DEAN EDWARD L. AYERS, long admired for his teaching, scholarship and public service, received the nation’s top teaching award in November when he was named the 2003 U.Va. Professor of the Year. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) present the annual award, the only national honor for undergraduate teaching and mentoring excellence.

“Students seek him out for his wise counsel and guidance.”

“As an educator, mentor, and advisor, Professor Ayers has had a lasting impact on both the University of Virginia and on his discipline,” said Vance T. Peterson, president of CASE. “Students seek him out for his wise counsel and guidance because of the extraordinary commitment he brings to everything he does.”

One of the nation’s foremost Southern history scholars, Ayers has continued teaching and advising students at U.Va. even as he offers guidance on history education across the nation and serves as the top administrator of the University’s liberal arts core.

One of the first scholars to tap the potential of emerging technologies for learning, Ayers created and directed an authoritative Internet archive, Valley of the Shadow: Two Communities in the Civil War, that has won numerous awards for its contributions to education. It is used in classrooms at all levels throughout the country and makes available thousands of original sources for students and scholars to conduct their own research and draw their own conclusions about history.

A finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award for his 1992 book, “The Promise of the New South,” he has since published a groundbreaking breakout about the coming of the Civil War, “In the Presence of Mine Enemies.”

“His infectious passion for learning invigorates every encounter with students, whether in a class of 400, a seminar of 10, or an individual conference,” said Gene D. Block, U.Va. vice-president and provost, who nominated Ayers for the award.

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Carnegie Foundation, CASE Name Ed Ayers 2003 U.Va. Professor of the Year
The College Foundation: A Brief History

MORE THAN 20 YEARS AGO a handful of College alumni and faculty decided it was time to establish a formal organization that would actively involve a dedicated group of alumni in the life, needs and priorities of the College.

As dean of the College and Graduate School, I feel nearly every day a debt of gratitude for the solid foundation you built for our school. As emeritus members of the Arts & Sciences Alumni Council or the College Foundation that followed it, each of you has helped raise the stature of the College to an unprecedented level of consequence in the University’s affairs.

Thanks to your work, and the efforts of our current trustees, the College is on a threshold of a remarkable period of renewal. From students, to faculty, to programs, to buildings, the scope of that renewal is broad.

The article on this issue about a surge of interest in undergraduate research is but an introduction to what lies ahead. My colleagues and I will have much more to share with you this April during the first Emeritus Society Weekend here in Charlottesville. I look forward to seeing you then.

Edward L. Ayers
Hugh P. Kelly Professor of History
Dean of the College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences
University of Virginia

As a fourth grader, Anna Palumbo wanted to be an astronaut. And a singer. And a doctor. She could see only one challenge.

“I wanted to do all three at the same time,” said the fourth-year College student from Newport News, Va., with a laugh.

She hasn’t changed much over the years.

“Torn between working as a researcher and practicing medicine, she’s considering medical schools where she can learn to—what else?—do both,” said Nicole Hardt, assistant dean and center director. “Many recognize that having research experience under their belts makes them more attractive candidates for fellowships and competitive graduate programs.”

Palumbo is a good example. With center assistance, she received one of U.Va.’s Harrison Undergraduate Research Awards to support last summer’s work in Fraser’s laboratory. She also was one of 300 undergraduates nationwide to receive a 2003 Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship for top students interested in scientific careers.

Hardt finds it important to introduce College students to resources available to them through the center during their first year. “We want students to think long-term about their educational goals as early as possible so they can make the most of their experience here.”

For her part, Palumbo is already looking beyond her May graduation date. Torn between working as a researcher and practicing medicine, she’s considering medical schools where she can learn to—what else?—do both.

“I am pleased to welcome you to this inaugural issue of the Emeritus Society newsletter, a new periodical that promises to bring an insider’s view to a key group of alumni volunteers,”

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