



The University of Vermont

## **President's *Our Common Ground* Award 2014**

**Rodman W. Cory**

**May 5, 2014**

When I learned about the creation of the President's *Our Common Ground* Staff Award the first person that came to my mind was Rodman Cory. With the help of Michelle Chapman, Naima Dennis, Karen Lemire, Tara Messier, and Joel Shapiro we quickly got to work on his nomination. For those of you who know Rodman well, you know that he is a wordsmith and editor in the truest sense and is always willing to debate the purposefulness of a comma. He has helped me and many others turn a terrible sentence into a work of art. So, you can imagine the anxiety each of us experienced in trying to compose these letters of support for his nomination, knowing full well that his keen eye and red pen would not be able to help us craft a masterpiece of the English language. We hoped that what we had written not only captured how Rodman lives out the values of *Our Common Ground* every day, but that we did so with correct grammar and punctuation. The fact that we are here today celebrating this man I hope is confirmation we got it right.

I have had the privilege of working with Rodman in so many different capacities over the years from his role in Human Resource Services to Staff Council and the Staff Appreciation Week Planning Committee. I have always been impressed by his dedication, integrity, professionalism, compassion, leadership, mentorship, and his ability to communicate.

Rodman is one of the most dedicated and hard-working people at the University of Vermont. He goes above and beyond every day and sees the importance of making connections and working together for a shared goal or outcome. He builds teams and creates community through his words and actions. Rodman doesn't just hear what you have to say, he listens and you know you have been heard, understood, validated, and most importantly valued for being you. He has immense respect for others. He can mediate the most difficult of conversations with the most dynamic people and end those discussions having worked through whatever challenges were present to build consensus and unity. Rodman is a humble servant leader, a confidant, a

mentor and a friend. He is someone you can rely on and you know that he is going to come through no matter what.

While I could go on and on, I reached out to a number of Rodman's colleagues and asked them to provide a few words about what kind of a person he is. I liked to close with some of their words.

- “Rodman carries his integrity so openly and proudly. He is confident in his ideals and humble with his gifts. He brings warmth, humor and respect to every interaction.”
- “He always has a positive attitude, an eagerness to pitch in, and a willingness to lend an ear, no matter how busy he is.”
- “With each interaction I have with Rodman, I leave with more insight and happiness; and, always, more inspired.”
- “He is a man that I trust and respect because he is a man that trusts and respects others.”
- “He is the consummate professional!”
- “He is a wonderful, kind person and a co worker who is always, always respectful to everyone.”
- “He lives by example – that to get the most out of each and every day, you must work with authenticity.”
- “I had a dear friend pass here at UVM. Rodman went out of his way to send me a very thoughtful email expressing his feelings in my time of pain. His words gave me much peace. I will always be thankful to Rodman for taking the time to reach out to me when I really needed it.”
- “The epitome of the expression: “Work is love made visible.” Rodman spreads compassion and care across the entire campus.”
- “[Rodman] isn't afraid to ask questions, share his insights or lend a helping hand. He holds himself accountable and strives every day to do the ‘right’ thing as he works to strengthen every community he is a part of – HRS, Staff Council, UVM, Hinesburg, his family, church etc. We all benefit from Rodman's contributions, and UVM is a better place because of him. P.S. He also bears a striking resemblance to the Provost.”

Thank you Rodman for your energy, enthusiasm, and dedication. You are a true steward of the University of Vermont and the values of *Our Common Ground*. Congratulations.

**Jeff Bukowski**  
Staff Council Administrator