

The Yakima Valley Community College Alumni Association is pleased to announce Mr. David Lester as this year's recipient of the YVCC *Distinguished Alumnus Award*. Mr. Lester is a reporter at the *Yakima Herald-Republic*. He has reported on a large variety of topics including local government, agriculture, business, and criminal justice.

Mr. Lester grew up in the Yakima Valley and graduated from Sunnyside High School. In 1965 he enrolled at YVCC. Commuting daily from Sunnyside, for the first year and later moving to Yakima. He had been attending YVCC's Yakima Campus for two years when he received his draft notice. Mr. Lester was inducted into the United States Army in February of 1968 and went through basic training at Fort Lewis. He spent nearly the next two years deployed in Germany during the Vietnam War. Returning to Yakima Mr. Lester again enrolled at YVCC, and earned an associate in arts degree in communication. He then transferred to Washington State University (WSU) and graduated in 1973 with a bachelor of arts degree in communications.

"I simply would not be where I am without YVCC. Even in the late 1960s and early 1970s when tuition costs were much lower, I lacked the financial capability to attend a four-year institution," stated David Lester. "YVCC provided me the foundation from which to continue my college career at WSU. My professors and advisors provided me the time and guidance to help me focus my career goals," he continued.

After graduation Mr. Lester worked in Prosser, Washington in the radio industry. In September of 1976 he began working at the *Yakima Herald-Republic's* Sunnyside office, and later transferred to Yakima. "David Lester is one of the finest reporters I've ever had the privilege to work with," stated Bob Crider, *Yakima Herald-Republic* Editor. "Elected and appointed officials rely on Dave for his straightforward and accurate reporting. Dave's peers on the reporting staff turn to him often for his institutional knowledge of the Valley and Central Washington. Editors, meanwhile, will readily turn to Dave to handle some of the toughest stories, knowing he'll do a thorough job and meet his deadlines. No story is too big for him, no story too small. Dave is a consummate professional whom our readers have trusted for more than 35 years," he concluded.

Mr. Lester has received numerous awards throughout his career including several *C.B. Blethen Memorial Awards*. Named after the newspaper's longtime publisher, *C.B. Blethen Memorial Awards* are sponsored by the *Seattle Times* and honor distinguished reporting. Mr. Lester was honored most recently with a first-place award in 2006. He also received two first-place awards in 2000 and a second-place award in 1987. In addition, he has received several awards from the Society of Professional Journalists. Mr. Lester received individual first-place awards in 2000 and 1998. He also received awards for his collaborative work with other reporters resulting in a third-place award in 2008 and a first-place award in 2003.

In 2011 Mr. Lester was honored by the *Yakima Herald-Republic* as the *Employee of the Year*.

## DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

*Mr. David Lester*



*Photo courtesy of the Yakima Herald-Republic*