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Dickson and Knudsen Take Top Honors

By: John Husfield
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There are unsung heroes in every institution who go about their job with little fanfare. Two USF St. Petersburg staff members were honored as university-wide winners of the 2003 Outstanding Staff Award.

John Dickson began his employment with the USF system in 2000 overseeing projects on all of USF's campuses. Familiar with USF St. Petersburg's project and team, Dickson joined the campus in 2001 as its Coordinator of Construction Projects. He handles code compliance, life, health and safety issues, remodeling buildings and other construction activities. He said he was attracted to USF St. Petersburg because of the opportunity to grow with the university system and wanted a place he could call home.

Regional Chancellor Karen A. White said, "John goes above and beyond the call of duty, working off-hours to assist contractors and confirm that work is completed."

Bob Jolly of Marine Sciences describes John as "a man of quiet professionalism who demonstrates honesty, ethics and fairness, and represents at all times and in every situation the finest qualities of the university."

Heading into her 15th year at USF St. Petersburg, Donna Knudsen had her first taste of working for a university while her husband was in the Army. When they returned to the Bay Area, she applied to USF and was won over by USF St. Petersburg's campus atmosphere. Knudsen has been promoted to positions of increasing responsibility over the years and serves as the Coordinator of Administrative Services in Academic Affairs.

Knudsen was recognized for her work on the SACS accreditation application. She worked closely with Academic Affairs to assemble the massive amounts of information needed for USF St. Petersburg's application, mailed Feb. 13. Sitting nearly three feet high, the SACS application is contained in more than 10 four-inch binders and covers the accrediting agency's 11 core requirements.

Her nominator said Knudsen's "intelligence, good judgment and creativity are behind every word and supporting document in our application."

Her willingness to lend her proficiency and extensive organizational history makes her an employee frequently relied upon for new and challenging tasks. In fact, one of her latest challenges is establishing USF St. Petersburg's Office of Graduate Studies.

White said, "Donna's commitment to USF St. Petersburg keeps her working into the evening and on weekends. With each task she raises the bar and sets new goals for herself."