

11-18-2001

## Gamma Sigma Delta Award of Merit Recipient Introductions

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Owens, John, "Gamma Sigma Delta Award of Merit Recipient Introductions" (2001). *John Owens: Speeches & Appearances*. 11.  
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GAMMA SIGMA DELTA AWARD OF MERIT RECIPIENT INTRODUCTIONS  
NOVEMBER 18, 2001  
JOHN C. OWENS  
VICE PRESIDENT FOR AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
AND HARLAN VICE CHANCELLOR FOR  
INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

*Steve your student received the Excellence in Teaching Award!  
My student, Dr. Witek, received the Award!  
Wow!*

Dr. Rita Kean

"One" of the most delightful parts of my job is being able" to be part" of recognizing" outstanding individuals" for their tremendous achievements. It is my pleasure" to join you" in recognizing" two" such individuals tonight as we present" each" of them with a Gamma Sigma Delta Award of Merit.

Our first Award of Merit recipient," Dr. Rita C. Kean," is currently Interim Associate-Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs. Dr. Kean served as "chair" of the Textiles, Clothing, and Design Department from 1991-1999, and in 2000 provided" leadership" as the Interim Dean of the College of Human Resources and Family Sciences.

Dr. Kean's" scholarly activities" span the land-grant university's mission of teaching, research, <sup>Extension education.</sup> and ~~outreach~~. The viability of home-based businesses in rural areas, and rural consumers' use of e-commerce to acquire goods and services" are" her areas of focus.

Dr. Kean encouraged cutting edge research to develop commercially feasible and profitable textile-uses for Nebraska farm commodities. Examples include chemically-modified wheat-gluten textile-print-paste binders and ~~synthetic~~ floss (milkweed) <sup>FLOSS</sup> combined with goose down to create a hypoallergenic product.

Under her leadership, the department made significant additions, including: 1) the Robert Hillestad Gallery; 2) the International Quilt Study Center, and 3) the Textile Testing Service. The department received the <sup>YGAR</sup> 2000 *University-Wide Departmental-Teaching-Award* for excellence in teaching and esprit de corps and the *American Textile Manufacturers-Institute Award for Program Excellence*.

Her excellence in teaching, research, and extension-education, as a leader and as an administrator, make Dr. Kean an outstanding recipient for this Gamma Sigma Delta Award of Merit.

## Roger Wehrbein

Our next Gamma Sigma Delta Award of Merit recipient this year is Nebraska State Senator Roger Wehrbein of Plattsmouth. We all know Senator Wehrbein as a strong leader in the Nebraska Legislature, where

he is in his seventh year as Chair of the Appropriations Committee. He has a reputation for being a progressive agricultural producer and a leader in many agricultural organizations, as well.

Long before he was a senator - and probably long before he had even a thought of someday being a member of Nebraska's legislative body - he was a charter-member in a Cass County 4-H livestock club. Later he served as that club's leader for 20 years.

Senator Wehrbein attended the University of Nebraska and graduated from the College of Agriculture - now our College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources - in 1960. He served his country as a commissioned-officer in the U.S. Army Reserves from 1960 to 1968, and following his service he returned to Cass County to be part of the Wehrbein agricultural operations.

Senator Wehrbein's community activities include serving as president of the Cass County Fair Board; chairman of the Federal Land Bank; Chairman of the Government-Affairs-Committee of the Nebraska Livestock Feeders Association; a member of the Cass County Planning Commission, and the first president of the seven-county River Country Economic Development District for southeast Nebraska.

His public service has included serving as a Cass County Commissioner, and as the Nebraska State Senator for District 2, where he was elected in 1986, and re-elected in 1990, 1994, and 1998. The Appropriations Committee is the only legislative committee on which he has ever served. Roger recently was quoted in the Daily Nebraskan as saying, "If you understand the budget, you understand Nebraska pretty well."

He received special recognition in 1999 as the Honoree of the Nebraska Hall of Agricultural Achievement. Please join me in welcoming this distinguished Nebraskan as our second deserving recipient of this year's Gamma Sigma Delta Award of Merit.

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