Ellis W. Oliver ’37/38 (deceased)

Business owner and leader who set high standards in business and personal endeavors. Was a long-time local businessman and a well-known financier and broker. He attained the rank of lieutenant commander in the U.S. Navy during WWII, served in elected and appointed public offices in the community.

Dr. Eileen K. Wicks ’60

Leads a distinguished career in economics and in governmental and policy settings. She is a nationally known expert on issues relating to regulation of health insurance, health care delivery, and managed care. She has written health policies and advises on issues of health care for several states.

Dr. Steve Webster ’63

A nationally known forest researcher who has conducted ground-breaking studies that changed the way thinking on forest productivity and management. He has written extensively on the subject.

John Y. Sato ’53

Soon after John Sato graduated from Centralia College he was drafted into the army. It was there that he was a victim of the U.S. Japanese internment government during WWII. Rather, like most Japanese-Americans of the era and his family, remained staunchly patriotic. He built his business and his home into a major Pacific Northwest name.

Juan L. DePauw ’48 (deceased)

Juan L. DePauw served as a civil engineer and national leader for public works administration. As County Engineer and Director of Public Works for King County he was responsible for roads and streets, managing Boeing Field, overseeing trash and waste, and establishing flood control. He helped evolve public works into a modern, civil service employer accountable mostly that guided him nationally.

Dr. Jerri Hedges ’60

Dr. Hedges was instrumental in the writing of the first bill on emergency room procedures, which was signed into law in 1975. She worked to establish a Home Health Services Program, which was one of the first in the state for nursing homes.

Rick Anderson ’71

Rick Anderson, chairman and chief executive officer of Moss Adams LLP, among the top 50 largest accounting firms in the country. He was a chief financial officer at Microsoft and held that position from 1985 until 1999. From 1999 – 2009, he served on the Board of Trustees of the Financial Accounting Foundation. 2011

Angela Meade ’98

Angela Meade is a rising star in the world of opera. She has won the Beverly Sills Artist Award for young singers and the Richard Tucker Award, given to an American singer poised on the edge of a major national and international career. Already to her growing list of credits is her impressive debut in the New York Metropolitan Opera and critical acclaim for a range of subsequent roles. She performs on stages throughout the world.

Laura Dowling ’79

honored with Centralia College’s 2013 Distinguished Alumnus Award

Laura Dowling has a passion for nature’s beauty and a gift for design. Dowling captured the eye of First Lady Michelle Obama who appointed Dowling in 2009 as the White House chief floral designer. She is the college’s 36th award recipient.

“I am really honored by this award. I had a wonderful experience at Centralia College setting part in academic, theatrical and athletic. It is amazing and humbling to join such a distinguished group,” Dowling said.

As the nation’s top floral designer, Dowling is responsible for the White House floral style. On a daily basis she manages plans, and implements decor and flowers for a broad range of White House events, including state dinners, parties, receptions as well as the White House Christmas. Her work includes creating floral arrangements for the White House state rooms, East and West Wing offices, and the private residences.

It is worth noting that Dowling trained for a different world. In college, she majored in social sciences with a goal of becoming a lawyer. She went on to the University of Washington, earned an undergraduate degree in political science and Master of Public Administration. She was on track for a career in government service.

With that career on its ascendency, Dowling became the Floral Department and Congressional Relations officer for the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars where she coordinated fundraising and lobbying efforts for the international affairs think tank located within the Smithsonian Institution. She held that position from 1985 until 1999. From 1999 – 2009, she served as Senior Manager of Strategic Communications at The Nature Conservancy, the world’s largest environmental organization.

In 2005, Dowling visited Paris and studied French floral design. It was an epiphany and a new plan began to unfold. She was hooked on floral artistry. In 2000, Dowling visited Paris and studied French floral design. It was an epiphany and a new plan began to unfold. She was hooked on floral artistry. In 2000, Dowling visited Paris and studied French floral design. It was an epiphany and a new plan began to unfold. She was hooked on floral artistry. In 2000, Dowling visited Paris and studied French floral design. It was an epiphany and a new plan began to unfold. She was hooked on floral artistry.

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