

CORNELL CHRONICLE



Jason Koski/Cornell Brand Communications
Cornell President Martha E. Pollack stands with recipients of the 2018 Cornell Town-Gown Awards Dec. 8 at Ithaca High School.

Eighth annual TOGO awards celebrate community engagement

By Nancy Doolittle | December 12, 2018

The 2018 Cornell Town-Gown Awards recognized three student partnerships with local organizations to develop new bus route signs, sponsor a pet health clinic and explore the future of local emergency medical services.

Held Dec. 8 at Ithaca High School, the eighth annual TOGOs also recognized local leaders retiring from key positions and presented the inaugural Achievement Award to performing artist, author, and health and wellness coach Michelle Courtney Berry, MPS '92.

Cornell President Martha E. Pollack gave remarks and welcomed Shirley Collado, president of Ithaca College, and Orinthia Montague, president of Tompkins Cortland Community College. Pollack said Ithaca is so special “because of the deep relationships between the community and all three of our institutions of higher education. Staff, faculty, students, alumni, parents, volunteers, partners – there are so many people in the Ithaca community who are tied in one way or another to one of our institutions.” The community and higher education “enrich each other all year long,” she said.



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Luvelle Brown, superintendent of the Ithaca City School District, addresses the audience at the 2018 Town-Gown Awards as Martha Pollack looks on.

Pollack noted that Cornell was founded to make a difference in the lives of its students, the local community and communities around the world. Engagement is all about having that impact, building those connections and “recognizing that good engagement is good for everyone,” she said.

Demonstrating that engagement, students in Cornell's Meinig National Scholars program were present to raise funds for the inclusive playground currently under construction in Stewart Park.

In addition, Beth Bagwell, executive director of the International Town-Gown Association, described how successful town-gown strategies also enhance local economies.



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Meinig National Scholars stand with Cornell President Martha Pollack and, to the right, Friends of Stewart Park Executive Director Rick Manning.

TOGOs were awarded for the following projects and programs:

- **Bus route signs:** About 60 engineering master's degree students and undergraduate students studying design thinking in systems engineering work on collaborative projects with TCAT each year. Last year, these students worked with lecturer Siriteta Simoncini and Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit service manager Matt Yarrow to design new route signs throughout the TCAT system. About 30 of these students were recognized in person.

- **Pet clinic:** The partnership between Southside Community Center and College of Veterinary Medicine students has provided a monthly walk-in health clinic for pets since 1996. In addition to the CVM student volunteers who provide health care for about 600 pets annually, second-year veterinary students serve as program directors for the clinics.
- **Emergency medical services:** The Emergency Medical Services Task Force of the Tompkins County Council of Governments collaborated with students in the Cornell Institute for Public Affairs on challenges to the long-term sustainability of local emergency medical services. Irene Weiser, task force chair, called the students "remarkable, smart and capable" in their analysis and recommendations.

Receiving TOGOs for their service to the community were three retiring Cornellians: Jane Mt. Pleasant, associate professor in the Department of Horticulture and former director of the American Indian and Indigenous Studies Program; Monika Roth, agricultural extension leader for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County; and Cal Walker, former associate director of the Learning Strategies Center and outreach liaison for the Office of Community Relations, who received a standing ovation for his community service.

Thirteen retiring community leaders also received TOGOs: Dave Banfield, town of Lansing town justice; Steve Colt, town of Lansing recreation director and park supervisor; John Conners, recently retired provost and vice president of Tompkins Cortland Community College; Dale Johnson, Hospicare executive director; Ken Lansing, Tompkins County sheriff; Carol Mallison, executive director of McGraw House; John Rudd, president and chief executive officer of Cayuga Medical Center; Bruce Ryan, dean of external relations at TC3; Kathy Schlather, executive director of the Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County; Rich Schoch, parks maintenance manager for the town of Ithaca; Jim Steinmetz, Cayuga Heights chief of police; Mario Tomei, Lansing Planning Board; and Gary Woloszyn, manager of Wegmans in Ithaca.

The TOGOs are sponsored by Cornell's Office of Community Relations.

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