Distinguished Emeriti Award 2018

This award was established by the late John Kenelly to recognize emeritus faculty members who have made outstanding contributions to the Emeritus College, Clemson University, the greater Clemson community, and to society. The name of the award also pays tribute to John’s late wife, Charmaine Voss. In addition to recognition by the Emeritus College, the award provides $500 toward the purchase of library materials for donation to Clemson Libraries in the award recipient’s name.

This year’s Distinguished Emeriti Faculty, Dr. Cecil O. Huey, Professor Emeritus of Mechanical Engineering, retired in 2006 after a long and distinguished career. A graduate of Clemson University, he returned to Clemson in 1975 and taught mechanical engineering students, conducted research in machine design, and served the university and Clemson community. He is a recipient of Class of 1939 Award for Faculty Excellence.

Dr. Huey nomination letter reads in part: “He was not only a fine scholar and teacher but also served the community for many years as NCAA Faculty Athletic representative. Like many retirees, Cecil has stayed active professionally, serving on the Council of Engineering Examiners until 2012 and testifying in various intellectual property legal disputes. He has also been a member of the Emeritus advisory board and served as President in 2009-10, and being "on call" for various kinds of troubleshooting for the Honors College Appeals Committee. He has also been active in the community, working on repairs and odd jobs for the Clemson Child Development Center every Monday morning, teaching short courses for OLLI (most recently in understanding relativity!), serving on the Board of the Atlantic Institute (formerly the Dialogue Foundation) promoting intercultural/interfaith relations with Turkey, and taking on a number of leadership roles in his own congregation.

After his retirement, Dr. Huey returned to continue teaching and advising students, as well as taking on some administrative duties in the mechanical engineering department.

The Clemson University Student Government recognized Dr. Huey with the 2009-2010 Excellence in Teaching Award. Three years after his retirement!

One student nominator wrote that Huey is an effective teacher because he encourages students to “think outside the box” and gives them the skills they need to tackle “real-world” engineering problems. The student recounted an experience he had after being in one of Huey's more popular classes for a semester: “The opinion these students had of Dr. Huey became very clear at the end of the semester. I witnessed something I had not seen happen in all my years of education. At the end of the final class of the semester, Dr. Huey received a standing ovation from the entire class in a unanimous action by students.”
Huey served as the faculty athletics representative from 1993 to 2006 and chaired the university’s Athletic Council for two years. He was president of the Atlantic Coast Conference for two terms and served on committees for the ACC and the NCAA. His work with the department and student athletics resulted in the Clemson athletic department naming an award in his honor that is given annually to an outstanding senior-athlete. In addition, The Cecil O. Huey Jr. Freshman Study and Program Room in the Vickery Athletic Academic Support Center also is named in his honor.

Cecil has continued his research activities as well. The following was highlighted in his nomination letter,

“But the activity that stands out to me, which started right after his retirement in 2007, is a conservation project in Puerto Rico and continues to the present, is a unique venture in industrial archaeology, or the preservation of scientific and engineering knowledge. There is a piece of machinery on a historic site, a sugar plantation, which was designed to run on a steam engine. The engine, dating from 1861, had not been operating for 127 years. There were no operators, no instructions, and no institutional memory were available, but with the help of a team of Puerto Rican technicians Cecil got it up and running by 2015. Cecil went with the technicians to a London museum specializing in steam engines to prepare it for public demonstrations. A history and operating manual is scheduled to be published in Spanish.”