Moms Association announces 2017 Award and Scholarship Winners

Champaign, IL – The Moms Association at the University of Illinois at Urban-Champaign has announced the winners of their annual awards and scholarship programs. These recipients were recognized on campus during the annual Moms Weekend program April 7-9.

2017 Humanitarian Award
Justin Lien and Ashley Armstrong the recipients of its 2017 Humanitarian Award. The annual award is given to one graduate student and one undergraduate student who have developed innovative approaches to community service work and have translated their ideas into practical results. Each recipient received a stipend, and a grant will be given to a charity or organization of their choice on their behalf.

Armstrong was chosen as the graduate student recipient. Armstrong, who is studying mechanical engineering in the Department of Mechanical Science and Engineering, enjoys inspiring, teaching, befriending, and motivating the next generation of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) leaders. She is head and co-founder of ENISION (Engineers Volunteering in STEM Education) where she organizes and develops hands-on STEM activities for K-12 youth in the Champaign-Urbana area.

Lien was selected as the undergraduate student recipient. Lien is a senior studying molecular and cellular biology and psychology. He has been involved in Illini Emergency Medical Services (IEMS), the organization with which he has chosen to share his award, since his freshman year. Lien has served as the president of IEMS since May 2015. IEMS members provide emergency medical care to over 100 patrons at Illinois events, certify over 500 campus members in CPR, and certify over 60 campus members as EMTs every year. He has also been active in the greater Champaign-Urbana community answering calls with the local crisis line through Rosecrance Champaign/Urbana (formerly Community Elements) for more than three years.

2017 Medallion of Honor
Tonya Pulley was the recipient of the prestigious 2017 Medallion of Honor Award. Pulley has served as an academic advisor on the Illinois campus since 1997. She has advised undergraduate students in the Department of Kinesiology, the Division of General Studies and currently advises undergraduate students in the School of Integrative Biology.

Pulley began her career as a 7th grade science teacher, and after receiving her Master’s degree in Exercise Physiology and Biomechanics, arrived on campus as a lecturer and academic advisor. She views her role as an academic advisor as one that supports, guides, and motivates students through their college years preparing them to be in the best possible position for life after graduation. She loves working with students and often continues to serve an advisor role far past graduation.

The Medallion of Honor award was created in 1966 to pay tribute to those individuals who, by example and service, have used their talents to enrich the lives of others. Two men and eight women were honored between 1966 and 1976. Since 1977, this award has been given to a woman affiliated in some way with the University of Illinois.

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Mom of the Year Award
Maureen Carr of Darien, IL, received the 10th annual Amelia Alpiner Stern Mom of the Year award. The award gives students an opportunity to honor the support, encouragement, and inspiration that their moms and mom figures provide.

Carr was nominated by her daughter Maura, a senior. Maura is the final child of the five in their family to graduate from Illinois. Maura believed that being recognized by the University of Illinois after 40 years of loyalty would mean the world to her mom because she shows love, loyalty, and kindness every single day without expecting anything in return.

“My mom met my dad when she was a sophomore at Illinois and he was a freshman football player. They were the start of my extended family’s love for the orange and blue. I am now the 30th family member (21 out of 27 total cousins) to attend the University of Illinois. Illinois is our family school, and our memories of Champaign have made us closer, all thanks to my mom. She is "loyal to you, Illinois", and has taught her family to be the same.”

Patricia Potempa of Poplar Grove, IL and Karyn Nadler of South Elgin, IL were finalists for Mom of the Year.

Illini Spirit Award
The Women's Resources Center’s I-Heart Healthy Relationships received the Illini Spirit Award. In its ninth year, the award was created to provide financial support to programs and projects that contribute to the safety, health, development and achievement of University of Illinois students.

I-Heart Healthy Relationships is an educational program on abuse within relationships with a particular emphasis on undergraduate women, including international students. It emphasizes how to recognize and build healthy relationships. It utilizes a bystander intervention model to assist students in knowing when and how to intervene when they have concerns about a friend’s relationship. Workshops are peer led by student facilitators specially trained to present the workshops and trained to respond to the sensitive nature of these issues.

Because domestic violence is now included in the Title IX offenses, this past year the Women’s Resource Center piloted a bystander intervention workshop on sexual assault and tailored this workshop on intervening related to abuse within relationships. Their goals are to employ best practices using literature and research including research at the University of Illinois, to pilot the workshop during October’s National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, to expand their efforts to reach 30 student organizations, and assess the outcomes throughout 2017-18 academic year. Funds from the Illini Spirit Award will be used to implement this educational program.

Scholarship Winners
A one-time scholarship of $1,000 was awarded to four full-time University of Illinois students who have successfully completed at least 24 college credit hours. The 2017 Moms Association Scholarship winners are:

- Isabelle Ausdal, soph., agricultural economics with a concentration in agri law and public policy major
- Monika Zmudzki, soph., finance and accountancy major
- Karena Coicou, senior, political science major
- Alexander Bryk, freshman, Spanish major

For more information about the above winners and the Moms Association, please visit union.illinois.edu/PFPO.

The Moms Association at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, established in 1923, is believed to be one of the nation’s longest-serving parent organizations. The Association supports programs, services and activities that promote the health, safety and well-being of the university community and serves as the parent liaison to the campus.

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