

2017

UNIVERSITY TEACHING AWARDS



JANE F. THRAILKILL

Board of Governors' Award for Excellence in Teaching

TITLE AND DEPARTMENT Bowman and Gordon Gray Distinguished Term Associate Professor of English and comparative literature

FACULTY MEMBER SINCE 2000

HOMETOWN Chester, Vermont

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?

Dale Griffith, my English teacher at Barrington High School in Illinois. He taught me three things: 1) that William Faulkner is actually funny, 2) that you should never make any noise at the opera, and 3) that in academia, murder is more acceptable than plagiarism. My friends and I had such a crush on him that one night we transplanted dozens of "house for sale" signs on to his front yard - a strange way to express affection, but somehow it made sense at age 16!

Describe an "Aha!" moment you had when learning how to teach students.

Once I had laryngitis and class went beautifully anyway. If you give students the space to observe carefully and talk about a literary work they will discover much of what you had planned in your lecture - and teach you something new, to boot. Aha, I thought, teachers need to talk less. (Though I find it's sometimes hard to take my own advice....)

Describe a time when you learned something from a student.

A UNC student changed forever how I interpret *The Scarlet Letter*. He asked, "Who is buried under the grave stone at the end of the novel?" I - like 150 years of readers - had assumed it was the two lovers, Hester Prynne and Arthur Dimmesdale. But that's pure romance! The Puritans would never have buried an unmarried pastor next to the woman who bore his child. So here are all these readers, who in 1850 in the United States are terribly divided politically, unthinkingly agreeing on a crucial (and controversial!) plot point. By "filling in the blank" of a literary tombstone on which no names are inscribed, we all take the romantic perspective and reunite the lovers in death.

Name a fun fact about yourself.

My great-great-great grandfather, Alexander Davis Betts, is quoted on one of the steps of the UNC War Memorial (next to Memorial Hall).

EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION

“ She laid the foundation for what I hope to be a lifelong pursuit of the medical humanities and the compassionate, humanistic practice of medicine.

Established by the Board of Governors in April 1994 to underscore the importance of teaching and to reward good teaching across the university system, the awards are given annually to a tenured faculty member from each UNC institution.



TANNER AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING

ABOUT

This award was created in 1952 with a bequest by the children of Lola Spencer and Simpson Bobo Tanner in memory of their parents. The award recognizes excellence in inspirational teaching of undergraduate students, particularly first- and second-year students.



JENNIFER GATES-FOSTER

TITLE AND DEPARTMENT Assistant professor of classics, adjunct assistant professor of archaeology

FACULTY MEMBER SINCE 2013

HOMETOWN Carrollton, Mississippi

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?

Clemon P. Jimmerson, my first and third grade teacher in Biloxi, Mississippi. He taught me I could learn anything if I really wanted to do it and was willing to put in the time, even as a little child. He was also incredibly gentle and supportive. I will always be indebted to him for pushing me to do more and helping me memorize the Gettysburg Address in first grade! I still remember it.

Describe an "Aha!" moment you had when learning how to teach students.

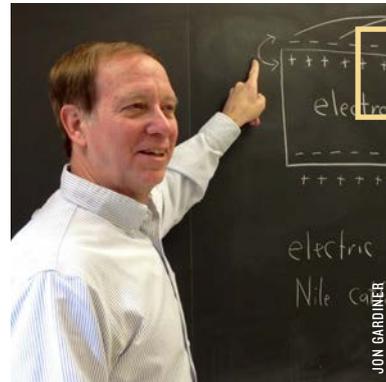
I remember vividly the first time a group of students stopped responding only to me in a class and began to talk – really talk – to each other. Up to that point, I had never known how electric a classroom could be once they started to hear each other and care that their peers understood their position. I had no idea an undergraduate class could be like that. It was a revelation.

Name a fun fact about yourself.

The first time I took part in an archaeological excavation I was only 15 years old.

EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION

“ I was struck by how she told us what it felt like to pull those pieces of pottery out of the earth and the tears of joy that streamed down her face. It was those emotions that inspired me to be a part of something like that, that I needed to explore my passion for archaeology like she had.



KENNETH J. LOHMANN

TITLE AND DEPARTMENT Charles P. Postelle Jr. Distinguished Professor of biology, adjunct professor of marine sciences

FACULTY MEMBER SINCE 1991

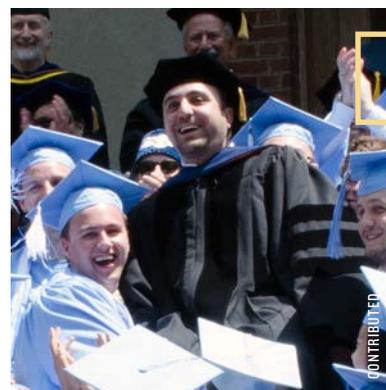
HOMETOWN West Lafayette, Indiana

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?

My high school biology teacher (Dr. Ken Bush) introduced me to research and mentored me on a three-year science fair project involving frog calls. From that point on, I was hooked on biology.

Describe an "Aha!" moment you had when learning how to teach students.

Early on I took students in my marine biology class to the coast for a weekend field trip. It was amazing to watch students who had been dutiful but uninspired suddenly come to life as they waded through estuaries and saw the crabs, anemones, and other animals we had been studying right there in the natural environment. I realized then that a day out in the world can have a greater impact than weeks in a classroom.



MOHAMMAD HOSSEIN JARRAHI

TITLE AND DEPARTMENT Assistant professor in the School of Information and Library Science

FACULTY MEMBER SINCE 2013

HOMETOWN Tehran, Iran

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?

Picking one will be a disservice to so many of them who inspired me over the years.

Describe an "Aha!" moment you had when learning how to teach students.

Occasional jokes help convey the content while maintaining students' attention.

Name a fun fact about yourself.

I sometimes sleep with semi-open eyes!

EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION

“ Ken is the exemplar of the best Carolina has to offer: a world class researcher and scholar who also has the skills and passion to be an outstanding educator.

Name a fun fact about yourself.

I was an undergraduate at Duke and was co-captain of the track team there. However, I have now been at UNC long enough to be fully rehabilitated.

EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION

“ Even after graduation, Mohammad's students stay in touch with him and volunteer to come back to speak to his classes, linking the subject matter in class to life after graduation.



TANNER AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING



ENRIQUE NEBLETT

TITLE AND DEPARTMENT Associate professor of psychology and neuroscience

FACULTY MEMBER SINCE 2008

HOMETOWN East Orange, New Jersey

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?

Ms. Raikes, my third grade teacher. She made us repeat over and over “If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again,” which still sticks in my head until this day. She set high standards, was a great motivator and she believed in her students – which made us believe in ourselves.

Describe an “Aha!” moment you had when learning how to teach students.

How you treat and value your students matters more than just about anything else. A compliment, believing in your students and words of encouragement will go a long way.

EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION

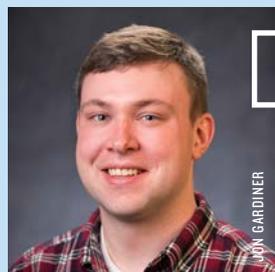
“ He has by far been the best professor I have had at UNC, and I’ll be sad to go when I graduate in May.

Name a fun fact about yourself.

I am a University of Michigan fanatic, and if you spot someone on campus with a Michigan umbrella or argyle socks, it’s probably me.

TANNER AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING

BY GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS



WILL BEGLEY Georgia, Vermont

DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?

Until seventh grade, I was homeschooled, so all my classes were taught by my mother. She was (and still is) an excellent, excellent teacher, and the more teachers I’ve had, the more I realized how well she taught.



SAMUEL SMITH Hampstead, North Carolina

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY AND NEUROSCIENCE

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?

