

2006 Denise Nicoletti Trustees' Award for Service to Community

Professor Allen H. Hoffman

The Trustees' Award for Service to Community is presented in memory of Denise Nicoletti, a professor in the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department from 1991-2002, whose passion for life and outreach to under-represented groups touched many lives. Among her many activities, Denise co-founded Camp REACH, a widely-acclaimed summer program which introduces seventh grade girls to the excitement of engineering and science. The recipient of the 2006 Denise Nicoletti Trustees' Award for Service to Community is Allen H. Hoffman.



Two activities demonstrate Al's commitment to the community welfare and the enrichment of life for others. First, Al's twenty-seven years of service as an elected member of the Town of Sterling's Board of Health helped protect and enhance the quality of life in that community. Allen's duties included overseeing water quality and waste disposal, protection from hazardous wastes, the licensing of all establishments involved in the preparation and serving of food, and the licensing of all the town's animals. For these varied and essential duties, which involved hours of work monthly, Allen received \$100 a year from the town. Last year, Sterling honored Al with a Certificate of Recognition and retirement ceremony for his stellar community service.

Allen's continuing work and research with WPI's Assistive Technology Resource Center (ATRC) also demonstrates his passion and action in enriching the lives of others. The ATRC's outreach program integrates student projects at all academic levels with the design and manufacture of assistive devices to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities. Since 1989, Al and his students have worked with the Massachusetts Hospital School in Canton to help people suffering from muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, spina bifida and other physically disabling conditions. Among the many designs created by his students, Al's important biomedical work on a motor-powered arm orthosis holds promise for increased independence in the daily living activities of many young men who are afflicted with MD.

Al is always available to open WPI's rehabilitation lab for tours to groups from various summer programs, admissions visitors, and science teachers. He regularly volunteers to conduct seminars and workshops on assistive technology for such diverse groups as WPI Alumni College, local AT service providers, and summer youth programs such as Frontiers, GEMS, STRIVE, and, of course, Camp REACH.

Al's diverse activities focused on rehabilitation engineering and assistive technology not only result in improved quality of life for persons with disabilities, but also serve to increase public awareness of disability concerns within the greater community.

Al's extraordinary service to WPI extends well beyond his professorial duties. A quarter of a century after winning the Trustees' Award for Outstanding Teaching, Al's passion and dedication towards the two most important communities in his life – apart from the Hoffman clan – have not wavered. Although Al has also won the coveted Trustees' Award for Outstanding Research and Creative Scholarship in 1989, we believe that ultimately Al will most cherish the Nicoletti Award for Service to the Community among all his prestigious awards.

For his many, many years of dedicated service to the WPI community and communities beyond, we honor Allen H. Hoffman with the 2006 Denise Nicoletti Trustees' Award for Service to Community.