

Presenter: Allen Bolton

The final award of the evening is the **John Nolt Lifetime Achievement Award**.

This award is named after the first recipient of the award, John Nolt, who received it the year he retired in 2017. John was a long-time member of the Committee on the Campus Environment and served as Chair or Co-chair of the committee for many years. He worked tirelessly to teach students environmental ethics and was instrumental in laying the foundation of so many sustainability policies and work on this campus. This award is presented to a faculty or staff member who has demonstrated environmental leadership throughout their tenure at UT and will leave a lasting impact on the university even after they leave.

The nominees are:

Jay Price

Jay embodies the core values of the John Nolt Lifetime Achievement in Environmental Leadership award. The first day that Jay's feet touched campus he started demonstrating his role as an environmental leader on the UTK campus. I think that everyone on this committee will agree that Jay's commitment to UT, its people and its mission, will leave an impact on the university for years to come.

Gerry Dinkins

For more than 35 years Gerry Dinkins has been a champion for our environment and the sustainability of our planet by acting as a voice for one of the most vulnerable animal groups in the ecosystem—freshwater mussels. Gerry is the Curator of Malacology and Natural History at UT's McClung Museum and an adjunct assistant professor in the School of Natural Resources. Indeed, he is one of the nation's foremost experts on these critical invertebrates. Through his work--and his entire life--Dinkins has defined himself as a lifelong advocate for the environment and a more sustainable future.

David Brown

Since 2006, David has been the primary recycling collections driver on campus, but has worked for the university for 55 years. David has always been enthusiastic, hard-working, and truly uplifting in his work for UTK all these years.

Dr. Melissa Hinten

Dr. Hinten is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Geography and Sustainability, and the Chair of the Sustainability BA program since 2017. Dr. Hinten is a passionate advocate both inside and outside the classroom for students interested in sustainability and the environment. She was instrumental in UTK's application to lift the Sustainability Program from an Interdisciplinary Program to its own BA degree.

Could we have a round of applause for our nominees.

We have two Lifetime Achievement Winners tonight, and both are truly deserving of this award.

The first recipient is **David Brown**.

David Brown has been a tireless employee with the University of Tennessee for over 55 years. He retired after 46 years of full-time service, but he has continued to work for the past 9 years as a part-time, post-retiree employee. Since 2006, David has been the primary recycling collections driver on campus. Even now, at age 73, he stays as long as is required to complete the recycling routes. Due to compliance requirements brought about by recent changes, David has had to sort out more of the paper in order to make it as clean and high-quality as possible. This, in turn, brings the highest price for the material. Even though this additional time and effort investment significantly increased the hours required of him during his longest night of the week, he never once complained. In fact, this has been a hallmark of his 55-year tenure here at UTK. He goes above and beyond to make people happy and to provide excellent customer service, with nary a complaint. Just before David officially retired from the university, UT Recycles got a new recycling truck that required a CDL in order to drive it. Even though David was nervous about this proposition, he studied, he trained, and he was rewarded for his efforts with his Commercial Driver's License. Because David was willing to do this, even at the end of his official career, the recycling operation was able to become significantly more efficient. David has always been enthusiastic, hard-working, and truly uplifting in his work for UTK all these years. Though David's work is rarely seen by the public, through his words and his dedication to his job, David is quite possibly UT's biggest recycling advocate. Thank you sincerely, David, not only for sticking with UT for all these years, but also for everything you have done in the field of sustainability. We honor your service. Thank you.

The next recipient is **Dr. Melissa Hinten**.

Dr. Hinten is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Geography and Sustainability, and the Chair of the Sustainability BA program since 2017. She was instrumental in UTK's application to lift the Sustainability Program from an Interdisciplinary Program to its own BA degree. She has taught hundreds of students about the importance of sustainability. Indeed, she has built much of the curriculum and has made it into one of the most popular majors and minors in the college. Many of her students have gone on to become powerful advocates for sustainability in their careers.

Dr. Hinten is a passionate advocate both inside and outside the classroom for students interested in sustainability and the environment. In the classroom, Dr. Hinten is known for inspiring her students to reflect on their classroom materials and how this information connects to their personal lives. Outside of the classroom, Dr. Hinten is known for her leadership in fostering student engagement through internships and jobs that apply their knowledge to making real-world changes, no matter how small. For all her efforts in these areas, Dr. Hinten received a Chancellor's Honors Award for Excellence in 2019.

Dr. Hinten also created a "Lunch and Learn" initiative that allows students to learn about career opportunities in sustainability and the environment. She invites professionals from various

fields across academia, the local community, and government to share their career paths in the fields of Geography, Sustainability, Biology, Geosciences, and other related areas. This lunch series is one of the most popular events in the department, attracting numerous undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff who are interested in practical career development, the latest research, and networking opportunities with peers.

In addition to all this work, dedication, and attention to her students, Dr. Hinten also organizes other events on campus related to Sustainability. Earth Day and Geography Awareness Day are just two examples of her efforts in this area. Her strategic approach connects service, leadership, engagement, and teaching in a holistic package, maximizing her impact and commitment across various levels of the community. This approach offers a more complete educational experience for students, and also aligns perfectly with the university's land grant mission to implement sustainability action items.

Dr. Hinten is an impeccable student mentor, a trailblazer for experiential sustainability education opportunities on campus, and has gone above and beyond to create access to actionable professional connections and program engagement for the Department of Geography since the beginning of her directorial term in 2014.

We are deeply grateful for Melissa's dedication to her students and this university, for her creativity in helping students in every way possible, and for her efforts in highlighting sustainability at UTK. We wish her the very best in her future endeavors, and we expect great things from her. Congratulations, Dr. Hinten!