My high school teacher, Mr. Ritter. He always expected a lot from his students, but was able to introduce an air of levity into each class that made the environment interesting and engaging – even when the material itself might not have been.



TAMARA FAKHOURY Beirut, Lebanon

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?

My philosophy professors at the American University of Beirut. They provided me with the best examples of good pedagogy and excellent character. They are also exceptionally intelligent, worldly, and wonderfully supportive of their students.



PRISCILLA VAZ Tres Lagoas, Brazil

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?

Clarinda, my Portuguese teacher in 7th grade. She was the first of only three black teachers I ever had to this day. She taught me how to interrupt firmly, but lovingly and with confidence, situations of class prejudice and explicit and tacit racism.



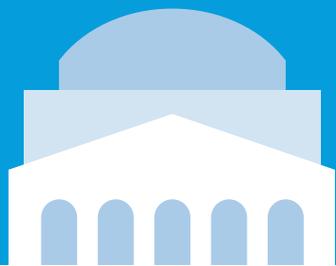
ZELIHA KILIC Istanbul, Turkey

DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?

My high school chemistry teacher. He was very motivating and was always going beyond the syllabus to give us the best of his knowledge.

In 1990, the University expanded the purview of the Tanner Awards to recognize excellence in the teaching of undergraduates by graduate teaching assistants.



TANNER AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING



LILLIE SEARLES

TITLE AND DEPARTMENT

Associate professor of biology

FACULTY MEMBER SINCE

1986

HOMETOWN

Rock Hill, South Carolina

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?

My best teacher was Professor Henry McBay, who was the instructor of two chemistry courses (general and physical chemistry) that I took when I was an undergraduate student. His classes were very challenging, and he was somewhat eccentric, which made class more interesting. He occasionally sprinkled into his lectures small gems about his philosophy of life, usually told in a humorous way. He was an extraordinary mentor, who encouraged my interest in the sciences throughout my time in college and beyond. Over the course of his career he had a lasting impact on many people.

Describe an "Aha!" moment you had when learning how to teach students.

In the classes that I currently teach, we spend a good deal of class time discussing experiments from primary research articles. Although this is a new experience for many students, most of them seem to enjoy the challenge. An "Aha!" moment for me was the point when I discovered that more learning occurs when I talk less and allow more time for the students to engage with each other in small groups. This gives them low-risk opportunities to work through many of their questions before we engage in discussions that involve the whole class. I enjoy facilitating this process.

EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION

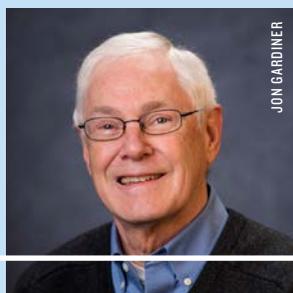
“She is a fantastic professor both in the classroom and during office hours, with a deep knowledge of the material she teaches and a commitment to ensuring that students thoroughly understand.”

Name a fun fact about yourself.

My husband and I have the same birthday, although he is several years older than I am. Both of us also chose careers as college professors.

J. CARLYLE SITTERSON AWARD FOR TEACHING FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

This award was created in 1998 by the family of the late J. Carlyle Sitterson to recognize excellence in freshman teaching by a tenured or tenure-track faculty member in the College of Arts and Sciences.



WILLIAM H. RACE

TITLE AND DEPARTMENT

Professor emeritus of classics

FACULTY MEMBER SINCE

1996

HOMETOWN

Wooster, Ohio

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?

I fell in love with my 11th-grade English teacher, who opened up worlds of human experience I did not know existed. From then on, all I wanted to do was read, read, read.

EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION

“Dr. Race is very learned in his subject area (Greek literature) as well as those outside his area – so he can connect material from other areas.”

Name a fun fact about yourself.

I wanted to be a chemist.



JILLIAN DEMPSEY

TITLE AND DEPARTMENT

Assistant professor of chemistry

FACULTY MEMBER SINCE

2012

HOMETOWN

Summit, New Jersey

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?

