

# Honors awarded on Founders' Day

Founders' Day, which recognizes the event on February 9, 1855, when New Jersey Governor Rodman M. Price signed the bill establishing a New Jersey Normal School, was celebrated this year by bestowing special honors on three alumni and one of the College's academic schools.

For 2006, the 10th Annual Alumni Leadership Convocation presented the Alumni Citation to **Robert Parrish '72**, retired professor of music. The Distinguished Service Award went to **Ernest Rydell '60**, a 26-year College administrator. **U.S. Rep. Chris Smith '75**, received the Humanitarian Award. **Greg Bellotti '92**, outgoing president of the Alumni Association, presented the three honors at an evening ceremony and reception in Paul Loser Hall.

**Jonathan Peck '96**, vice president of the Alumni Association, introduced President R. Barbara Gitenstein, who spoke briefly to an audience of about 100 faculty, students, staff, and alumni to honor the School of Art, Media, and Music, the product of an academic reorganization in 2001. She presented a commemorative plaque to James Lentini, dean of the school, who recognized the school's high-caliber faculty as the essence of its accomplishments.

Bellotti said the recognition committee of the Alumni Association was highly impressed with Parrish's long-term exceptional service as a vocal teacher and artistic director of the Opera Theatre

from 1983 to 2005, as chairman of the department from 1990 to 2002, and as chair of the design and construction committee of the Music Building. "His day-after-day dedication really saved the Opera Theatre for the kids and the community," Bellotti said. "He was the

fundraising, and alumni affairs. This award for distinguished service is long overdue."

Rydell left Trenton State to become director of development and alumni affairs at Glassboro State College (now Rowan University) from 1987 to 1991, following which he spent nine years at East Stroudsburg University in Pennsylvania, retiring in 2000. In recent years, he once again has become very active with TCNJ's Alumni Association.

The Alumni Association's Humanitarian Award went to 14th District Republican Congressman Chris Smith, Bellotti said, because of work he has done as a result of responsibilities



*Taking center stage at the February 9 Alumni Leadership Convocation ceremony are, from left: Alumni Association President Greg Bellotti '92; retired professor of music Robert Parrish '72; TCNJ President R. Barbara Gitenstein; U.S. Congressman Chris Smith '75; and longtime College administrator Ernest Rydell '60. Inset: Dean of School of Art, Media, and Music, James Lentini.*

sort of teacher who went way beyond the call, directing the shows even after he had retired and moved to Florida."

Rydell, known to all as "Ernie," joined the administration one year out of college and went on to serve in a number of capacities for 26 years. Bellotti said, "He's probably spent more time working and volunteering for this college than anyone else, and provided significant service to former presidents Clayton Brower and Harold Eickhoff in public relations,

he held for many years on the Veterans' Affairs Committee and a subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights, and International Operations that works to protect victims of human trafficking, sexual assault, and domestic violence.

He said Smith, a business major as an undergraduate, is "one of the most respected congressmen in the District of Columbia, one who is true to his values and hardly has to campaign at all to win re-election by a wide majority."