**Apperson Award**

The Richard L. Apperson Award, named in honor of PCACAC's first president, is the association's highest honor presented to a PCACAC member.  It is awarded annually to a member whose career embodies the ideals of the association - providing extraordinary service to students, to PCACAC, and to the college counseling profession.

We are pleased to acknowledge this year’s recipient ---

This recipient got her start in higher education like many of us do, as a tour guide for Averett University, located in Danville, Virginia. She graduated with a bachelor’s degree in psychology, and not long after earned a spot as an Admissions Counselor.

She recalls being excited about being paid for the work that she had enjoyed doing as a student. She knew that she wanted to continue her education, and eventually ended up at Radford University, where she earned her master’s degree.

The diversity of her positions & her successes within the field of enrollment management are impressive. From Admissions Counselor at Averett University to Assistant Director of Academic Advising at University of North Carolina-Greensboro to Associate Vice Provost at Virginia Tech and lastly retired in July 2019 from her most recent role, Dean of Admissions at Radford University – This marked the end of an impressive 44-year career in higher education.

The relationships formed and the impact she had on all those she interacted with (present company included) is extensive - From students to admissions teams, from colleagues to relative strangers, **Mildred Johnson** seems to leave a lasting effect on people wherever she goes.

Mildred, tonight we recognize and celebrate your commitment to the students, families and colleagues that you have served and we are grateful for all you have taught us. Please join me in congratulating Mildred Johnson as our 2021 Apperson Award Winner!

* Rebekah LaPlante, PCACAC President

Remarks from Jake Talmage, PCACAC Past-President:

Congratulations, Mildred. I am honored to help present this award to you.

As Rebekah mentioned, the Apperson is awarded to a member whose career embodies extraordinary service to students, to PCACAC, and to the college counseling profession. During her storied career, Mildred certainly exhibited the extraordinary.

Over the years, Mildred has been an incredible advocate for students. I specifically remember one instance when Mildred and I were both working with a recruited student athlete. Over an admission process that started in the student’s junior year, Mildred worked individually with the student, the coach involved and me as the college counselor to make sure the student was best prepared not only for admission, but to graduate from college. Throughout the process, Mildred was honest, encouraging and caring. The truth is that this story is just one of thousands—all of the students Mildred worked with knew that she wanted the best for them, even if the best was not always good news. As one colleague stated, “Mildred was always able to keep the students front and center in her thinking.”

As far as her service to PCACAC, Mildred was nothing short of incredible. She tirelessly volunteered as Summer Institute faculty, participated on countless conference panels, and served on a variety of committees. She was so present that I cannot remember a single PCACAC event where I did not see Mildred. The thing is, Mildred was not just present, she was making an impact whether welcoming a new member, mentoring a committee chair, or whispering sage advice to a member of the Presidential Cycle. As one PCACAC member commented, “I personally got to experience the ‘Mildred-effect’ at the 54th annual conference.” The thing is, the Mildred-effect goes much deeper than just a conference. She has been influential in PCACAC’s growth, direction and success.

Not only has Mildred impacted our organization, she has made a difference in our profession. Trying to walk down a hallway at a NACAC conference with her was always an adventure-- every few yards we would meet a new person from outside our region who wanted to say hi or thankyou to Mildred. What an amazing experience to be in her presence. As a past PCACAC president related, “Mildred was a guiding light in our profession, and although we'll miss her astuteness, integrity, and empathy, any who knew and worked with her are greater educators as a result."

In addition to all of this, Mildred demonstrated extraordinary fashion taste and helped us all learn to better dress in our school colors! Once again, congratulations Mildred! – *Jake Talmage, Director of College Counseling, St. Paul’s School, MD*

Remarks from Robyn Lady, PCACAC Past President:

"My earliest vivid memories are at the joint PCACAC/SACAC Conference in Crystal City. Seeing her come down the escalator each morning, sporting her school colors, Rebekah by her side, and lighting up the room with her warm smile. Learning from her and alongside her in sessions, networking during breaks, standing by her side at the front of the drink line and dancing until the last song, we made the most of that event. And, we have continued to do so at every PCACAC conference since. I will always treasure those times and remain in awe of Mildred’s commitment to attending PCACAC events, regardless of her position at her institution.

We also shared some amazing memories at NACAC conference. From Indianapolis to Toronto, San Diego, Columbus and Boston, our entourage made the rounds and left our mark. Mildred lives her life to the fullest. Being with her is always uplifting and fun. She is the true model for how to work hard and play hard. Most importantly her ethics are a model for anyone in this industry. When she was awarded the Jack Blackburn award by PCACAC leadership, I know Jack was smiling. They were dear friends who were both trailblazers in admissions and steadfastly committed to equity and access for all. Her humility when receiving this award was vintage Mildred. Never wanting the spotlight on herself, she always preferred to celebrate the success of others. I cannot convey how much Mildred’s friendship means to me. No words can adequately summarize, describe, celebrate, and/or honor her adequately. I look forward to creating more memories in her retirement." *- Robyn Lady, Director of Student Services, Chantilly High School, VA*

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