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Six receive Faculty Awards for Excellence

AUGUST 9, 2007

Six members of Georgia Southern University's faculty were recognized at the Fall 2007 Convocation Ceremony with awards for excellence in instruction, research and service.

The Faculty Award for Excellence in Contributions to Instruction recognizes contributions to the teaching-learning process at the institutional level. It was presented to Patricia Humphrey, an associate professor in the Department of Mathematical Sciences; and Jeffrey Orvis, an associate professor in the Department of Chemistry.

The Faculty Award for Excellence in Research/Creative Scholarly Activity recognizes individuals who excel in their research efforts in addition to fulfilling full-time teaching responsibilities. It was presented to Sophie George, an associate professor in the Department of Biology; and Xiao-Jun Wang, a professor in the Department of Physics.

The Faculty Award for Excellence in Service recognizes faculty who use their academic disciplines to provide non-compensated assistance to the region as well as the academic community. It was presented to Michael Nielsen, a professor in the Department of Psychology; and Bruce Schulte, an associate professor in the Department of Biology.

Each recipient of the Faculty Award for Excellence is awarded a summer contract with the University to continue instructional, research or service activities and to develop a mechanism to share their expertise with faculty, staff and students.

During the course of the 2007-2008 academic year, each of the six award winners will present an on-campus lecture on a selected topic.

The Faculty Awards for Excellence were presented by University President Bruce Grube and Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Linda Bleicken on Wednesday, Aug. 8, in the Performing Arts Center

President's Medal presented to Department of Music professor Braz

AUGUST 9, 2007

Michael Braz has been presented with a special award that recognizes extraordinary contributions to Georgia Southern University.

A professor in Georgia Southern's Department of Music, Braz received the President's Medal during the University's annual Fall Convocation Ceremony on Wednesday, Aug. 8, in the Performing Arts Center.

"It gives me great pleasure to honor Dr. Braz for his professional accomplishments, his contributions to this community, and his dedication to academic distinction in teaching, scholarship and service," University President Bruce Grube said.

Braz teaches music theory/aural skills, orchestration and music composition, as well as courses on subjects such as Finale music software and Wagner's 'Ring' cycle. He is a book and music reviewer for various journals and publishers, and is in demand as a performer, conductor, clinician and adjudicator.

A member of Georgia Southern's faculty for two decades, Braz was the 2003-2004 winner of the Ruffin Cup, which is presented annually by the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. He received the University's Faculty Award for Excellence in Service in 1994.

In addition, Braz was honored with the *Statesboro Herald's* Humanitarian of the Year award at the annual Deen Day Smith ceremony in 2003.

Braz will take an educational leave during the 2007-2008 academic year to focus on three artist-in-residence positions in England, Nepal and China.

"In every sense of the word, Dr. Braz is truly a world ambassador for Georgia Southern," Grube said.

Braz has served as associate director of the Miami Choral Society, conductor and musical director of the Boy Singers of Maine, and founder and director of the Capital Children's Course in Tallahassee, Fla., and the Statesboro Youth Chorale.

A recipient of an American Composers Forum/Rockefeller Brothers Fund 'faith Partners' grant, Braz has 18 published choral compositions in print. He has written orchestral and choral commissions for professional, collegiate, school and community ensembles across the country, and his compositions have been performed by such varied groups as the Boston Pops, the Raleigh (N.C.) Boy choir and the Georgia Tech Glee Club.

Most recently, Braz composed his second opera, 'A Scholar Under Siege,' in honor of the Georgia Southern's Centennial celebration. The opera told the story of University President Marvin Pittman, who was fired by Gov. Eugene Talmadge for supporting integration. 'A Scholar Under Siege' received national publicity when it debuted in April.

Braz has performed with numerous orchestras, music festivals and ensembles ranging from chamber music to jazz and rock. In 1975, he premiered his first opera, 'Memoirs from the Holocaust,' which was inspired a visit to the Dachau concentration camp in Germany.

Braz's community service includes the past presidency of the Statesboro Arts Council. He also served as a volunteer piano teacher at the Boys and Girls Club.

Braz earned his B.M. and M.M. Degrees at the University of Miami and later completed his Ph.D. as a University Fellow at Florida State University.

The first President's Medal was presented by Georgia Southern in April 2005. The medal was designed by Christina Lemon, an associate professor in the Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art.