

News Release

Four Outstanding Alumni to be Honored at the U of M Crookston during Homecoming on Friday, October 2, 2009, Social in Bede Ballroom begins at 6 p.m.

By Itolfe on Monday, August 31, 2009

Crookston, Minn. - Four outstanding alumni from the University of Minnesota Crookston will be recognized on Friday, October 2, 2009, as part of homecoming on the campus. The outstanding alumni honorees include Mary Jo (Melbye) Eastes, '79; David Genereux, '80; Troy Olson, '89; and Karissa (Dahl) Olson, '99. A banquet and program will be held in Bede Ballroom in the Sargeant Student Center beginning with a social at 6 p.m. Tickets are available from the alumni relations office by calling Rose Ulseth at 218-281-8439 (rulseth@umn.edu).

Outstanding alumni for 2009:



Mary Jo (Melbye) Eastes, '79

Mary Jo (Melbye) Eastes, '79, majored in fashion merchandising and minored in small business management at the U of M Crookston. She went on to earn her bachelor of science in education from the University of North Dakota and following graduation was a distributive education teacher at Bismarck (N.D.) Century High School and Willmar (Minn.) High School. Today, she is a grant writer for Arts Visalia in Visalia, Calif., and is responsible for finding funding for operational expenses, children's art classes, and gallery exhibits. Eastes organized the Neighborhood Watch in her community; started the Monthly Birthday Party for the Visalia Rescue Mission in 2004, an ongoing event for the mission; has been involved with Banner of Hope, a fundraising effort to fight cancer; and partnered with a local newspaper and 18 non-profits to raise money in Newstands for Non-profits. She is a board member for Arts Visalia, and Events Visalia as well as a member of the Art Consortium. She and her husband, Rick, reside in Visalia.



Dave Genereux, '80

David Genereux, '80, graduated with a degree in crop production from the U of M Crookston and went on to earn a degree from North Dakota State University, Fargo, N.D., in 1983. Genereux is currently the mayor of the City of Crookston and a member of the Community Vitality Committee, New Arena Advisory Committee, Northwest Minnesota Emergency Planning Committee, and the All-College Advisory Committee at the Crookston campus. He is a senior crop consultant with Centrol, Inc., of Twin Valley, Minn. He is responsible for crop monitoring, soil testing, crop planning and providing technical service for the Natural Resources Conservation Service and others. In 2006, Genereux was chosen to attend the Minnesota Agricultural and Rural Leadership Program and he received the Pioneers Club Award for Centrol, Inc., in 1987. He and his wife, Linnea, are the parents of four children.



Troy Olson, '89

Troy Olson, '89, is a marketing and business teacher at Bismarck (N.D.) Century High School and has served as the head hockey coach since 2005. After graduating with his associate's degree in business, Olson, attended the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, earning his bachelor of science degree in vocational marketing education. Olson is the advisor for the association for marketing students, known as DECA. He is a past president of the North Dakota Marketing Education Association and his community service includes volunteering for the American Diabetes Association. He was named the North Dakota Young Marketing Educator of the year in 1995 and was named North Dakota Class A Baseball Coach of the Year in 2001 and 2003. Olson and his wife, Tara, have four children.



Karissa (Dahl) Olson, '99

Karissa (Dahl) Olson, '99, administrator of Heartland Care in Devils Lake, N.D., graduated from the U of M Crookston with a bachelor of science in health management. After graduation, she worked in Cannon Falls and Long Lake in Minnesota before moving back to her hometown to become CEO/administrator of the long term care facility there. Olson is the treasurer of the Business and Professional Women (BPW) of Devils Lake and a member of the Kiwanis Club and ambassador for the Devils Lake Area Chamber of Commerce. She is involved in various community projects including the annual BPW Tour of Homes which raises money to provide college scholarships for young women. She is a member of the North Dakota Long-term Care Association and North Dakota Department of Health Business Process Re-engineering Committee. She and her husband, Rich, have two daughters.

Theme for this year's homecoming at the U of M Crookston is "Flying Through Time in 2009." Saturday's highlights include a parade, featuring Grand Marshal JoAnn Westburg; Teambacker tailgate with the band Four Wheel Drive; and Golden Eagle football vs. Northern State at 1 p.m. on Ed Widseth Field. Visit the Homecoming website to learn about all the activities taking place during homecoming.

The Outstanding Alumni award is the highest honor bestowed on U of M Crookston Alumni Association. The award recognizes alumni who have displayed exemplary commitment and service to community, church, education, family or in their occupational field. This award is given annually at homecoming during a banquet and program that also honors inductees into the Athletic Hall of Fame.

Today the University of Minnesota Crookston delivers more than 25 applied-science undergraduate degree programs and 50 concentrations, including several online degrees, in agriculture; arts, humanities and social sciences; business; math, science and technology; and natural resources. To learn more, visit www.UMCrookston.edu.

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