

Student Awards 2001

St. Ignatius Loyola Medal: Kevin C. Hayes

Respectful, intelligent, committed, compassionate, and unassuming, are just a few of the words that have been used to describe Kevin Hayes from administrators and students alike. Kevin is the essence of a well-rounded person as demonstrated through his academic achievements, spiritual devotion, and commitment to our Jesuit mission. It has been said, "Kevin lives his life in the true Ignatian spirit, he is caring and concerned for others. He puts these ideals into practice in his daily life with integrity and compassion."

Academically, Kevin is presently a member of two prominent honor societies: Alpha Sigma Nu, the Jesuit Honor Society and Pi Sigma Alpha, the National Political Science Honor Society. As a politics major, he maintains an exceptional G.P.A., ranking in the top ten percent of the class, and has been named to the academic dean's list four semesters.

Kevin's tenure as FUSA president was a year of unique challenges. From intense discussions and negotiations over strained town-gown relations at the beach, to campus facility renovations that impacted student life, Kevin has represented the students and the University with dignity and diplomacy. His courage and conviction to do what is right has made him a role model for all student leaders. As president of FUSA, Kevin worked tirelessly on behalf of student rights whether it be at the beach or on campus.

Although Kevin was involved with student government throughout his four years, he still found time to be a leader for T.E.A.M or Together Effectively Achieving Multiculturalism, a member of the Fairfield University Crisis Management team, lector for Campus Ministry, member of the College of Arts and Sciences dean's search committee and a coordinator for Freshman Orientation.

Besides his extraordinary involvement on campus, he participated in Global Outreach to Duran, Ecuador. He described the trip as an eye-opening experience, one that he felt brought meaning and enrichment to his life.

Kevin's diverse and countless accomplishments have led him to numerous aspirations for the future. He feels Fairfield University gave him the opportunity, not only to further himself academically, but also allowed him to further himself as an individual. He remembers entering the University as just another freshman, but through the encouragement of others, embraced the opportunities before him to experience personal growth and renewed faith. Kevin says its not just being at Fairfield that has allowed such growth, but it was truly being a part of Fairfield University.

Student Achievement Awards: Courtney A. Darts

As a timid, quiet freshman, Courtney joined the Debate Team to boost her public speaking skills, and what emerged by her senior year was a confident, articulate woman. She has gained tremendous self-confidence from her work with the team, and considers her mom and past debate partner as those who inspired her to get involved. Today she,

along with other members of the board, has worked excessively to keep the team enthusiastic and serious about debating. This past August she formed a debate workshop for returning members to attend before classes began. She was extremely focused on keeping Fairfield's debate team as a strong presence in the APDA (American Parliamentary Debate Association). She has truly brought the team to new heights.

Significant achievements for Courtney and the debate team include reforming the setup of the board and winning a major national tournament. She took a board of typical seats and made them into positions that were useful in furthering the team's mission. From having a president, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary, the team now has more effective decision-making and a more closely knit board. Additionally, Fairfield University was put on the international map when Courtney placed well at the World Debate Invitational. On a regional level, the team placed well against Ivy League Schools.

She feels that Fairfield has given her the chance to choose the things she likes to do and the ability to do them. Now she enjoys talking about the issues debates, meeting new people, and learning their take on issues. She also credits her success from the support of professors who pushed her to get involved with clubs and activities. In addition to this she feels she is leaving Fairfield with an emotional as well as intellectual bond to her team.

Along with her leadership and work on the debate team, Courtney is also part of the Glee Club, has written for *The Mirror*, was a charter members of the Woman to Woman program and spent a semester abroad. Academically, Courtney is in the honors program and was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa.

Her future plans are to go to graduate school or continue with a career in public relations.

**Student Achievement Award:
Timothy P. Healy**

When asked what work best describes him, Tim Healy responds, "busy," with a big smile. Tim upholds the highest level of organization to provide structure to his demanding schedule. Tim's passion for politics and zeal for public service led him to campaign for a position on the Representative Town Meeting (RTM) and was elected to serve a two-year term. His commitment to his constituents is reflected in his efforts to create a relationship between the residents of the Town of Fairfield and the University students. He has been an advocate for the University and offers a positive voice while attempting to find solutions to conflicts between the students and the beach residents.

