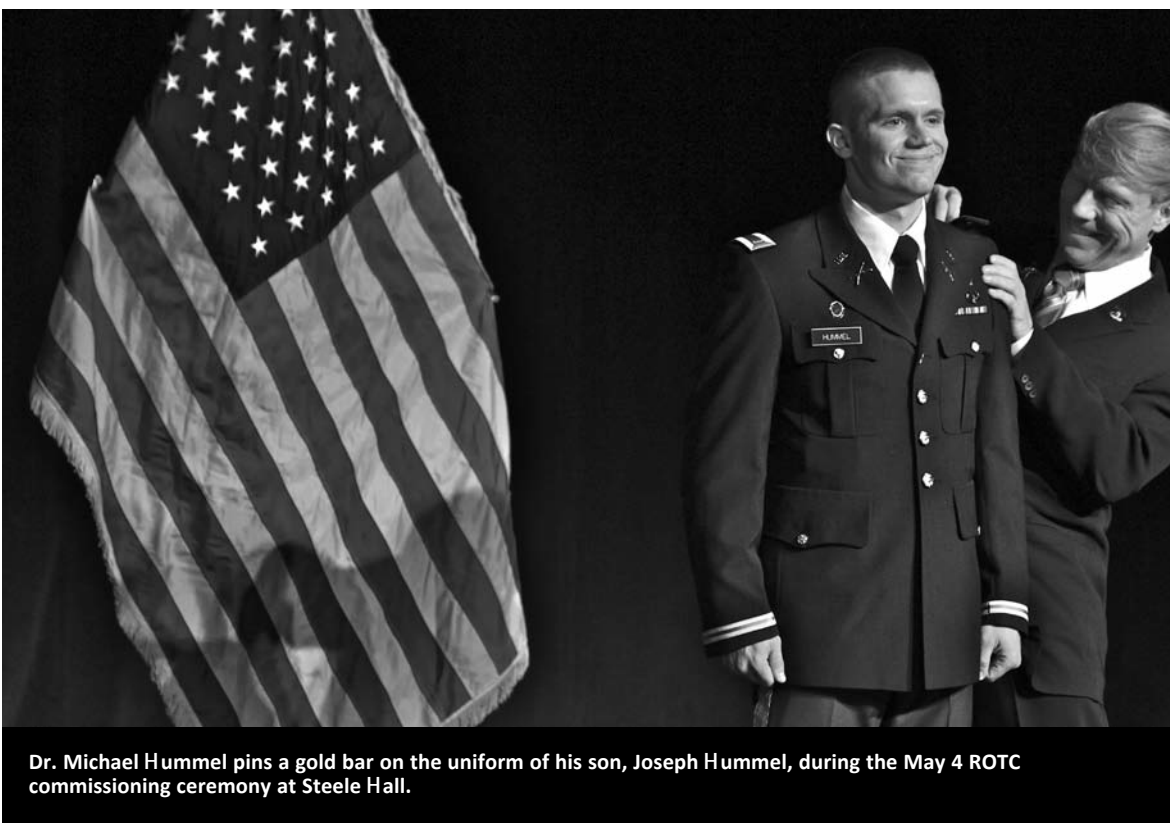
"This is a motto I took with me to the Ringgold and Bethel Park school districts," he said. "I tried to use this motto to the best of my ability with the student-athletes."

At Cal U, Zolak received the Alumni Association's Michael Duda Award for Athletic Achievement in 2005.

This year's Mon Valley Hall of Fame banquet will be held at 5:30 p.m. June 17 in the Willow Room, Rostraver Township. The other inductees are the late Willie Ross, Charles Ahlborn, John Hostetler, Charles "Yogi" Jones, Don Law and Michael Moorer.



A previous winner of Cal U's Michael Duda Award for Athletic Achievement, Paul Zolak '69 will be inducted into the Mid-Mon Valley All Sports hall of fame. This marks the fifth straight year that a past Vulcan great has received this honor.



Dr. Michael Hummel pins a gold bar on the uniform of his son, Joseph Hummel, during the May 4 ROTC commissioning ceremony at Steele Hall.

Six ROTC Cadets Commissioned as Officers

Leadership principles took center stage when six ROTC cadets were commissioned as second lieutenants in the U.S. Army at a ceremony May 4 in Steele Hall Mainstage Theatre.

Cal U cadets Zachary Drysdale, Joseph Hummel, Konrad Kearcher, Nicholas Messina and David Schott Jr. received the gold bars signifying their new rank at the Department of Military Science's Reserve Officer Training Corps commissioning ceremony.

They were joined by cadet James Cooper, who attends the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg.

Before taking the oath of office, the cadets heard words of advice from Dr. Michael Hummel, director of the Linda and Harry Serene Leadership Institute at Cal U and a retired Army officer with more than 23 years of military service.

"Leading and learning are lifelong obligations," said Hummel, whose son was among those being commissioned.

"Hold people to a tough and high standard, and yourself to an even tougher and higher standard."

The six new officers have different

military assignments.

Drysdale will serve in the Field Artillery, and the younger Hummel will receive a National Guard commission into the infantry. Kearcher, who received an educational delay, will attend law school in the fall.

Messina will enter the Army Corps of Engineers. Schott, recognized as a Distinguished Military Graduate, will enter the Military Intelligence Corps. Cooper also will be assigned to military intelligence.

After completing his address, the elder Hummel joined other family members who, one by one, pinned a gold bar to a cadet's uniform. Following Army tradition, each newly minted second lieutenant gave a silver dollar to an officer in exchange for his first salute.

Lt. Col. Joseph P. Alessi, professor of military science at the University of Pittsburgh, closed the ceremony.

"We free people, protect people and calm people," he told the new officers. "You are a defender and will be for the rest of your life."

Spring Sports Score

Junior Annabel Pieschi helped Cal U's women's tennis team win its fifth consecutive PSAC and NCAA Atlantic Region titles this spring. The Vulcans reached the NCAA national quarterfinals and finished the season with a 22-8 overall record. Also advancing to NCAA post-season play this spring were the men's and women's golf teams, the softball team, and several individual track-and-field competitors. For complete results, visit www.calvulcans.com.



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