



8 National American University Graduates Receive the 2016 Distinguished Service Alumni Award Recipients

The annual NAU Distinguished Service Alumni Award recognizes alumni for their educational and professional accomplishments and for their service to others in the university, workforce, community, and society.

Congratulations to these 8 NAU alumni who received the 2016 NAU Distinguished Service Alumni Award at recent NAU graduation ceremonies at several campuses.



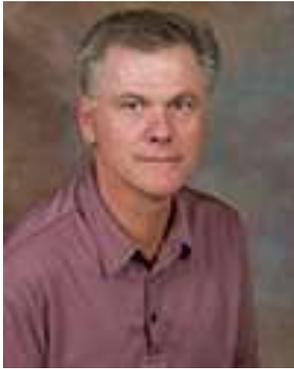
NAU-Rapid City: Mayor Steve Allender

Steve Allender is a native South Dakotan, and was raised in a military family. After his Father retired from the Air Force, his family moved to Belle Fourche, where Steve attended grade school through high school. Steve began his career in law enforcement in 1983 working for the Belle Fourche Police Department. In 1985 he joined the Rapid City Police Department and spent the next 29 years serving as a patrol officer, detective, sergeant, crime lab director, lieutenant, captain and eventually chief of police. He retired from the RCPD in May 2014. In June, 2015 Steve was elected Mayor of Rapid City. Steve holds a bachelor's degree in management from National American University and has attended the FBI National Academy in Quantico, VA. He is married to his high school sweetheart, Shirley and they have two adult children.



NAU-Colorado Springs: Mark Simmons

Mark A. Simmons is a Retired Army First Sergeant and native of Washington, DC. He has held every leadership position from squad leader to First Sergeant. His assignments include Fort Knox, KY; Fort Hood, TX; Fort Carson, CO; Peterson AFB; Fort Dix, NJ; Fort Huachuca, AZ; and United States Army Recruiting Command. He has served overseas in Iraq, Germany, and South Korea. Currently he works for the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment where he assists Veterans with significant barriers in finding suitable employment. His awards and decorations include The Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Korea Defense Service Medal, NCO Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Recruiting Badge Gold w/ 3 Sapphires, and the Army's Basic Space Badge. 1SG Simmons is married to Michelle and has one son Mark Jr and one daughter Senior Airman Khayriyyah Simmons. Along with two grandkids Sabastian and Ameerah.



NAU-Sioux Falls: Loren Koepsell, Ph.D.

Loren Koepsell is a 1981 graduate of National American University where he earned his Associate of Science Degree in Data Processing and Business Administration. He later earned his Bachelor of Arts in Accounting from Augustana College and his Master of Business Administration, and Doctorate of Education from the University of South Dakota.

Loren currently serves as an Assistant Professor at Augustana. Loren began his business career as a computer programmer for the oil company Plateau.

Later he was employed as a computer programmer for EROS, during his time there Loren was part of the team that brought the first internet connection to South Dakota. Transitioning to the education industry Loren held the positions of Director of Academic Computing, Information Technology, Institutional Research, Budgeting, and the Vice President of Finance & Development at Augustana. He also served as Chief Financial Officer for Lloyd Companies from 2007-2014. He taught classes as an Adjunct Professor at National American University, Dakota State University, and Augustana for over 14 years.

Loren is an active member of the community, sitting on the Boards of the Sioux Falls Chamber of Commerce Budget Committee, SD Works Board, Bid Board for the City of Sioux Falls, the Board of Directors for Dakota Business Finance, and Gage Brothers. He volunteers his time with Junior Achievement and has held numerous positions at Hope Lutheran Church.

Loren credits NAU as the springboard for his success, allowing him to receive his first two jobs. He realized what education can do for your life and it inspired him to continue you on with his higher education career.



NAU-Watertown: Scott Jorgenson

National American University Distinguished Service Alumni-Watertown is Staff Sergeant (SSG) Scott Jorgenson. SSG Jorgenson is a 2013 graduate of National American University. He is using his Bachelor of Science in Information Technology degree as a Desktop Support Technician at First Premier Bank.

Scott credits his degree to helping him get out the cycle of manual labor and enter a field he is passionate about as well as advancing his military career. He is inspired by how technology is shaping the world. He holds A+ and Security+ Certifications. His current MOS (military occupational code) is 25 Bravo, or Information Technology Specialist, in the Army National Guard with the 115th Network Support Company. Scott joined the National Guard in 1996 and has helped with state efforts such as the Missouri River flooding in May 2011.

