

**2006 Robert L. Sigmon Service-Learning Award**  
**Dr. Betsy Alden, Duke University – Inaugural Winner**

Dr. Betsy Alden credited as one of the “founding mothers” of the service-learning movement first came to service-learning in the 1980’s through campus ministry where she created the Praxis Project in which campus ministers at Dallas area community colleges served as liaisons between faculty and community agencies to enable students to combine learning and service.



The Praxis Project grew to involve six campuses, 900 students and 90 community sites and the model spread to over 100 campuses in the 1980s and 1990’s. In the mid-80’s she served on the Board of Directors of the National Partnership for Service-Learning and participated in many of these early conversations, conferences and workshops related to the field. After moving to New Mexico, Betsy continued to build service-learning programs as campus minister and English faculty member, and director of a Corporation for National Service Learn and Serve grant. In 1996 she received the Governor’s Award for “Outstanding Woman of New Mexico.”

Betsy joined Duke University’s Kenan Institute for Ethics in 1997 as Coordinator for Service-Learning and was appointed Chair of the newly formed Dean’s Advisory Committee for Service-Learning. With this committee she helped developed Duke’s definition of service-learning, securing financial support for course development grants, integrating service-learning with Duke’s new undergraduate Curriculum and building partnership between service-learning faculty and other Duke units.

Betsy launched *The Source*, an annual publication about Duke’s service-learning initiative and served as the advisor to the student service-learning organization LEAPS (Learning Through Experience, Action, Partnership and Service). Betsy has played a significant role in securing funding for the integration of service-learning on campus including linking Duke’s mission as a research university to service-learning. In 2002 Duke received a 3-year, \$450,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education to formulate a three-stage model for research service-learning. She also played a role in incorporating service-learning in to a Kellogg-funded joint project with North Carolina Central University.

All Betsy’s efforts have been key to the growth and institutionalization of service-learning on the Duke Campus. Today, a cornerstone of Duke’s draft strategic plan is emphasis on *Knowledge in Service of Society* and in July 2006, the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education will take over service-learning administration under a newly formed Provost’s Council on Civic Engagement.

2006 Selection Committee

John H. Barnhill, Executive Director  
*North Carolina Campus Compact, Elon, NC*

Abby Kiesa, Youth Coordinator  
*CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on  
Civic Learning and Engagement)  
University of Maryland, College Park, MD*

William Lindsay, Executive Director  
*NC Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service  
Office of the Governor, Raleigh, NC*

Jennifer Meeropol, Project Associate  
*Integrating Service with Academic Study  
Campus Compact (national office), Providence, RI*

Dr. Thomas Schnaubelt, Dean of Community Engagement  
*University of Wisconsin-Parkside, Kenosha, WI*