



Richard L. Apperson Award
Presented to Mike Oligmueller
53rd Annual Conference – Dover, DE
April 16, 2018

By Sue Rexford, PCACAC Past President

On behalf of the Potomac and Chesapeake Association for College Admission Counseling, I am honored to present the Richard L. Apperson Award to this year's recipient. The Apperson Award, established in 1973, and named in recognition of PCACAC's first president, is the highest honor bestowed annually by our association. The award is presented to an individual whose career embodies the ideals of our association – providing extraordinary service to students, to PCACAC and to the college counseling profession as a whole. This year's recipient is most deserving of this recognition.

Our recipient has long been an advocate for students often underrepresented in the college process. He has worked tirelessly on their behalf. Early in his professional career, his advocacy took shape as he became focused on the many challenges of international students and for those in the LGBTQ community. He was striving to ensure that their voices were heard, their needs met, and that they were well represented in the admissions process. As early as the mid-1990s, he was already facilitating sessions at NACAC conferences on topics that ranged from Advising International Students for College to "Out in the Application Process: Should it be Don't Ask, Don't Tell?" to helping secondary school counselors better understand immigration issues. Later he broadened his focus to include volunteer work with KIPP – the Knowledge is Power Program – in the Washington, DC area working with eighth grade students to assist them with their applications to high school while he was also providing professional advice to schools hoping to establish a strong college advising program to better serve their students.

Our recipient began his illustrious career in the college counseling profession on the college side of the desk when he joined the admissions office at Wabash College in Indiana. After filling several roles in college admission, culminating in serving as Dean of Admission at Earlham College, our recipient made a move to Charlotte, North Carolina and to the high school side where he spent several years as a college counselor. Fortunately, for Potomac and Chesapeake, in the fall of 2002, he journeyed north to become the Director of College Counseling at the Connelly School of the Holy Child. For the next 15 years, we were privileged to have him in our region as a leader and role model for our affiliate.

Long an active member of Potomac and Chesapeake, our recipient became actively engaged in the association as a member and then later as co-chair of the Human Relations Committee where he once again worked to empower those who serve the underserved in our region. After his service to Human Relations, he brought his many and varied talents to our leadership first serving two terms as Treasurer where he made a meaningful impact on the fiscal health of our association and then as Secretary of Potomac and Chesapeake. It only seemed a natural progression for our recipient to move into the presidential cycle where he led our association admirably.

There is much to admire and respect about our recipient that makes him an exemplary and valued member of our profession, one worthy of honoring, but I have my own reasons for thinking he deserves special recognition. Who else would travel with me to Charlottesville to spend two days with Mary Layman, at that time the PCACAC Executive Assistant, where we literally cleaned PCACAC's house as we sorted through decades of both the useful and the useless that comprised our association's records? Who else would serve as my faithful traveling companion to meetings and conferences often overriding my car's temperamental navigation system to keep me from becoming perpetually lost – especially the last time we conferenced here in Dover? Who else would share memorable theater outings in DC with me – often to some amazing productions and to some that left us shaking our heads in wonder or confusion? Who else would be such a great friend, both in good times and bad? His is a friendship I value and depend on.

Last year PCACAC said goodbye to our recipient when he once more journeyed south to assume the role of Director of College Counseling at the NSU University School in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Today we are happy to welcome him back if only for a short time to honor him as the recipient of the Apperson Award. I am proud to call him friend and honored to present this year's Apperson Award to Mike Oligmueller.