

MCC professor gets top honors

John Wadach receives national award for
Professor of the Year for community colleges

JAMES GOODMAN
Staff writer

John Wadach began teaching at Monroe Community College three decades ago because he wanted to try his hand at helping students succeed.

A measure of his success came Thursday, with Wadach receiving national recognition as the outstanding community college professor of the year.

Wadach, who is chairman of the Engineering Science and Physics Department at MCC, was selected for the award by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for Advancement and

Support of Education. There were nearly 400 nominees.

He received the award Thursday at a luncheon at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

"Wadach's dedication to his students goes beyond the classroom walls. His efforts to promote engineering and mentor students are wide-ranging," said a statement from the Carnegie Foundation and Council for Advancement, telling of his achievements.

The statement goes on to note that Wadach has coordinated annual high school and more recently community college competitions to increase

awareness of science, technology, engineering and math fields.

He also has worked with state universities to ensure MCC's curriculum meshes with their programs and standards.

And Wadach has developed an event to bring together colleges, employers and prospective science, technology, engineering and mathematics students.

Wadach, who began teaching engineering science and physics at MCC in 1984, said in the text of his acceptance speech that, in most cases, the work of community college professors is "largely invisible" beyond the



PROVIDED

John Wadach

institutions where they teach.

"Our titles may not be as prestigious as those professors from large research universities, but in many cases, we are the difference between a student working for minimum wage or one who will be entering the middle class," he said in his prepared remarks.

He considers himself as just one example of the many community college professors around the country dedicated to their students.

And his acceptance speech praised the students.

"Many of our students support themselves and pay for school without parental assistance," Wadach said.

Wadach lives in Lima, Livingston County. He earned a bachelor's degree in physics from the State University College at Geneseo in 1981, and two years later, a master's degree in physics from the University of Maine-Orono.

His previous awards include being named as a State University of New York Distinguished Teaching Professor in

2011 and being the recipient of a SUNY Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence in 1998.

The U.S. Professors of the Year Awards Program was initiated in 1981 by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education to salute the most outstanding undergraduate instructor in the nation.

The program was restructured in 1994 to include the Carnegie Foundation categories of higher education, with four national awards: community colleges, baccalaureate colleges, master's universities and colleges; and doctoral and research universities.

The four national winners each receive a \$5,000 award.

JGOODMAN@DemocratandChronicle.com
Twitter.com/Goodman_DandC