

New Fellows Selected for Induction at Upcoming 2016 Fellows Luncheon

by Christina Chant

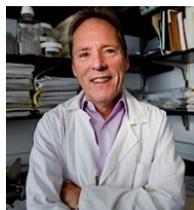
At the last meeting of the Trustees, the VAAS had the pleasure of selecting for nomination six new Fellows. The Fellows include Mary Jane Dickerson (Poet and Teacher), Doreen Kraft (Arts Administrator), Mark T. Nelson (Professor of Pharmacology), Erik Nielsen (Composer), Donna M. Rizzo (Professor of Environmental Engineering) and Susan S. Wallace (Professor of Microbiology). VAAS Fellows "...must be living and of mature experience; Must be exemplary in repute; Would respect being a Fellow of the Academy; Would bring prestige to the Academy; Must have made an extraordinary contribution in or to the arts, humanities, sciences or teaching; Contributions must have made a substantial impact on the life and conditions in Vermont, or if such impact be elsewhere, credit therefore rebound to Vermont, its institutions, people or influence, and such contribution must have been culminated, at least in its effect, since 1964."



Doreen Kraft has been a leader in the Burlington art scene since 1983, making the Queen City one of the most arts-friendly places in the nation. She has done this by broadening the scope of the BCA and by bringing all forms of art to a wide range of audiences including schools, hospitals and the public streets. Her nominator noted that she has "initiated, advocated and encouraged all kinds of endeavors to engage Vermont youth in the making of and interest in the arts, and that [she has] instilled in a larger public an appreciation of not only art but also of the artist."



Mary Jane Dickerson has had a long and fruitful teaching career at UVM, and the Trustees were impressed by the work she did to advance courses in African American literature, and with the receipt of the Kidder Award for her impact on students. They were also very impressed by her activities in bringing poetry to the people of Vermont since her retirement. Her two books, the creation of the Sundog Poetry Center, her continued work with new poets, and the sponsoring of Vermont poets to read at independent bookshops in the state were all noted by the board.



Mark Nelson has spent many years teaching at UVM and has received many awards for teaching and research. He has also published a significant number of articles in such important scientific journals as *Science* and *Nature*. The Trustees were especially impressed by his unique expertise to perform key measurements on singular vascular cells in the brain in order to understand the pathogenesis of small vessel disease there.



Donna Rizzo was nominated because of the quality of her teaching and service as evidenced by all of the awards she has received at UVM. The Trustees were also excited to hear about her research, particularly her work on the problem of pollution in ground water. Her nominator mentioned that she is "...a superb teacher and mentor, inspiring many students, especially women, to carry on careers in engineering" and that "[she is] a critical part of Vermont EPSCoR that is focusing its attention on the health of Lake Champlain."



Susan Wallace has served for a number of years as the Chair of the UVM Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics, and has conducted award winning research on cellular DNA damage and the repair process and how this relates to an increased risk for cancer if the repairs do not happen.



Erik Nielsen impressed the Trustees with the quality and the quantity of his compositions, and particularly by the number of Vermont commissions he has received. He has created works for chorus, orchestra, wind ensemble, solo instruments, chamber music, dance, film and electronic music.

Congratulations to the newly chosen Fellows!