

## Best Should Teach Awards and Lecture honors teaching excellence

Several hundred people attended the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Best Should Teach Awards and Lecture in the Glenn Miller Ballroom Aug. 18. Chancellor Phil DiStefano delivered the keynote address on “The Best Should Teach” Legacy. Two School of Education faculty, Ruben Donato and Dan Liston, received Faculty Gold Awards.



**Dean and Distinguished Professor Lorrie Shepard, left, shares a moment with Laura Border, Director, Graduate Teacher Program, at the Best Should Teach**

Five public school teachers received Gold Awards: Kathy Bergren, St. Vrain Valley School District; Kristin Donley, Boulder Valley School District; Jesa Griffeth, Denver Public Schools; Jennifer A. Santos, Weld County School District RE-8; and Julie Schwab, School District 27J.

Two other CU-Boulder faculty also received Faculty Gold Awards: Anne Costain, a professor of political science and Marianne Wesson, a professor of law.

Donato and Liston received these accolades:

**Ruben Donato** is a professor of education at the University of Colorado Boulder. He received his doctorate in education from Stanford University in 1987. He teaches Educational Foundations, Policy, and Practice and also offers graduate seminars in the history of American education, multicultural education, school and society, and African American and Latino education in the United States. Professor Donato is an educational historian whose research interests range from the educational histories of Mexican Americans to current educational policy issues that affect Latinos in American schools. He has served as chair for Division F (history and historiography) for the American Educational



**Ruben Donato, left, receives his Faculty Gold Award**

Research Association (AERA), was a National Academy of Education Post Doctoral Fellow, and is a recent winner of the American Educational Studies Association “Critics’ Choice” book award for *Mexicans and Hispanos in Colorado Schools and Communities, 1920–1960*. Professor Donato receives high scores on CU-Boulder’s student evaluations and has served as a Junior Faculty Mentor and Area Scholar for the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program.

**Daniel Liston** is a professor of education in the Educational Foundations, Policy, and Practice program at the University of Colorado Boulder. He received his doctorate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1985. He studies how reason and emotion interact to affect the practice of teaching and the

education of teachers, offering workshops for graduate students on this topic through the Graduate Teacher Program. His teaching interests focus on curriculum theory, the social and political foundations of schooling, and radical educational critiques and proposals. He currently co-directs Colorado Courage to Teach/Lead, a program of professional development and renewal for public school personnel. He is a member of the American Educational Research Association, the American Association of Colleges of

Teacher Education, and the American Educational Studies Association. He has served on the Editorial Review Board of *Educational Theory*, received the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) Outstanding Writing Award, and was awarded the University of Colorado Student Organization for Alumni Relations (SOAR) Teaching Award at CU-Boulder. He served on the Graduate Teacher Program's Steering Committee from 2001-2010.



***Dan Liston, left, shakes hands with Arts and Sciences Dean Todd Gleeson after receiving his Faculty Gold Award***

These kudos were accorded the K-12 honorees:

**Kathy Bergren** has made a noticeable impact in her multiple roles as an educator for the St. Vrain Valley School District. As a classroom teacher, she developed students who were confident, successful, reflective and self-directed. As an induction coach, she helped new teachers become reflective practitioners to ensure every classroom and every student has a quality teacher. As a teacher of teachers, she developed teacher skills in classroom management strategies. Her training as a cognitive coaching instructor has helped many teachers deepen skills to plan, reflect and resolve problems



relating to their teaching practices. Ms. Bergren has worked extensively to plan for and help implement the new state standards. She continually challenges herself to make her instruction meet the needs of every student and is adamant that the standard for teaching is each student's evidence of high-level learning. She teaches first grade at Blue Mountain Elementary School.

