

The Florida State University Faculty Senate Torch Awards: A Brief History

The Faculty Senate Torch Awards were established in 1996 as a way for faculty to honor those friends of Florida State University who have made sustained and significant contributions to the university's ability to fulfill its academic mission.

In 1996, then Foundation President, Jeff Robison and Chair Gus Stavros approached Faculty Senate President Marie Cowart about creating this special award. Seeing this as an opportunity for Faculty involvement, the Faculty Senate Steering Committee agreed to support the idea. On October 9, 1996, the Faculty Senate approved creating the awards, which are presented annually by the Faculty Senate in the name of the Faculty of FSU.

Seven persons served on the initial Committee that would solicit nominees, screen them, and make a recommendation to the Faculty Senate Steering Committee: Jim MacMillan, Professor of Education, who chaired the Committee; former FSU President Bernard Sliger; Lawton Professor of Chemistry Greg Choppin; Professor of English Anne Rowe; Assistant Professor of Nursing Mary Beth Schall; former member of the FSU Foundation Board Frankie Strickland; and President of the FSU Foundation Jeff Robison. On February 22, 1997, Jim MacMillan, circulated the first announcement asking for nominees

The first Faculty Senate Torch Awards were given to Katherine ("Kitty") Hoffman, George Langford, William R. Rogers and Godfrey Smith by Faculty Senate President Marie Cowart at the Annual Faculty Awards Ceremony held at the Augustus B. Turnbull Conference Center. After a few years, the Awards were moved to the Fall semester and presented by the Faculty Senate President at the Fall Faculty Meeting.

This practice was followed until 2012, when the University administration graciously decided to raise the profile of the Torch Awards by holding a special dinner where the Awards were presented by the Provost and the Faculty Senate President.

Until 2018, the Torch Awards Committee, consisting of a mix of retired and long-time active faculty, operated as an *ad hoc* committee of the Faculty Senate. At its February 2018 meeting, the Senate voted to make the Torch Awards Committee a Standing Committee of the Faculty Senate.

For more than twenty years, the Torch Awards have recognized many outstanding friends of the University. As of November 2018, a total of 84 supporters of the academic mission of Florida State University have received one of the three awards:

- *Vires*: recognizing moral, physical, and intellectual strength
- *Artes*: recognizing appreciation of aesthetics and the beauty of intellectual pursuits
- *Mores*: acknowledging respect for customs, character, and tradition