Three Adjunct Faculty Receive Gordon Clark Ramsey Awards for Creative Excellence

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At the Fall 2018 faculty staff kickoff yesterday, three adjunct faculty were presented the Gordon Clark Ramsey Award for Creative Excellence for adjunct and part-time faculty.

The Ramsey award is given either for a proposed scholarly or creative project or for prior sustained scholarly or creative work related to classroom teaching. It is named for the late Gordon Clark Ramsey, who was adjunct faculty for more than 20 years at UHart and secretary of the Faculty Senate. Ramsey was a strong advocate of efforts to enhance the status of, and provide opportunities for, adjunct faculty.

This year’s recipients are dedicated and exemplary. Between them, they have 98 semesters of instructional service at the University.

**Hudson Birden**, Adjunct Faculty in University Interdisciplinary Studies and the College of Education, Nursing and Health Professions was recognized for prior sustained scholarly work related to classroom teaching over several years as adjunct faculty. He has taught at the University for 30 consecutive years beginning in 1988 when he was invited to become part of the teaching team for a new All-University Curriculum (AUC, now UIS) course on AIDS and Epidemics. Because he was director of health for the town of Avon, Conn and later the city of New Britain, Conn. as well as faculty at UConn Medical School, he was able to teach based on actual experience of developing health policy and running health programs.

In the early years of the epidemic Birden believed that Australia’s approach to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and public health in general was more focused and successful than U.S. strategies. To study this more closely, in 1991 he began to regularly visit Australia and eventually moved there in 2001.

Over the years, Birden’s courses expanded to include Public Health Administration in Barney and Epidemiology, Public Health Law and Ethics, and Public Health Program Planning and Evaluation in ENHP, and History of Health and Disease in Arts and Sciences. He is also an original member of the team that developed the Caribbean Mosaic AUC (now UIS) He helped develop an exchange course for graduate nursing students to study in Australia and has co-authored textbooks and journal articles.

Birden’s courses now are taught online from Australia. He says he misses the days of walking into a classroom full of students, “but I am grateful to the University of Hartford for providing me the opportunity for a great start, in a supportive, nurturing environment, to have a rich and satisfying career in higher education that I am proud to continue.”

**Annmarie Davis**, Adjunct Faculty in the Theatre Division of The Hartt School, also was honored for prior sustained creative work related to classroom teaching over several years. She came to Hartt as a Movement Specialist in 2001. By the end of her first year, she had developed a thorough curriculum on movement that that includes introductory level body awareness and
movement improvisation, basic ballet, neutral mask, character mask, animal studies, period styles, deportment and dance. She also brings in master teachers from Shakespeare & Company to teach armed and unarmed stage combat. Fourth year students receive private sessions in the Alexander Technique and monologue study.

In Davis’s The Movement of Art course, students are asked to identify a work of art they are passionate about over the summer. In the fall, the art is shared with the class and groups select one piece they are passionate about. They then explore movement and gesture possibilities evoked in the art and perform these pieces for the Theatre Division Director and their classmates. The class has led students to write, direct, choreograph and perform their own work as Senior Honors Projects.

Davis also has served as academic advisor and mentor to dozens of students over the years. She assists with admission and auditions and recently added a Movement Warmup for students auditioning for Hartt’s Actor Training program. She has directed, choreographed and coached over 50 Hartt productions.

Of her nearly two decades at Hartt, Davis says “I have exhibited consistent creativity, kept up with current trends in theatre and actor training, and assimilated these resources into original and stimulating methods. Most importantly, I have been a positive influence on the students in the Theatre Division.”

**Jacqueline Smith.** Adjunct Faculty in Music Education at The Hartt School has conducted scholarly work related to classroom teaching. She recently earned her PhD in music education at Hartt and her research is on teaching music to children with autism. She teaches classes including Foundations of Music Education and the Student Teaching Seminar, which means she is the first and last instructor that Hartt students have in the music education program.

Smith uses the knowledge gained from her research in her instruction of undergraduate and graduate courses at Hartt. From her, students learn how to make accommodations and modifications for children with autism and other learning needs in music classes and music ensembles.

“I found that many music educators and music therapist are incorporating evidence-based support strategies for children with ASD in their music classes and ensembles and music therapy sessions,” says Smith. “Music educators continue to need support from special education professions and administrators to provide professional development for gaining knowledge about strategies for working with students with ASD.

Separately, in the Hartt Community Division, Smith created the Prism Project, a performing arts experience for children with autism and other exceptionalities. The children are paired with a University of Hartford student buddy to rehearse every Sunday in the spring semester in preparation for a production in April. In 2018 there were 28 buddies from five schools and colleges who worked with 18 children. Smith is currently conducting a study to determine the effectiveness of this program.