Dr. Margit McGuire

The Yakima Valley Community College Alumni Association is pleased to announce Dr. Margit McGuire as this year’s recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award.

Dr. McGuire grew up on a fruit ranch in Parker Heights and graduated from Wapato High School. She knew she wanted to be a teacher and began that journey at YVCC graduating with an associate of arts degree in 1966. YVCC provided a strong grounding for her further education and made it financially possible for her to pursue higher education. One of her favorite teachers, Mr. Charles Garretson, inspired her to focus on history and social studies throughout her teaching career.

After graduating from YVCC, she attended Washington State University where she majored in elementary education and graduated with distinction. With her interest in history and social studies, Dr. McGuire also wanted to travel so she became a flight attendant for United Airlines and was based in New York City. Following her time with the airlines, she began her teaching career in Stamford, Connecticut. Homesick for the Northwest, she moved back shortly thereafter. She completed an M.Ed. at Central Washington University and earned a Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction at the University of Oregon. She taught at Seattle Pacific University for 12 years at the outset of her higher education career.

Currently, Dr. McGuire is Professor of Teacher Education at Seattle University. She has served in a variety of leadership roles including president of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), 1991; president of the Washington Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, 1998-2000; board member of the National Geographic Literacy Council; and chairperson of the Elementary Social Studies Framework for Washington’s Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. She was appointed to the Washington Commission of Charter Schools in 2013.

Dr. McGuire has been honored for her work. She earned the Washington Award for Excellence in Teacher Preparation in 1992 and the 2008 McGoldrick Award from Seattle University for distinguished teaching, commitment to students, and exemplifying the values of the Jesuit educational tradition.

Perhaps her proudest professional achievement is the development of Storypath. This K-8 social studies and literacy curriculum uses narrative structure to immerse students as characters in a time and place to help them understand social and historical events from the inside out. Students use imagination and role play as they engage in critical thinking and problem solving using literacy skills to speak, write, listen, and read within the context of the events. The program is used in classrooms across the country and around the world. Currently Dr. McGuire is researching the impact of the program on English language learners and special needs students.

Dr. McGuire’s lifelong passion for travel has taken her to over 60 countries. Some of the best travel experiences have been in Morocco, Iran, and Bhutan where she had the opportunity to interact with teachers and children. “I believe that growing up in the Yakima Valley and attending YVCC introduced me to issues of diversity and justice that have guided my work throughout my career,” stated McGuire. “I am honored to receive the Distinguished Alumnus Award and hope that today’s YVCC graduates realize the value of their educational experience as they journey forward,” she concluded.