Dr. Sheila Pirkle, my 9th-grade physical science teacher! She brought chemistry and physics to life and gave me my periodic table.

EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION

“She made it so easy to succeed if you put forth the effort and she was always conscious of how her students were receiving and retaining the information.”

Name a fun fact about yourself.

I've run four marathons.



GARY JOSEPH PIELAK

Mentor Award for Lifetime Achievement

TITLE AND DEPARTMENT Kenan Distinguished Professor of Chemistry and professor of biochemistry and biophysics, member of UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center

FACULTY MEMBER SINCE 1989

HOMETOWN Rockford, Illinois

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?

Professor Bhagat Singh, my physical chemistry instructor at my undergraduate alma mater, Bradley. Dr. Singh was great at explaining the relationships between the mathematics and the chemical observations. Furthermore, the class was so small, Professor Singh was my lab partner.

Describe an "Aha!" moment you had when learning how to teach students.

My moment came on slowly. After many years, I realized that listening in office hours, at the bench and in my office is key. When I listen, I learn what students know and what they don't know. Listening is the stealth move in life and in class, because hardly anyone does it.

Describe a time when you learned something from a student.

Students drive the research in our lab. Almost every change in research direction has come from a student walking in to my office and saying, "We should try ..." In fact, my two most highly cited publications have UNC undergraduates as first authors.

Name a fun fact about yourself.

I know Morse code .- .- .. / -.- - - - ..- / -.. - - - - . - - - -
[and you don't]

This award, created in 1997, acknowledges a lifetime of contributions to a broad range of teaching and learning, particularly mentoring beyond the classroom.

EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION

“ He is willing to help work through the tough decisions that talented people often have to make to leave some opportunities behind in pursuit of other ones.



F. CHARLES WISS

William C. Friday/Class of 1986 Award for Excellence in Teaching

TITLE AND DEPARTMENT Senior lecturer of psychology and neuroscience

FACULTY MEMBER SINCE 2007

HOMETOWN Short Hills, New Jersey

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?

Jerry Miller, University of Michigan. He inspired me to go into the field and taught me that passion and compassion as teacher can be contagious.

Describe an "Aha!" moment you had when learning how to teach students.

When I got a lengthy e-mail from a student thanking me profusely for a C, and I realized that different students have very different goals.

Describe a time when you learned something from a student.

Almost every day. UNC students are so smart and knowledgeable. One of the many joys of teaching

is getting to learn new things continuously from lots of different students.

Name a fun fact about yourself.

I enjoy snowboarding, mountain biking, backpacking and playing in a band in my spare time.

The award was created by members of the 1986 graduating class to recognize faculty who have exemplified excellence in inspirational teaching. It is named in honor of the late William C. Friday, who devoted a lifetime of service to the University as president of the University of North Carolina system.

EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION

“ He has shown me there is so much to learn in the field of psychology and that there is much good that can be done in the world with the knowledge you can learn from higher level psych education.



DISTINGUISHED TEACHING AWARDS FOR POST-BACCALAUREATE INSTRUCTION

ABOUT

This award was first given by the University in 1995 to recognize the important role of post-baccalaureate teaching.



JON GARDNER

JAMIE ARGUELLO

TITLE AND DEPARTMENT Assistant professor in the School of Information and Library Science

FACULTY MEMBER SINCE 2011

HOMETOWN Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?

My adviser during my master's degree was very enthusiastic, driven and had BIG ideas about her research. As an assistant professor, it's sometimes tempting to work on research that is safe, yet somewhat incremental. Over the past few years, I have thought about her a lot and have come to appreciate how forward-thinking she was as a young assistant professor.

Describe an "Aha!" moment you had when learning how to teach students.