***Kathy Bergren accepts her teaching award from Laura Border while being introduced by Lorrie Shepard***

**Kristin Donley** has implemented innumerable innovations including hands-on, inquiry-based labs with a strong emphasis on molecular genetics in her biology class at Monarch High School in the Boulder Valley



*Kristin Donley listens as Lorrie Shepard announces her award*

School District. She utilizes technology, such as clickers, social networking websites, and podcasting to enhance her instruction. Her outstanding work with the district's Science Research Seminar (SRS) provides juniors and seniors with the opportunity to experience working as a scientist on an actual research project. Her ability to engage students in authentic scientific research has proven that quality student research can happen in a high

school with the guidance of a highly motivated teacher. Her SRS program is one of the district's most successful strategies to increase the pipeline of high school students entering a career pathway in science or engineering.



*Jesa Griffeth accepts her teaching award from Laura Border*

**Jesa Griffeth** approaches her teaching with an energy, dedication, and focus that is infectious. Her mathematics students at Lake International School, in the Denver Public Schools, respond to her with high levels of enthusiasm and have made great progress in their comprehension of mathematics. Ms. Griffeth has very high expectations for her students and holds them accountable for their learning. She empowers students through the development and use of

academic language and guides them in the process of tracking their own progress toward mastery of the "Big Ideas." On a daily basis, she challenges students to think as mathematicians and connect their learning to the real world. Her professionalism brings out the best in her students and colleagues and she represents the future of teachers' work as educators.

**Jennifer A. Santos** is known for changing the lives of her students at Fort Lupton High School where she teaches science and Freshman Academy in Weld County School District RE-8. Her open-door approach and her commitment to ensure that all her students learn in her classroom, while also being challenged, reflect her dedication to student learning. Ms. Santos's humor, caring personality, and strong expectations add rigor to her science and extended learning opportunity classes. She, too, strives to continue to improve as a teacher, incorporating new strategies from AVID to ELL in order to use the

latest teaching techniques. She sets an example for her students of how to be a responsible and dedicated professional.



*Jennifer Santos listens as Dean Shepard remarks about the award-winning teacher's classroom excellence*

**Julie Schwab** demonstrates professional growth. Hired by School District 27J in 2003, she epitomizes teaching excellence in her West Ridge Elementary School, Thornton, classroom. She is the model of informed professionalism, 27J's target for teacher excellence. Ms. Schwab hits the target by allowing her students to do the thinking and the work, which requires extraordinary amounts of planning and organization on her part. She is also an avid learner and reads professional books, attends conferences



*Julie Schwab stands as Lorrie Shepard and Laura Border confer her award*

at her own expense and, most importantly, transfers this learning into her classroom. She models transparency and leadership as teachers become more public about their learning and invites others into her classroom to learn from her expertise. As a learner, Ms. Schwab also visits classrooms to glean what she can from her colleagues.

CU-Boulder alumnus Lindley J. Stiles was a lifelong educator who died at age 94 in 2008. He held high-level academic positions, including deanships at the University of Virginia and the University of Wisconsin and a professorship at Northwestern University. Dr. Stiles was a policymaker, instrumental in the Brown v. Board of Education 1954 Supreme Court decision, and known for his advocacy on behalf of under-represented minorities. He believed the most gifted should be informing others through teaching, which he considered the ultimate profession because it nourished the other professions. Dr. Stiles and his wife, the former Marguerite Croonenberghs, initiated and generously funded The Best Should Teach program. He funded the sculpture on the wall at the School of Education, shown below.



The School of Education at the University of Colorado Boulder supports The Best Should Teach Initiative by giving Best Should Teach Gold Awards to outstanding teachers in its partner districts. Additionally, the school recognizes an outstanding undergraduate in education each year who receives a Best Should Teach Gold Award pin and plaque at graduation.

*School of Education graduate students chat with Professor Valerie Otero (back to camera) at the Best Should Teach reception*

A reception followed the awards and lecture. The event is co-sponsored by the Graduate School, College of Arts and Sciences, School of Education, Graduate Teacher Program, Faculty Teaching Excellence Program, and the University of Colorado Boulder.