Aside from campaigning for office and servicing as an elected public official, Tim is the Chief Justice of the Fairfield University Student Court. Under Tim's direction, the Court has take a pro-active approach to student rights and has authored two opinions concerning student rights. He implements and carries out University policy by leading the body for judicial infractions. Additionally, Tim recruits, trains, and oversees nine additional justices to assist him on the court. Tim's peers describe his administration on the court, "Tim radiates with enthusiasm for what he does and turns three intense hours of a Sunday night into a meaningful learning experience for all involved." His

professionalism and integrity has led to a respected judicial body that creates a vital balance between the students and administration.

Tim's motto *non sibi sed curotis*, Latin for "It's not for oneself, but for all," reflects his dedication to the University community. His involvement at Fairfield ascends beyond politics as he dedicated his time as co-coordinator to the Freshman First Year Experience Committee, in which he selected, trained, and managed over 120 students to implement the program. Additional campus activities include FUSA, Fairfield University Election Commission Chair, working for the office of admission, and writing for the school paper, *The Mirror*.

Tim's academic life is no different that all of his endeavors. He is a politics major and minors in legal studies, English, and religious studies. He maintained excellent grades and was elected as a member of Pi Sigma Alpha. He plans to attend graduate school for a master's degree in politics and to lead a life of public service.

Student Achievement Award: Felipe J. Polanco

Felipe Polanco is a role model of an individual living his faith in service to others. Selfless is the word that was consistently repeated when administrators and students nominated Felipe. Although he may be most associated with Habitat for Humanity or MLK events, the underlying mission in all that Felipe has taken on deals with social justice and challenging the University community to become more aware of these issues.

Two years ago he devoted himself to being vice president of Habitat for Humanity, in addition to his already long list of activities he was involved in at the time. But this past year he has shown his passion for Habitat for Humanity by taking on the role of president and continuing the new chapter's commitment to educate the community and raise funds to build or renovate homes for the inadequately sheltered. He describes Habitat for Humanity, not as an organization that builds homes, but an organization that builds communities and families. He was most touched when he met one of the families that would inhabit a house they were constructing and it was then that he knew he was truly making a difference. He says that situations like that are what keep him going.

It doesn't end there. Felipe is also the vice president of multicultural relations. One event the organization hosts is the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. three-day celebration, which Felipe turned into a superlative event, having extraordinary speakers and activities. Along with this, he was the executive coordinator and co-chairperson of the First Year Experience orientation program, acting as a liaison between the student coordinators and the director of new student programs. He has been a spokesperson for Concerned University Community Member, where he has led numerous press conferences, coordinated and participated in a three-day hunger strike for the rights of janitors to unionize, and also as a Spanish translator. Finally, he went to Duran, Ecuador as a mission volunteer.

When asked what he received and will walk away with from Fairfield University, he said "maturity." He feels that Fairfield has allowed him to grow in ways he never knew or thought were possible. After graduation, Felipe plans to enter the corporate world at First Investors. His aspirations down the road is to further his research started at Fairfield concerning micro-lending, which is giving money to the poor, and involving

himself with something in the public sector. He hopes never to lose his spirit of activism, nor his ties with Habitat for Humanity and Fairfield University.

**Student Achievement Award:
Sheniqua A. Rowe**

Sheniqua has been a driving force since her first day at Fairfield. Together with faculty, administrators and students, Sheniqua has spent her four years at Fairfield University dedicated to promoting and improving a greater awareness and celebration of multicultural relations.

As a freshman, Sheniqua went through a period of time where she found it difficult to adjust. UMOJA, a support organization for African-American/Caribbean students was the group that gave Sheniqua a sense of community and allowed her to have a voice. The club discusses issues in a group setting that are relevant to multicultural students and gives them an outlet to express their feelings and concerns in a comfortable atmosphere. UMOJA became her passion because she recognized the need for such a program to become more publicized to the wider campus community.

She served two terms as president and she and her executive board developed the club into a unique organization that allows multicultural students to gain support in their diversity and celebrate it. This energy and perseverance culminated in UMOJA receiving the Club of the Year Award for breaking down barriers and increasing programming for cultural awareness on campus. Sheniqua also founded the Unity Ball, the capstone event of the three-day Martin Luther King, Jr. celebrations. The Unity Ball brings together all cultures and encourages us to live together as one.

In addition to Sheniqua's devotion to UMOJA, she is also a member of the AHANA Student Council, a program leader for T.E.A.M (Together Effectively Achieving Multiculturalism), and COSO director (Council of Student Organizations) for FUSA.

