

6-19-2015

Alumni Awards Recognize Outstanding Service, Engagement and Success

Justin Wilder
Roger Williams University

Follow this and additional works at: https://docs.rwu.edu/weekatroger_featured_news



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Wilder, Justin, "Alumni Awards Recognize Outstanding Service, Engagement and Success" (2015). *Featured News Story*. 494.
https://docs.rwu.edu/weekatroger_featured_news/494

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the The Week at Roger at DOCS@RWU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Featured News Story by an authorized administrator of DOCS@RWU. For more information, please contact mwu@rwu.edu.

Alumni Awards Recognize Outstanding Service, Engagement and Success

'Hidden gems' honored, 370 alumni celebrated during 5th Annual Alumni Weekend



June 19, 2015 | Justin Wilder

BRISTOL, R.I. -- A record number of alumni came back to Bristol for the 5th Annual Alumni Weekend in June. About 370 alumni and their families attended events throughout the weekend to reconnect with one another, reflect on their time at Roger Williams and recognize a few outstanding Hawks.

"Our alumni community is very strong," Vice President of Institutional Advancement Lisa Raiola said to a cheering crowd at the Alumni Awards Ceremony on Saturday evening. "There's much more than the bricks and mortar of the campus."

Making the most noise was the class of 2005, whose record attendance booked the entire second floor of the North Campus Residence Hall. Their energy boomed throughout the reception as they were honored with the Class Leadership Award for their continued engagement and connection to the life of the University.

It's a connection felt by alumni across class years, according to Alumni Service Award winner Daniel Gumb '08.

"I really look at a place like Roger Williams as the only place I'm truly an alumnus," said Gumb '08, who was recognized for his continued work with the Men's Basketball team as an assistant coach and recruiter. "I'm glad to see other alumni appreciate it as much as I do."

The quality of an RWU education quickly became a running theme throughout the ceremony when Kaitlin Baird '06, a marine biologist who directs science curriculum development, programming and workshops at the Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences, expressed her appreciation as she received the 2015 Young Alumni Achievement Award.

"I am extremely grateful for the education that Roger Williams bestowed upon me and the skills that I needed to be successful in my career," she said. "I really want to thank everyone here for making this opportunity possible, because that's really all you ever need – a possibility."

University President Donald Farish echoed Baird's comments, noting that many alumni tell him, 'RWU gave me a shot, I made the most of it and look what I've done.' "That's one thing that isn't going to change at this place," he assured the audience. "We always want to look for the hidden gems."

Michael Ayles '91, who earned the Distinguished Alumnus of the Year award, also spoke to the unchanging quality of a Roger Williams education.

"It's amazing how this campus has transformed in 30 years. The character of this university has not changed at all. As alumni, we're all better for it," said Ayles, an accomplished architect and principal of business development at Antinozzzi Associates in Bridgeport, Conn. "I have a lot I think I need to accomplish still, and with all of those accomplishments I will always be thinking of Roger Williams, this award, how it molded me and the people I have been honored to be associated with over the years."

As the program concluded and alumni headed back to their dorm rooms to continue celebrating, Farish had his own message of gratitude for the group:

"I just couldn't be more delighted to be a part of this University. When I hear these kinds of stories it just underscores my pride in this place."