

Strong receive Presidential Orders of Merit

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Two veteran Alfred University educators received Presidential Orders of Merit for their service to the University during a surprise presentation at the annual Honors Convocation. President Charles M. Edmondson presented Dr. Paul Strong and Dr. Susan Strong with the Orders of Merit, citing their contributions in and out of the classroom and library. A professor of English, Dr. Paul Strong joined the AU faculty in 1971. He is, said Edmondson, "a gifted classroom teacher, a notable Hemingway scholar, and a mentor of countless Alfred University students." He is a multiple winner of Excellence in Teaching Awards from the University and in 1991 received the Joseph Kruson Faculty Award for Distinguished Service. He is a member of the Blue Key Society, Phi Kappa Phi and the Alfred University chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's oldest honor society. "But his legacy at Alfred University is created as director of the Alfred University Honors Program, a title he has held for 23 of the 24 years of the program's existence," Edmondson said. "He took what was a fledgling program and shaped it into a hallmark of the Alfred University experience (that) evoke the creativity and, yes, the quirkiness, that are so much a part of the Alfred fabric." One alumna, writing about her friend, teacher and mentor, said of Dr. Strong, "No other professor has ever had, for me, such talent, wit, love, and a zest for life and teaching." That is, said Edmondson, "a fitting tribute, indeed, for someone who has spent a lifetime guiding and teaching Alfred University students." Dr. Susan R. Strong is a woman "whose service to Alfred University over more than 30 years has helped to change and improve the institution profoundly," said Edmondson. Susan Strong began her service to AU 35 years ago as part-time reference librarian at Scholes Library of Ceramics. After earning a master's in library science, she became art reference librarian in 1977. In 1986, she was named assistant dean of the New York State College of Ceramics, and when Richard W. Ott became provost in 1988, she was acting dean of the College for two years. In 1990, she became assistant vice president for Academic Affairs, and in 1996, added yet another title: vice president for Enrollment Management, a title she held until 2004. Although her administrative service might have made it more difficult, it did not diminish her interest in scholarship, Edmondson noted. "She has continued to write articles and make presentations dealing with art, ceramics, the history of Alfred University, and, in particular, the history of women at Alfred University." Strong, who earned a Ph.D. from the University of Rochester. She has just completed a book, "Thought Knows No Sex: Women's Rights at Alfred University," published by SUNY Press. Susan Strong was "instrumental in convincing Phi Beta Kappa to award a chapter to Alfred University's College of Liberal Arts & Sciences in 2003," Edmondson said. Fewer than 300 colleges nationwide have Phi Beta Kappa chapters. She is the 2006 recipient of an Abigail Allen Award for service to women; received the Founder's Award from the Alfred Circle of Omicron Delta Kappa in 2001; was inducted into Alpha Lambda Delta in 1999; and received the State University of New York Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Librarianship in 1986.