Sheniqua has achieved exceptional academic success as a recipient of the Christopher Blake Love Award for the past three years. She has also been named to *Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges*.

As one friend said it best, "Sheniqua has served Fairfield as an activist who stood up against injustices, an innovator, business woman, and role model. She has contributed tremendously to the diversity and growth of Fairfield University." As Sheniqua prepares to leave Fairfield, she will not stop making an impact on the people around her. After graduation, Sheniqua would like to spend two years working and then head to Columbia University to obtain a master's degree.

**Student Achievement Award:
Stephen G. Winkel**

"A successful person is one who can lay a firm foundation with the bricks that are thrown at him or her," says Steve. His credo is exemplified through his development of the S.K.I.L.L. program here at Fairfield. S.K.I.L.L. is a leadership program for developing an individual's interpersonal and communication skills. Each later has its own unique meaning: Service exemplifies Jesuit ideals as well as service to the

community, immersing oneself into society and preparing for the future; Knowledge of oneself and how one works with others; Integrity in building one's own character; Linkages to the business world network, making use of resources and people to get something done or obtain information desired; and Literacy is concerned with all communication skills.

While in search of an internship in the field of higher education, he discovered the program known as S.K.I.L.L. Steve used a two-year internship in student activities to refine random campus leadership development programs for students into Fairfield's version of S.K.I.L.L. He researched the S.K.I.L.L. programs at Jesuit institutions and developed a program for Fairfield. "Steve doesn't need or except recognition because he loves what he does" said one of his advisors. Using his creativity and initiative he networked with faculty, leadership experts and alumni to help develop and lecture to Fairfield student leaders. The program grew from 20 participants to over 70 students and has paved the way for future student leaders.

Steve has also been involved with FUSA as director of publicity and as co-coordinator for special events for new student programs. He also oversaw all aspects of Senior Week for the class of 2000. This past January, Steve became a mission volunteer to Duran, Ecuador through Global Outreach. Along with these experiences, he sang with the Glee Club, was a member of the Task Force for FUSA, and was a facilitator to the class of 2003.

He describes his experiences at Fairfield as well rounded, encompassing the best and worst of times. When he looks back at high, it's a blur; here he has grown in character and he has taken advantage of every possibility. His future plans are to attend graduate school with the aid of an assistantship for higher education.

**William J. Kramer '60 Humanitarian Award:
Kerry E. Schardien**

Kerry's dedication and commitment to the service of others stands proud in the Jesuit tradition with her extension of the compassion of Jesus to all. Her spiritual faith, which has only been enhanced by her Fairfield experience, has found completeness through serving those in need. A song used in a retreat by Kerry entitled, "He could you say no?" characterizes her limitless devotion to service in her life.

Kerry's true passion for service is found in her activities both on and off the Fairfield University campus. Since Kerry was 14-years-old, she has been a volunteer at the Center for Hospice Hope. Kerry assists in the general care of terminally ill patients to meet their physical and emotional needs. She brightens the lives of patients by providing companionship and recreational activities.

Kerry is also a camp counselor at Camp Fatima of New Jersey where she can indulge in her love for children. Camp Fatima is an overnight camp experience for children with severe developmental disabilities. As a counselor, Kerry is paired with a camper for who she provides 24-hour care by meeting their special, physical, and emotional needs. When a camper was asked to describe his experience at Camp Fatima, he answered, "Heaven, it's a place where everything is completely perfect for one week." Kerry loves to provide the children with the knowledge that they are great and wonderful.

She has continued her service lovingly since 1994 and has great affection for all her campers.

Kerry gives a piece of herself to many different experiences at Fairfield, including Campus Ministry, Hunger Clean-Up, Urban Plunge, the Literacy Program, and Prospect House Shelter. She has even carried her service to Duran, Ecuador as a mission volunteer assisting in community services for leprosy patients and orphans.

Kerry's zeal for life is also found in her academic career with her psychology major and a double minor in sociology and the study of peace and justice. Kerry also continues her service at academic level by interning at Fairfield University Preparatory High School as a counselor for those risking academic failure. She was involved in the initiation and creation of a peer tutoring program, in which she herself tutoring in mathematics, English, Latin, and theology.

As Kerry graduates, her service will continue as she dedicates a year of her life to the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. Kerry's experience at the Deirdre O'Brien Child Advocacy Center, for children who have been sexually abused, has inspired her for the future. She would like to continue her work with children by obtaining a master's degree in social work and counseling abused children.