

GH Cook Distinguished Alumni Award winners for 2019

Joe Charette
BS 1977



Joe Charette is the current Executive Director of Rutgers Dining Services. Since 1989 Joe has been a leader in innovative food programs for dining halls at Rutgers and is now seen as a national expert in this area. A graduate of Cook College in 1977, Joe earned his B.S. in Environmental Science. After gaining valuable experience in some of the finer restaurants in the Washington D.C. Georgetown area, in the late 70's, Joe wrote the menus and wine lists for several privately owned upscale restaurants in Colorado. He later opened and managed restaurants in New Mexico, Arizona and New Jersey. He has been innovative in food waste management, in healthy food options, in student focused dining requirements and better overall service. He had been involved with Rutgers' Sustainability Committee for the past ten years and the RecycleMania Committee for the past seven years. Nominated by Dr. Roger Locandro and Dr. Bonnie McCay.

Dr. Susan Biegel Carson
BS 1992



Susan (Biegel) Carson is a Professor of Plant & Microbial Biology at North Carolina State University. She graduated from Cook College in 1992 with a B.S. in Biotechnology. She began her undergraduate research in Dr. Gerben Zylstra's lab, where she continued on to perform her George H Cook Senior Honors Thesis. Sue embodies the best of the teacher-scholar attitude that the faculty at Cook College/SEBS incorporate in their own programs. Sue earned her Ph.D. in Microbiology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1999. She then took a "teaching postdoc" position at North Carolina State University. Her position was supported by a special NSF grant that mentored postdocs to become teacher-scholars. After only one year in that position Sue was hired as an instructor in the NCSU Biotechnology program. She then worked her way up the academic ladder, acting as the Biotechnology Academic Coordinator (2002-2013) and being promoted to Teaching Assistant Professor (2005), Teaching Associate Professor (2010), and Associate Professor with tenure (2013).

Sue is also the Director of [THINK](#), a NC State initiative that is designed to cultivate student's higher order skills in critical and creative thinking. Prior to leading THINK Sue spent over ten years leading curriculum development for the NC State Biotechnology Program as its Academic Coordinator. Her scholarly work over the last ten years has focused on college-level biology education. She has received multiple awards for teaching excellence and innovation and is a member of the Howard Hughes Science Education Alliance, promoting and implementing inquiry-guided learning and authentic research in the undergraduate classroom laboratory. She co-authored two molecular biology lab manuals, and has published numerous peer-reviewed papers in the area of course and curriculum development. She has mentored over 100 undergraduate students in research projects and is the PI and Director of the National Science Foundation (NSF)-funded Integrative Molecular Plant Systems Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Program. She serves on the Leadership Council of the National Science Foundation BIO REU, and has served on the Board of Directors of the Wake County Beekeeping Association. She was nominated by Dr. Gerben Zylstra.

Donald Heilman
BA 1976



Graduating in 1976 with a BA in Anthropology Don went on to earn his J.D. from Seton Hall University School of Law. He practiced as a civil trial attorney for 19 years. In 2003 Don shifted his career focus, earning his Masters (2007) then Doctorate of Education in 2012 (RGSE). He became the Director of the Rutgers University Student Legal Information Center in 2004 and is now the Director of and Attorney in the Student Legal Services which he helped create. The office is dedicated to providing students with legal services while also creating educational outreach programs and internship opportunities. At the University level Don has been an academic advisor, taught lectured in both undergraduate and graduate level courses and has been involved in the development and nurturing of several initiatives including the legal center and an assessment program for 50,00 Rutgers University students.