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Cal Walker thanked for his life of community service



A community leader, mentor, social activist and educator, Cal Walker was recognized this month with two awards for his life of community service.

The outreach liaison in Cornell's [Office of Community Relations](#), Walker is known throughout Ithaca and Cornell as a "leader who has dedicated his life to making meaningful contributions to the lives of others," said Todd Hilgendorff '02, a Cornell Tradition alumnus, as he presented Walker with the Cornell Tradition's Debra S. Newman '02 Community Recognition Award Feb. 9. "His history of active involvement in agencies and volunteer efforts is impressive and inspiring," Hilgendorff said.

The Human Services Coalition also recognized Walker, presenting him with the Anne T. Jones Award for Community Service on Feb. 18 for his "outstanding achievements in the local community as a dedicated volunteer."

Walker attributes his desire to be involved to his growing up among social activists. A native of Tuskegee, Alabama, he often visited his aunt, who was the church clerk at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in nearby Montgomery when Martin Luther King Jr. first became its pastor. He later attended the historically black Livingstone College in Salisbury, NC. Fred D. Gray, the lawyer who defended Rosa Parks, became one of Walker's mentors and friends.

"I learned at an early age the interconnectedness of humanity," Walker says. "As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, 'We are all tied together in a single garment of destiny.' What affects one of us affects us all."

Walker believes "helping to meet the needs of our neighbors ought to be a civic norm, and getting involved helps us become collectively better as a community. Volunteer work, civic engagement – these strengthen the ties that bind us together as a community."

He and his wife, Glenda, moved to Ithaca almost 40 years ago and became connected with the Calvary Baptist Church, Southside Community Center and the Greater Ithaca Activities Center.

“These acquainted me with the needs and issues within our community – poverty, education, criminal justice,” Walker says. In 1992 he began home-tutoring students for the Ithaca City School District.

He was tutoring a sixth grader when he learned that that boy was about to be placed in detention. To keep him from being moved, Walker and his wife became his emergency-certified foster parents.

Over the years, they became foster parents for more than 45 children, sometimes housing up to five siblings at a time. The Walkers plans to resume foster-parenting now that Cal is recovering well from treatment for lymphoma.

After 15 years working for Procter and Gamble, Walker came to Cornell in 1993 as assistant, and later associate, director of the Learning Strategies Center.

In 2002, Walker co-founded the “Village at Ithaca,” which works to help students – particularly those who are African-American, Latino or low-income – meet or exceed local and state standards of academic achievement. Under Walker’s leadership, the organization expanded educational opportunity, increased access to resources and furthered the cause of social justice in Ithaca.

Walker says his work at the Village at Ithaca was among the “most rewarding” work he has done.

For many years, Walker also has taught life skills classes to incarcerated young men and takes pride in those who have left jail, established stable lifestyles and secured long-term employment.

For 28 years, Walker served as a deacon at Calvary Baptist Church in Ithaca, and was also a founding board member of the Community Faith Partners, which works to unite Christians across organizational, racial and economic barriers.

He is also a longstanding member of the Ithaca Rotary Club and has served on the boards of numerous community organizations and agencies.

“All around us are human needs and conditions,” Walker says. “You just have to decide to make a difference in one life. You have to say, ‘I am only one; I can’t do everything, but I can do something.’”

Big Red One-Day Online Auction today

The Big Red One-Day Online Auction is today, Friday Feb. 26. If you have not gone on the auction web site to bid, now is the time. Support the United Way and benefit local communities and [bid for dozens of Cornell and Ithaca-themed items and experiences, deadline midnight, tonight.](#)

Like food and wine? There's a “foodie experience” for 15 with the Cornell Dining Culinary Team, and a wine tasting with a Cornell viticulturist.

How about art, tickets, jewelry, and lunch with Ezra Cornell? All of these items – and many more –are on the online auction block, to benefit United Way, and Cornell friends and neighbors.

Visit the [Cornell United Way homepage](#) to bid today, Friday, Feb. 26.

Police officers and veteran recognized for life-saving actions



Two Cornell University police officers and a Samuel Curtis Johnson Graduate School of Management M.B.A. candidate were recognized Feb. 11 in Barton Hall for intervening in critical situations in which they risked their personal safety to help others.

Police Officer Andrew Navarro nominated graduate student Matthew T. Welch for his actions Jan. 8 of this year. Welch, a U.S. Army veteran, had been walking east on Campus Road by Gates Hall when he saw a man grab a woman by the coat, throw her to the ground and start to beat her.