Outside of his two careers, Scott enjoys spending time with his wife, Angela, who is also an NAU alumnae, and two children. He also volunteers for the Habitat for Humanity of Watertown and assists Scout Leaders in his son's Boy Scout Troop. Scott feels that the 2016 graduating class should know that the country needs skilled and trained people out in the workplace to help and inspire future generations. National American University is proud of SSG Jorgenson, his family, and his contribution to the local area as well as his 20 years of service in the military.



NAU-Mesquite: Lawrence McCall

Lawrence McCall completed his Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice (Magna Cum Laude) with National American University in 2014. He immediately went on to obtain his Master of Management degree with an emphasis in Criminal Justice Management. Mr. McCall is a United States Marine Corps veteran who served in the Gulf War and received the National Defense Service Medal. He has been with the Dallas County Sheriff's Department for nine years now and takes great pride in his service to his country and his community.

Before achieving his education, Mr. McCall described his life as "stagnant." He now feels he is on a fulfilling career path and is excited to inspire others to continue their educational pursuit to excellence.

When chosen for the Lewisville campus Wall of Fame in 2014, Mr. McCall stated,

My life prior to earning my degree was an uphill battle. I worked many years in law enforcement and gained a lot of experience, but it seemed as though I was always stopped from getting promoted because I didn't have a college degree. Once I received my degree, I was promoted to Lieutenant and now I supervise undercover detectives, traffic deputies, and administrative staff. Lastly, I am able to look my daughters in the eyes and tell them to get their education because it pays off: financially, emotionally, and spiritually.

Mr. McCall is very pleased to announce that he will continue his educational journey with his pursuit of a doctoral degree.



NAU-Bloomington: Lei Sun

Lei Sun is a licensed CPA with extensive accounting and finance experience. She has worked in various positions for General Mills in Minneapolis, Minnesota for nine years, most recently serving as a Financial Association and Location Analyst for the company. Prior to career at General Mills she served in positions financial positions for AT&T Revenue Assurance Management and Carlson Companies. In all these positions she tapped experience, education, analytical, and language skills. She is proficient in Chinese and can also speak Spanish.

Lei Sun is also an active volunteer, serving as a volunteer tax preparer, for Big Brothers and Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities, and VEAP (Volunteers Enlisted to Assist People). Lei has an MBA from the University of St. Thomas School of Business (2013), a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from National American University (2009), an M.S. from the University of Wisconsin-Stout (1999), and a Bachelor of Science from the Wuhan University of Science and Engineering (1994).

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NAU-Albuquerque: Willie “Sing” Singleton

Willie “Sing” Singleton is a retired Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) technician with over 29 years of training and experience. During his military career, Sing worked with numerous military and civilian lasers, night vision, and infrared optic devices, became Air Assault and Mountain Warfare certified, as well as Army Master Instructor certified.

Sing has documented over 14,000 hours in the classroom teaching over 12,500 students to date. These students were directors, supervisors, principals, detectives, investigators, fire fighters, as well as other patrol level personnel. As an adjunct instructor at Fox Valley Technical College in Appleton, WI, Sing taught risk assessments, ordnance identification and initial response to bombing incidents to first responders.

He currently holds an Associate’s degree in Electronics Technology from Barstow Community College, graduating Cum Laude. He began his pursuit of his bachelor’s degree in Workforce Education and Development at Southern Illinois University. While endeavoring to complete his BS degree he landed here at National American University. After 7 years and a great deal of tenacity, persistence and hard work he graduated in 2013 with a degree in Organizational Leadership (again with honors), and was inducted into the Alpha Sigma Lambda Honor Society. Sing continues to pay it forward as a tutor and enjoys assisting others that struggled as he did by helping them to achieve a high level of proficiency.



Gregory Allen - Wichita

Gregory Benson Allen Sr. was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1954. He received an Associate degree in 1978 from Computer Systems Institute in Pittsburgh. Gregory joined the U.S Army in 1986. Gregory was in theater in Desert Shield/Desert Storm which he received a Brass Star for his service and ended military service in 1992. He was not physically wounded during his service but mentally suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Gregory has been doing computer programming contract work for more than 15 years. He graduated from National American University cum laude in 2014. He presently is remarried to his lovely wife Delfina and has three children Nylah, Raymond Jr. and Elijah Sack. He and his family currently live in West Des Moines, Iowa.