UC Alumna and Former Administrator Cheryll Dunn to Receive NAACP Innovative Educator Award
By: Ashley Duvelius

Cheryll Dunn, Academic Director and associate professor emerita for the College of Engineering and Applied Science, will be honored with National Association for the Advancement of Colored People’s (NAACP) Innovative Educator Award for her devotion to student success.

“The highlight of my career of 40+ years at the University of Cincinnati has been working with the students,” reflects Cheryll Dunn, Academic Director and associate professor emerita for the College of Engineering and Applied Science (CEAS). Dunn has led a long and distinguished career at UC, dedicated to the personal and academic success of every student. For her commitment and outstanding service to UC students, she will be honored with the NAACP’s Innovative Educator Award during the 57th Annual Cincinnati NAACP Freedom Fund Dinner on Saturday, October 27, 2012.

Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. From the ballot box to the classroom, the thousands of dedicated workers, organizers, leaders and members who make up the NAACP continue to fight for social justice for all Americans.

Prior to her current position, Dunn served as an associate professor emerita, associate dean, assistant dean and associate professor of chemical technology and director of student services when CEAS was the College of Applied Science (CAS). While at CAS, she worked tirelessly to start a National Society of Black Engineers chapter. Dunn also established the Student National Technical Association (NTA) and the first Society of Women Engineers Chapter at UC. For over two decades, she devoted herself to the NTA/UC Summer Enrichment Program to improve math skills among fifth to twelfth grade students. Not to mention the countless Saturdays Dunn has spent tutoring P&G interns and Emerging Ethnic Engineering Summer Bridge students to their full potential.

Dunn’s commitment extends to the community as she has served on the boards of Lighthouse Youth Services, United Way, the Association for Retarded Citizens, several environmental justice organizations and the YWCA. She has worked as a counselor for Lighthouse Youth Services as well as a counselor for juvenile offenders at the Cincinnati Institute of Justice. Additionally, Dunn served as an evaluator for the Minority Summer Program, Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, in Batavia, Ill.
Dunn earned her associate degree in chemical technology (1966) and her bachelor’s degree in chemical technology and vocational education (1968) from CAS. She came to the university with the help of a Patricia Corbett Scholarship and she says it was the best decision she ever made.

Dunn’s lifelong advocacy for student success began when she accepted a Graduate Research Assistant position at UC to pay for her master’s of education in vocational/technical education (1969) and a doctor of education in cognitive and developmental psychology (1977). Later, she worked for UC as a resident advisor and resident counselor for the UC residence halls, as well as a coordinator of UC’s summer orientation.

Dunn says, “This award means that all the Saturdays and evenings I’ve given up for many years were worth it. I want to continue to do all that I can do for as long as I can to provide experiences for not only college students but also for precollege students. I want them to gain the knowledge and motivation to enter and graduate from any college or university but hopefully CEAS. The future of this community depends on a well-educated workforce.”

The tradition of excellence that is UC courses through Dunn’s veins—her father, Charles G. Dunn, is a 1941 graduate of the UC McMicken College of Arts and Sciences (A&S) and was in the first liaison pilot class (the Tuskegee Airmen) trained at Tuskegee. Her mother, Precious Riley Dunn, now deceased, had also taken classes at CAS.

Dunn’s limitless motivation and excellence is the key to UC’s innovation in education.