When teaching students about a solution to a particular problem, I have learned that it helps to first ask: What would you do to solve the problem? This gets students thinking about what the solution should do, even if they don't

EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION

“ He is an amazing teacher who leaves you with a hunger to go out and learn more.

know how. While the devil is in the details, solutions to a problem (even complex problems) often have simple motivations and intuitions. I think students appreciate seeing that their own intuitions are often correct.

Name a fun fact about yourself.

None of my childhood friends can believe that I'm a professor.



JON GARDNER

MARILYN GHEZZI

TITLE AND DEPARTMENT Clinical assistant professor in the School of Social Work

FACULTY MEMBER SINCE 2002

HOMETOWN Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?

I loved my high school AP English teacher. She was enthusiastic and kind, and I felt like she was truly interested in me as a person. She treated us like adults and let us bring in readings, song lyrics and other materials that related to the literature we were studying which made texts that were hundreds of years old feel contemporary and relevant.

Describe an "Aha!" moment you had when learning how to teach students.

When I first began to teach at UNC, I attended a teaching workshop. The workshop leader noted that good teachers love teaching and are often "having fun" when they teach. I realized

EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION

“ I wish I could be in her classroom forever.

a playful attitude in the classroom encourages students to take risks, experiment and ask questions. It also promotes an atmosphere of safety and collaboration rather than competition.

Name a fun fact about yourself.

I spent much of my childhood pretending to be a cat.

GAVIN PAUL SMITH

TITLE AND DEPARTMENT Research professor of city and regional planning and director of the Coastal Resilience Center

FACULTY MEMBER SINCE 2008

HOMETOWN Shoreacres, Texas



JON GARDNER

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?

Dennis Wenger. He took on the role of Ph.D. adviser after my former chair left the university. He proceeded to guide me through the process and I'm forever grateful. We remain close friends to this day.

Describe an "Aha!" moment you had when learning how to teach students.

Whenever deep engagement through storytelling helps to clarify a concept, theory and/or describes other broad topical areas like policymaking and empathy. experiment and ask questions. It also promotes an atmosphere of safety and collaboration rather than competition.

EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION

“ He is one of the most kind, humble and hardworking people I have ever met. He's had meetings at the White House, but one would never know it.

Name a fun fact about yourself.

I am an avid cyclist.





DISTINGUISHED TEACHING AWARDS FOR POST-BACCALAUREATE INSTRUCTION



JON GARDNER

BRIAN ZAGUIRRE RAYALA

TITLE AND DEPARTMENT Clinical associate professor of family medicine in the School of Medicine

FACULTY MEMBER SINCE 2011

HOMETOWN Marikina, Philippines

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?

Arnold Esguerra, my history professor in college, opened my eyes to the beauty and vastness of the world around me, far beyond the four walls of our classroom.

Describe an "Aha!" moment you had when learning how to teach students.

I learned early on the importance of having your student perform return demonstration. One time I was teaching my fellow-in-training how to tie off the end of a subcuticular suture. I gave him lots of verbal instructions, but it wasn't helping. I then demonstrated how it's done. When I asked him to perform it in front of me, I watched him do it and saw the errors he was making. I was able to provide clearer verbal and hands-on feedback. What an instructive moment for me!

EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION

“One thing that is really special about Dr. Rayala is his inclusion of the patient in our teaching. He educates the residents in front of the patient without making patients feel like ‘guinea pigs.’”

Name a fun fact about yourself.

I learned skiing at the age of 31 and have since pursued it passionately.

JOHNSTON TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

This award was created in 1991 to recognize excellence in undergraduate teaching. The awards are funded by the James M. Johnston Scholarship Program.



JON GARDNER

LORRAINE CRAMER

TITLE AND DEPARTMENT
Lecturer of microbiology and immunology in the School of Medicine

FACULTY MEMBER SINCE
2001

HOMETOWN
Indianapolis, Indiana

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?

Dr. Andrew Mehall, my science instructor in college. He would bonk people on the head with erasers to indicate he was sending messages when he thought they weren't paying attention. He was capable of instilling excitement, enthusiasm and fun into everything he taught. He made me want to be a college teacher.

EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION

“She lives and breathes microbiology and gets more excited about peptidoglycan than a kid in a candy shop.”

Name a fun fact about yourself.

I am a self-admitted sci-fi nerd (I use the Helms Deep fight from Lord of the Rings as my go-to immunology example).



JON GARDNER

MARSHA PENNER

TITLE AND DEPARTMENT
Lecturer of psychology and neuroscience

FACULTY MEMBER SINCE
2013

HOMETOWN
Steinbach, Manitoba, Canada

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?

Dr. Michael McIntyre at the University of Winnipeg. He was a great teacher because he genuinely loved teaching. The most important things that I have learned, I have learned from mentors who are not “teachers” in the traditional sense. What makes them great teachers and mentors is that they are generous with their time and expertise, and are eager to share their knowledge.

EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION

“She is willing to think with us as she goes, and she shows us what it looks like to form an opinion that may or may not agree with the source.”

Name a fun fact about yourself.

I am a certified, professional dog trainer.



CHAPMAN FAMILY AWARDS FOR DISTINGUISHED UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING

ABOUT

This award was created in 1993 with a gift by Max Carrol Chapman Jr. '66 on behalf of the Chapman family, to honor distinguished teaching of undergraduate students.



PAUL NICHOLAS FRIGA

TITLE AND DEPARTMENT Clinical associate professor of strategy and entrepreneurship in Kenan-Flagler Business School
FACULTY MEMBER SINCE 2008
HOMETOWN Strasburg, Virginia

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?
My father – he taught me ethics, strategic planning and the meaning of life.

Describe an "Aha!" moment you had when learning how to teach students.
After my first very rough year in teaching, I learned to have a clear, core and relevant content framework to share and put most of my energy into developing unique and exciting ways to get students engaged and excited about the material (always incorporating a theme of experiential learning).

Name a fun fact about yourself.
I considered an acting career at one point. My credits include 10 plays (lead in four) and three movies (as an extra).

EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION

“ Consulting Skills and Framework was easily one of the best courses I’ve ever taken. It throws you into the real world pretty early on, so you learn by doing, but it doesn’t punish you grade-wise either. I came into the class with no case or consulting experience at all, and ended up doing very well in the competitions.”



COREY JOHNSON

TITLE AND DEPARTMENT Senior lecturer of biology
FACULTY MEMBER SINCE 2007
HOMETOWN Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?
Kurt Redborg, because he pushed me. In my college physiology class, a 93 got you an A and exempt from the cumulative final. I had a 92.5 and Dr. Redborg made me take the final. Now I teach physiology.

Describe an "Aha!" moment you had when learning how to teach students.
I was sitting in a seminar where the presenter was reading his slides. It occurred to me that I could not read because the presenter kept speaking (he was speaking the same thing I was reading). It struck me that my own students would be either reading or listening, but not both. I let this thinking guide the construction of my presentations.

EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION

“ This class has been my favorite one that I’ve taken at UNC, and Dr. Johnson is a fantastic professor.”

Name a fun fact about yourself.
When I was young, all I wanted to be when I grew up was retired.



BANU GOKARIKSEL

TITLE AND DEPARTMENT Director of graduate studies and associate professor in geography, associate professor of global studies
FACULTY MEMBER SINCE 2005
HOMETOWN Adana, Turkey

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?
My middle school English teacher who taught us how to speak Elvish [from J.R.R. Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings*].

Describe an "Aha!" moment you had when learning how to teach students.
When I use students’ personal experiences and stories to introduce cultural geographic concepts.

Name a fun fact about yourself.
I can’t whistle.

EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION

“ She creates a welcoming, yet intellectually challenging, environment for every individual. It is evident that she genuinely cares about the success of every student.”

SCOTT CONKLIN, student intern in the Office of University Communications, compiled the information for this year’s university teaching awards insert. See the insert and awards citations online at gazette.unc.edu.