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University recognizes long-serving staff members

By Nancy Doolittle

"We have been through some challenging times recently, so I am delighted that we are able to take this time to celebrate," said Mary George Opperman, vice president for human resources, in her opening remarks at the 55th Service Recognition Dinner April 12 in Bartels Hall. "You are Cornell, and we cannot thank you enough for all you do."

This year's event recognized 259 staff members who celebrated a fifth-year anniversary of 25 or more years of service to Cornell -- collectively having given more than 8,200 years of service -- as well as 21 staff members who have worked at Cornell for more than 40 years but were not celebrating a 45- or 50-year milestone.

Approximately 330 staff and guests attended the event, which featured music by the BackTalk Band and two of the winners of an employee talent show held in January: Erica Walters, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, accompanied by Harrison Tsai, a senior in the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, and Tom Kobela, Laboratory of Elementary Particle Physics.

"Tonight's awardees include so many people who do so many things," said President David Skorton. "Everyone understands you are important to the institution yesterday and today and tomorrow."

Susan Murphy, vice president for student and academic services, drew attention to Carmen Segarra, from the Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico, who was the sole person celebrating 45 years of service. At



Lindsay France/University Photography

Carmen Segarra, left, 45-year awardee, with Don Campbell, Luz E. Lopez and Jose Delgado.



Lindsay France/University Photography

David Richardson, right, talks with President David Skorton and Robin Davisson.

Arecibo Segarra has served as a data clerk, data processor, data analyst and librarian before assuming her current responsibilities as executive staff assistant to the director of the observatory.

During the reception, 40-year awardee Mariann Carpenter recalled that she started working in the basement of Day Hall, sending and receiving mail for the Langmuir Lab. Now she works for CIT in Rhodes Hall as manager of systems administration.

Martha Jane Benninger, administrative assistant at Alice H. Cook House, said she has enjoyed working with students for 35 years in Campus Life. "This has been a wonderful career for me," she said. "When you hear from a former student 20 years later -- the connections never end."

Mark Hall, a 30-year awardee, has worked in the Print Shop, Campus Mail and Red Runner. He said that he loves working with people and "getting things moved around."

Cathy Pace, student services associate for the School of Continuing Education and Summer Sessions with 30 years of service, said that her time at Cornell "has gone so fast, it seems like yesterday."

Robert Paul Stundtner, director of project management for Facilities Services, said he has worked with wonderful people: "Some are here tonight. We have followed each other's careers over these 30 years. That kind of continuity is unusual in many places."

And when asked what he likes best about working at Cornell, David Richardson, an HR subject specialist in the Recruitment and Employment Center, said, "the people" -- then added with a smile, "[and] being able to talk with President Skorton."

A list of those celebrating anniversaries is here:

http://www.hr.cornell.edu/life/celebrating/service_recognition/index.html.

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