Welch pulled the man off the woman and placed himself between the two. Keeping the man at bay, he helped the victim, who was pregnant, to retreat to a safer location until the Cornell University Police (CUP) could intervene. According to Chief of Police Kathy Zoner, Welch then provided “the critical assistance and testimony to bring the man to justice.”

These actions, Zoner said, “are in the finest traditions of military service, wherein physical and moral courage, selfless service and sacrifice are cherished values.” Navarro presented Welch with the department’s Citizenship Award.

Also at the awards ceremony, Sgt. Anthony Bellamy and Investigator Stanley Slovik were presented with CUP’s highest commendation, the Medal of Valor, for their actions during the fatal Ithaca Commons truck accident June 20, 2014.

The two off-duty officers were traveling together when the driver of the tractor trailer behind them lost control of his vehicle, swerved around them and crashed into Simeon’s restaurant. Armed only with hand-held fire extinguishers, the officers entered the unstable, burning building to look for trapped or injured restaurant patrons or bystanders.

The officers then assisted the Ithaca Police Department in obtaining witness statements. “Our officers are peace officers and, as such, are not required to act as police when they are off-duty,” said Zoner. “No amount of training can create the desire to help, the disregard for personal safety in the service of others more gravely impacted than they displayed that day.”

Patrol Officer Ellen O’Pray, who had nominated Bellamy and Slovik, presented them with the Medal of Valor to recognize “the heroism, bravery and professionalism you displayed that day.”

The Medal of Valor is an award for bravery or heroism performed “at extreme, life-threatening, personal risk. It recognizes officers whose actions could be considered as having gone above and beyond the call of duty, or to recognize an officer who has performed an act of bravery displaying an extreme amount of courage while knowingly facing imminent danger.”

Reminder: Call for nominations for employee awards

Nominations are sought for two employee awards given by the Employee Assembly – the Opperman Award for Staff Advocacy and the George Peter Award for Dedicated Service.

Opperman Award for Staff Advocacy

At any time during the year, staff members can nominate a Cornell staff or faculty member or academic professional who consistently demonstrates commitment to encouraging and supporting staff excellence. The deadline for submitting nominations for this spring's recognition event is March 15. More information:

<http://assembly.cornell.edu/EAAwards/EA-Opperman> or by contacting the Office of the Assemblies at 607-255-7075 or assembly@cornell.edu.

George Peter Award for Dedicated Service

Faculty, staff and students can nominate a staff member at any time for the George Peter Award for Dedicated Service. This award is given to staff members who consistently demonstrate a high degree of excellence in the performance of their duties, extend themselves to help others and exceed the normal expectations of their job responsibilities. Nominating materials are at <http://assembly.cornell.edu/EA-GeorgePeter/Home>.

Eldercare: Lindsay's story



Former first lady Rosalynn Carter once said, “There are only four kinds of people in the world: Those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers, and those who will need a caregiver.”

And yet, despite the fact that most of us will be involved with caregiving in one way or another during our lifetimes, caregiving tends to catch people by surprise. People can easily feel overwhelmed when they become a caregiver, says Eileen McCoy Whang, consultant for work/life in Human Resources. “The answer is to educate yourself and be prepared ahead of time,” she says.

Lindsay Ruth, assistant vice president for major gifts at Alumni Affairs and Development, is benefiting from that kind of proactive approach to caregiving. She started to take action when she realized her mother was having issues with dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

“When it first became clear that I was going to have to take time off, I talked to our human resources staff and my managers, and learned about [family medical leave](#). As my mom's situation evolved and deteriorated, my travel schedule and workload were challenging for me to balance. At the same time, I realized I was ready for new job opportunities.”

When a position that didn't require as much travel became available several months later, Lindsay moved into her current job. Still, eldercare needs often change over time, and Lindsay later worked again with human resources to craft a more flexible schedule and reduction from full-time to 60 percent.

While not every job can incorporate flexible arrangements, Lindsay found that “there are often more options than you think.” The crucial thing, she says, is that “it's *really* important to reach out to people for assistance.”

Nobody should expect to handle caregiving alone. Lindsay points out that “in addition to changing jobs and working part-time, establishing a team of neighbors, paid helpers, advisors and family is what really makes my mom's situation workable.” She notes that Cornell's caregiving workshops also helped her understand the often complicated framework of eldercare services availability and eligibility.

