

Alfred University honors two with ♦Fiat Lux!♦ Awards at annual holiday luncheon

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Student Beryl Torthe gives a jar, filled with thank-yous from current students, to Yvonne Squadrilli

ALFRED, NY Two members of the Alfred University community received “Fiat Lux!” awards at the annual holiday luncheon Tuesday for Alfred University faculty and staff. Honored were Yvonne Squadrilli, who works for AU Fresh, the University&s food service provider, and Dr. Larry Greil, professor of sociology, who has taught at the University for 40 years.

What the two have in common, said Alfred University President Mark Zupan, is their deep commitment to students and to building the University community.

Squadrilli is the card-checker at Ade Dining Hall, one who memorizes students& names and greets them each time they visit the dining hall. Squadrilli keeps a knitting project at hand, and during lulls, she often works on her latest project, oftentimes giving the knitted items to students as they pass through the line.

Senior Beryl Torthe collected thank you notes from current students to present to Squadrilli at the luncheon.

Earlier generations of Alfred University students knew Squadrilli as “The Egg Lady,” the person who cooked eggs to order in the dining hall. She knew students by name, and breakfast preference.

Students have recognized Squadrilli&s contributions in the past, voting her a two-time winner of an “Alfie” Award, once for best support staff person and once for her radio show on the student radio station, WALF.

But students are unaware how Squadrilli helps them in other ways. In 2006, after the death of her partner, Dr. Gail Walker, Squadrilli established the Gail Walker Book Fund to assist students who cannot afford to pay for their books. Squadrilli explained that Dr. Walker was very concerned about the ability of students who struggled financially, and knew that some cut corners by forgoing books.

“This is such an honor,” said Squadrilli. “But it is hard, because I love to give rather than to receive, but this is lovely.”

As for the Alfred University students with whom she has interacted during her 20 years of working in food service, “I love all my ‘babies.& Each one is an individual, with an enormous amount of kindness to give.” She creates a “kindness tree,” asking each student to help someone else. She recalled one student saying to her, “I have no kindness to give,” but she convinced him that he had limitless amounts of kindness to share with others.

Larry Greil is a professor of sociology who has spent 40 years at the University as a teacher, researcher, faculty advisor, and administrator.

Greil started his career at Alfred University in January 1971. Diligent about his scholarship and research, Greil has authored four books, as well as dozens of journal articles and book chapters.

In addition to his academic endeavors, Greil has been an associate dean and acting dean for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and chair of the Social Sciences Division for 20 years. He was chair of the committee that created Alfred University's Honors Program and was founding director of the program from 1985 until 1987.

Greil is well-known to students beyond his own department as he is also the advisor to Hillel at Alfred, which serves students at both Alfred University and Alfred State College. Succeeding the venerable Dr. Mel Bernstein in the role, Greil is only the second advisor Hillel at Alfred has had.

His puckish sense of humor became known to thousands outside Alfred University at Halloween, Zupan noted. For the past four or five years, Greil has dressed as "Papa Smurf," the infamously blue cartoon character with white hair and a beard, not unlike Greil in real life. A student posted a photo of "Papa Smurf" on Instagram, and it went 'viral,' spreading the word of Alfred University across our nation.

Absent from the luncheon, Greil again demonstrated his sense of humor in his videotaped remarks, saying, "I would like to thank the members of the Alfred University Academy for the honor."