

## News Release

# Brantner, Westrom and the Veden Trust are 2021 UMN Crookston Torch & Shield award recipients

By Michelle Christopherson, Director of Outreach and Engagement on Monday, December 20, 2021

CROOKSTON, Minn. - Jason Brantner, recently retired from the Northwest Research and Outreach Center, The Frank W. Veden Charitable Trust and Lyle Westrom, Ph.D. and faculty member emeriti were honored last month at the annual Torch & Shield recognition.

The Torch & Shield Recognition is an evening dedicated to honoring individuals and organizations who have provided leadership and who have aided in the development of the University of Minnesota Crookston, the Northwest Research and Outreach Center, and Extension. This year, two individuals and the Veden Trust received the prestigious award, November 3. The generous donors to the University of Minnesota Crookston were also recognized for their philanthropy and helped to celebrate the end of the Driven philanthropic campaign.

Hosting the evening's event were Mary Holz-Clause, chancellor of the University of Minnesota Crookston, and Maureen Aubol, Director of Operations, Northwest Research and Outreach Center.



The recipients for 2021 [Torch & Shield](#) are distinguished for their many contributions, including:

- Honors contributions of significance to higher education, the Crookston campus, and the region
- Recognizes champions of UMN Crookston, NWROC and Extension for their impact on the region through teaching, research, and outreach.
- Distinguish both high profile individuals and those who have been "quiet" contributors to the success of UMN Crookston.

**Jason Brantner** has a long and significant connection to the Red River Valley through his extensive work on sugarbeets. He was hired by the Northwest Research and Outreach Center (NWROC) in 1995 and worked for 25 years on sugarbeet plant pathology lab and field research.

**Dr. Frank W. Veden** was a graduate of Detroit Lake High School, and later, a 1936 graduate of the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry. He was a life-long resident of Fergus Falls, Minn., dedicating his profession in dentistry to the area for 54 years. His practice and interest in the economic well-being of rural Minnesota led him to the establishment of the Dr. Frank W. Veden Charitable Trust which was created to benefit several diverse facets of education at the University. At his death, Dr. Veden left funds in the Veden Charitable Trust to be used for a wide variety of purposes but generally with a focus on the northwest quadrant of Minnesota including economic development for this region.

**Lyle Westrom, Ph.D.** was an integral part of the University of Minnesota Crookston for 31 years. His time at UMN Crookston was split between animal science and agricultural education. Professor Westrom's tenure was highlighted by his role in starting the agricultural education degree program twice on campus. The first was a joint program with the University of Minnesota Twin Cities and UMN Crookston (2000-2014). The second was a stand-alone program at UMN Crookston (2016-present) that reached its peak enrollment near the end of his career. There are numerous agricultural education graduates teaching in Minnesota and North Dakota that graduated from the two agricultural education programs led by Westrom.

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