Faculty Length of Service Awards
Remarks by Provost Diane Z. Chase
Tam Alumni Center Grand Hall
December 6, 2017

I am so happy to kick off this event to celebrate the No. 1 reason UNLV has grown into the excellent institution we see today – our people.

This is our inaugural ceremony to celebrate these milestones for years of service.

There is hardly a gift more valuable than the gift of time. So today, whether you are here as an awardee or to congratulate those who are, we acknowledge how much we value your commitment of time and what it means to the success of our institution.

During today’s ceremony, we recognize academic and administrative faculty for their great contributions to the university through their longevity of full-time service.

We are celebrating individuals with 20 years, 30 years, 40 years and even 50 or more years of service. These are significant milestones that reflect passion and dedication to making our university the best it can be.

Everyone receiving a service award is so important, so deserving of acknowledgment and celebration. You are the people we count on, day in and day out, for institutional knowledge and wisdom essential to moving us forward.

And you have opened the doors for thousands of students to go into the world, unafraid and ready to succeed, doing things the Rebel way.

UNLV has grown rapidly from a small college, known as Nevada Southern in 1957, to the sophisticated degree-granting research institution we have today.
As I looked at the list of everyone we’re recognizing today, it occurred to me how lucky we are to have such trailblazers among us.

Your teaching, mentoring, research and community contributions have strengthened and elevated our university. You have all made a difference.

I’m going to take us on a quick trip down memory lane… if you hear your name along the way, here, please remain seated and we will more formally recognize you during the presentation portion of the program…

Some of our longest-serving faculty have been here since those early days, circa 1962, when campus consisted of only five buildings, including the first floor of the old James Dickinson Library (now the law school), the gym (now the Barrick Museum), Frazier Hall, Grant Hall and what is now the Lilly Fong Geoscience Building.

That’s what campus was like when Dr. Felicia Campbell arrived. We’re honoring her today for 55 years of service. Work like hers set us on a path that embraces daring, and the notion that yes, UNLV is different.

That’s what makes us great.

You may have read in the recent issue of UNLV Magazine about Dr. Campbell’s 1975 article, “The Future of Gambling,” a cutting-edge academic study of gaming at the time, which gained national attention from the likes of Time magazine.

She helped put UNLV on the map.

At the time, few if any academic studies had ever been done in a way that looked at gaming as anything more than a vice.

Today, UNLV is a global leader in gaming innovation and our college of hospitality has been ranked the best in the world.
Two other faculty members have served 50 years or more… To give this a little historic context, 50 years ago hippies took over San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury neighborhood during the Summer of Love. Frank Sinatra won a Grammy Award for his song, “Strangers in the Night,” and Faye Dunaway and Warren Beatty starred in the feature film, “Bonnie and Clyde.”

Dr. Sadanand Verma and Dr. Bernard Malamud were just getting stared at UNLV about that time.

Many of you may recognize Dr. Verma as a stalwart member of our commencement ceremonies. He hasn’t missed a commencement in 50 years, and has served as the grand marshal, carrying the university mace, at nearly every commencement for the past 17 years.

Dr. Verma first came in 1967 to teach in what was then the School of Engineering, Mathematics, and Sciences. He was instrumental in starting UNLV’s math program, and for many years served as the department chair.

Shortly after Dr. Verma’s arrival, Nevada Southern became the University of Nevada, Las Vegas – having grown to an enrollment of 5,000 students, a tenfold increase in the 12 years since it opened.

That’s about the time we were joined by economist Dr. Bernard Malamud (Mal’-a-mud), who has been informing us ever since – locally and nationally – about socioeconomic impacts and forecasts on everything from tourism and taxes, to exchange rates and the regional housing market.

Celebrating 40 or more years of service -- Dr. Satish Bhatnagar, Dr. Richard Harp, Dr. Stanley Hillyard, Dr. Russell Hulburt, Al Izzolo, Dr. David Christianson and Dr. Randy Sheldon – arrived in the ‘70s, in time to be part of some important milestones for our campus.
In 1977, UNLV awarded its first doctorates in education, and for the first time our enrollment – at 8,700 students – surpassed that of UNR.

That year, the cost of gas was 65 cents a gallon, Elvis Presley died – it’s true despite how often you see him on the Strip. Also, Apple II and Commodore PET 2001 put out the first PCs, and “Roots,” the miniseries, premiered on ABC.