In addition to making efforts to be prepared before a crisis strikes, Eileen and Lindsay offer the following advice for caregivers:

Nurture your sense of humor: Lindsay recalls going to a stress reduction workshop where the instructor said, “If you're gonna laugh about this later, why wait?” She carries around a little trio of plastic pigs, gifts from colleagues that remind her of a funny story about her mom. “Humor,” she says, “does help get you through those days.”

- **Be kind to yourself:** You're going to make mistakes – you're only human! Remember to take time to care for yourself, even if it's in ten-minute doses. Think of the airplane analogy of putting on your oxygen mask before helping someone else: you'll be a more effective caregiver if you're not struggling yourself.
- **Prioritize:** Not everything has to be done at once. Safety and health are always top priorities; for everything else, Eileen recommends making a list. “Take baby steps. Take one thing at a time, one day at a time. And then do something for yourself.”
- You're not alone: Reach out for help. Caregivers often feel isolated; networking can help ease the burdens of responsibility and stress. “A good first step is to give me a call or [email](#),” says Eileen. “Oftentimes, just talking can help.”

Cornell resources

Most employees are unaware of the extensive caregiving resources available through Cornell, which include the [Cornell Caregiver Support & Education Network](#), the [Elder Care/Caregiver E-Newsletter and e-list](#), and [elder care workshops](#).

- [Dependent care consultant](#): free, confidential consultations covering where to start, what you should be thinking about, finding the support you need; local and long-distance resources. Contact [Eileen McCoy Whang](#) to set up a time to meet.
- [Family Medical Leave](#): unpaid time away to support caregiving, either on an occasional or longer-term basis.
- [Flexible work arrangements](#): Consult with an expert who will help you determine if a flexible work arrangement would work for you and your individual situation.
- [Elder Care/Caregiver E-Newsletter and e-list](#) (type “join” in the subject line to subscribe): Monthly news of relevant on- and off-campus programs, articles, support groups and more. Network with other members of the Cornell community to share information, resources and support.
- [Elder care workshops](#): On-campus programs that address topics such as legal and financial issues, in-home and long term care, Alzheimer's and dementia, caregiving and more.
- [Cornell Caregiver Support & Education Network](#): Meetings for Cornell community members who are providing care for an adult family member, spouse, or friend either locally or long distance.
- [Wellness](#): Fitness and wellbeing opportunities for caregivers, spouses, partners, and family members including classes for healthy aging
- Finances: [Long term care insurance](#); [Dependent care reimbursement account](#)
- [Family Helper List](#): Cornell students, staff, retirees and external community members available for elder companionship, running errands, yard work, housekeeping and other help.
- [Project Generations](#): Student organization in collaboration with the Office for the Aging pairing students with elders in

the community for companionship.

- [Faculty and Staff Assistance Program \(FSAP\)](#): Free and confidential guidance and support for benefits-eligible employees and their partners.
 - Local support opportunities: Ithaca and Tompkins County offer numerous support groups for caregivers, including regular meetings dedicated to Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis, stroke recovery, depression, visual support, hard of hearing, cancer and more.
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Contest increases awareness of commuter alternatives

How do you encourage people to change longstanding habits? You lead by example, helping them to imagine another way, said Svante Myrick '09, Ithaca city mayor, at a meeting held by Cornell's Transportation Services and Way2Go, of Cornell Cooperative Extension, Tompkins County, Feb. 11 in Weill Hall.

The meeting highlighted the efforts of Cornell and local officials to decrease the number of single-occupancy vehicles driven to and around Ithaca and increase awareness about alternative modes of transportation. It also recognized the Cornell winners of this year's Tompkins County Commuter Challenge: graduate student Daniel Keough; Craig Riecke, of Cornell Computing and Information Science; and Alan Bleier, senior research associate, Cornell Nanoscale Facility.

For the past year, they led by example by logging their commuting choices at Zimride.com/Cornell or Zimride.com/Tompkins, receiving points for carsharing, biking, walking, working remotely or taking another mode of transportation other than private car. Keough racked up 938 points, winning a round-trip Campus-to-Campus coach ride to New York City; Riecke, 592 points; and Bleier, 537 points. Riecke and Bleier won gift cards from Wegmans.

In addition to making it easy to log commuting activity, Zimride provides a postings for people to offer or request rides for commutes, road trips and popular events. Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit, Ithaca Carshare, and special events such as Bike to Work Day, RunWalk @ Work and Dump the Pump, also give people the tools they need to find alternative ways to commute to work, save money and conserve energy.

The Feb. 11 meeting also highlighted the work of the Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council to target federal dollars to transportation alternatives; the relationships between housing and transportation; and the transformation of Tower Road into a "complete street" that enables safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities.
