

When I was elected to the EC of WSCA, I gained what I consider a small backstage glimpse of all that goes into running this organization. In this capacity, I quickly learned that service to the organization is not a sit-back-and-deliberate kind of service, it is a roll-up-your-sleeves-there-is-work-to-be-done kind of service. When it comes to service, WSCA isn't messing around and it shows. In fact, chairing this committee revealed an even deeper understanding of the breadth and depth of service that WSCA routinely gets from its members. The Distinguished Service Award is the organization's highest honor and its best kept secret until a minute or two from now. Today, it is my great pleasure to introduce the recipient of this year's Distinguished Service Award.

This past year, I worked with the rest of the DSA committee, Mark Bergstrom, Melissa Tafoya, and Derek Buescher. We solicited nominations, reviewed supporting materials, and then began the difficult task of selecting a winner from an incredibly deserving and very deep slate of nominations. When we finally reached consensus, we not only had a recipient, we also arrived at the conclusion, that WSCA is well-served.

Let me tell you a bit about who we will honor today.

The glowing and detailed letters of support describe this recipient as someone willing to hear everyone with an open mind and heart, and an excellent mentor of graduate students and faculty alike. This person's contributions to the discipline have changed the face of communication study across our country and around the globe authoring and editing five books, and close to 100 publications. Beyond academia, this year's award goes to a person whose scholarly-informed volunteer work in conflict mediation and community engagement has made a difference in communities near and far.

To look *just* at WSCA service is to see that this person has served with a generous and selfless spirit in leadership roles such as president, past president, vice-president elect, member of the article of the year selection committee, and interest group chair. This person has served on the editorial board of Western Journal of Communication since 2008 and reviewed for it for roughly 20 years before that.

This all amounts to impressive service but what kicks it over to distinguished? We learned that before this person agreed to run against another candidate

for first vice president of the organization, they agreed to share the presidential suite, regardless of who won! We learned that this person, a senior scholar, is always present at Western and still attends 7 am intercultural interest group meetings.

And then there is this:

this person is only one of two people who served two terms as president of WSCA. This person was not supposed to serve two terms, didn't take on the role knowing two terms were on the table but graciously agreed to a second term. A letter of support said, "he could not think of a more difficult circumstance under which to serve as the President of a professional association. The person we recognize today, not only performed this difficult role, but did so with uncommon grace, caring, and compassion. Of course, as is typical of any task this person undertakes, the task was quickly transformed to a collaborative team effort, creating a third-space for all to reflect on and honor all WSCA members who served the association.

What a remarkable human being. What distinguished service.

It is with admiration, respect, joy, and gratitude that we bestow WSCA's highest honor on Dr. Mary Jane Collier from the University of New Mexico.