Those of you who have been here since those days helped take our Rebel spirit to new heights, effecting bold changes that included the opening of the life sciences building and Artemus Ham Hall.

It was also the inaugural year of UNLV women’s varsity basketball team….. which happened at the same time the men’s basketball team made it to the Final Four in the NCAA tournament with famed coach Jerry Tarkanian.

By 1987, those of you celebrating 30 or more years may recall, UNLV’s enrollment had climbed to 14,000 and Thomas T. Beam Engineering Building was under construction.

Billy Idol’s “Mony, Mony,” was the No. 1 song on the Billboard Top 100 Hits. Dirty Dancing was a box office hit, the first Simpsons episode aired on the Tracey Ullman Show. It was the first year that DNA was used in a criminal case in England.

Also that year, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the legality of gambling on Indian reservations – a key moment for the development of the industry. And… disposable contact lenses were finally made available.

On a somber note, that year UNLV joined the world in mourning the death of Liberace, whose foundation would help music students attend UNLV. This was also the year you created the UNLV Hall of Fame to
honor individual athletes, teams, coaches, athletic directors and donors to our athletics programs.

These were indeed interesting times on campus.

Those of you celebrating 20 or more years of service today have witnessed major transformations on the Strip and on campus.

New York New York opened with a roller coaster, 150-foot Statue of Liberty replica, and Big Apple skyline, back in 1997. Las Vegas was booming then, and so was our campus with enrollment nearing 20,000. You were here to open the Paul Sogg Architecture Building and welcomed Paradise Elementary School to campus, where education majors could work directly with school children.

Speaking of school children, 1997 was also the year the first book in the award-winning Harry Potter series by J.K. Rowling was published, and Mike Tyson bit Evander Holyfield’s ear during a fight – he was suspended from boxing. Popular films included, “Titanic,” “Men in Black.”

I am honored to share in this celebration today. I’m humbled by your devotion to UNLV. Over the past 10 years, UNLV has felt the weight of the Great Recession.

But as I look around today, it’s clear that our resilience has been bolstered by your dedication to our students and our campus community.

Despite the tough times, we have emerged with a mission to join the ranks of the top 100 American universities. We’ve made incredible gains, rising in national rankings for our diversity and inclusion, the quality of our colleges and schools, and student achievement.
As we proceed with our ceremony, we are going to try to move quickly so we have time to enjoy the reception and each other!

But first, I want to mention that this year we’ve also acknowledged with commemorative service pins our faculty members who met or surpassed the 10-year mark in service to the university – there are 675 such faculty, and we hope to see them continue the legacy you all have built.

As we move into the formal part of our ceremony, let’s begin with folks who have been with us for 20 years or more. A little procedural note: The 20-year and 30-year service medallions will be distributed at the conclusion of the program.

We have a great many faculty members who have been with us for 20-29 years – 229! I’d like you all to now stand as a group to be recognized. Again, thank you for your service.

Let’s do the same for those of those you who have been here for 30-39 years of service or more. We have 66 faculty who have reached or surpassed that milestone! Let me have you remain standing and each say your name as we come around with the mic.

Thank you for your service.

The next group, those of you who have been part of the UNLV family for 40 years or more, we want to acknowledge you in a very special way. Please come to the front as we call your name, and present your service medallion.

Dr. Satish Bhatnagar Dr. Richard Harp

Dr. Stanley Hillyard

Dr. Russell Hulburt
Al Izzolo

Dr. David Christianson

Dr. Randy Sheldon

Thank you for your service!

The next three people I would like to recognize have been here 50 years or more. You have devoted a lifetime for the benefit of our students and our community. Please come up to receive your service medallions:

Dr. Sadanand Verma, celebrating 50 years of service!

Dr. Bernard Malamud, celebrating 50 years of service!

Dr. Felicia Campbell, celebrating 55 years of service!

Thank you for your many years of service!

Treasure these medallions. Wear them today to the UNLV President’s Holiday Reception. Wear them to commencement and to any event where regalia is the order of the day. Display them proudly in your office or home. As you see others with a medallion, ask about their story…. You are each part of the legacy that forged our identity as Rebels, as embracing all that makes us different, daring and diverse.