

THE BLUE BANNER

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UNCA hosts banquet recognizing service and leadership

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The applause dies and the room hushes as Etta Mae Whitner Patterson makes her way down from the stage.

The audience watches her take the steps one at a time, and she comments that it has been a long time since she last made this climb, better to take it carefully.

In her hands she holds an award recognizing exemplary service to her community – the Francine M. Delaney Award, named for the first African-American student to graduate from UNC Asheville. Now it is awarded to Patterson, who in 1961 was the first African-American student to attend at all.

“While Etta did not graduate from UNC Asheville,” said **Mary Grant, chancellor**, while presenting the award, “she is the student who bravely broke the color barrier. She often speaks with fond memories of her time on campus, including her friendship with Francine M. Delaney, who enrolled the very next semester.”

Patterson received the award at the Student and Alumni Leadership Awards Banquet on April 14, where UNCA students past and present dined together in Alumni Hall, their accomplishments recognized and celebrated throughout the evening.

Grant and **Bill Haggard, vice chancellor for student affairs**, served as the event’s hosts.

“We have a chance to recognize members of



Maya Newlin and Stephanie Watkins-Cruz accept awards at the annual awards banquet.

Photo by Daniel Hall- Staff Writer

the campus community – faculty, staff, students, alumni,” Grant said after the event. “That’s really so powerful. It really is a

window into the passions on this campus, so this was a special night.”

They presented 13 awards to students, five

to alumni and two to faculty. Awards were in recognition of some form of service: student leaders and employees, innovative

and outstanding student programs, alumni or faculty who served the campus and the community.

Brian Davis, direc-

tor of university events, said student nominees were invited to attend, along with alumni and faculty award recipients, and additional university staff to help host the event.

Anja Mayr, a sophomore from Charlotte, was the first honoree, receiving the Adelaide Daniels Key Community-Engaged Learning Award.

“I feel very honored,” Mayr said. “I have always been very passionate about service learning, but there are so many other students here who do so much for the community as well, I just never pictured it.”

After Haggard cataloged Mayr’s myriad activities, Grant expressed awe at the list.

“I’m tired just listening to all that,” Grant said. “That’s great.”

Maya Newlin, student body president and recipient of the Carolyn Briggs Diversity Award, said it was an exciting experience.

As Grant presented Newlin’s award, she listed her accomplishments, such as founding Shades of Color, an online multi-cultural newsletter, and involvement with the Black Student Association and Diversity Action Council.

“It feels really good to know that your work is acknowledged,” Newlin said. “And not just acknowledged, but that your work is actually doing something.”

Between the awards, the event came to periodic stops so attendees were free to eat. During

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Post rock band ushers in new music scene

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The first chord hits and an abrasive swarm of delayed guitar notes, rumbling bass waves, and thundering drums floods the room. The bassist raises his instrument high into the air, eyes closed, as if making an offering to the gods of sound and frequency. The crowd becomes entrenched in the ambient wash of the vocal-less intensity. The band “onj.” has taken the stage. In the next 45 minutes they will take the crowd of musical pilgrims on an exodus to new auditory frontiers.

“There are some nights when I can’t sleep because I have this part stuck in my head. It almost haunts me at times. It’s three in the morning and I can’t fall asleep. I have to wake



Band onj. performs at the Odditorium.

Photo by Stephen Livengood- Contributor

up in six hours, but I have to get up and play this part on the guitar. Every time you play it, you feel so satisfied,” said **Mark Klepac, an Asheville resident and lead guitar player for local post-rock**

band “onj.”

Post-rock has slowly made its way into Asheville’s local music scene with its intensely dynamic and orchestral songs, and looks to be here to stay. “Before this, I was a

vocalist of a progressive metal band with lots of screaming. I just got really tired of each week our other guitar player coming to practice with these riffs

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Campus minister fosters accepting community

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Gloria Schweizer doesn’t chuckle very often. She laughs wholeheartedly instead. Loud and boisterous, it announces her presence before you even see her, and doesn’t seem like it could come from someone so petite.

“You can hear it from a mile away,” said **Erin Krichilsky, a sophomore biology student from Charlotte**. “You’re like, ‘Where’s Gloria, she’s late?’ but then you just hear that cackle and you know she’s there.”

What makes her laugh so unique is not only its volume but the spirit behind it. She continues

to smile despite hardships she has experienced. She cites her faith as a source of strength.

Schweizer, the Asheville area Catholic campus minister, said she started working in Catholic campus ministry 21 years ago at Western Carolina University. At the time, she was a stay-at-home mom and her only experience for this job was volunteering with high school students at her church. Despite being up against a qualified candidate, she got the job.

“At first I thought, ‘The other person didn’t want it,’” Schweizer said. “About two months after I

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