U of U Alumni Association Selects Distinguished and Honorary Alumni Award Recipients

Salt Lake City – Each year, beginning in 1947, the University of Utah Alumni Association presents accomplished alumni and friends with the institution’s highest honors—the Distinguished and Honorary alumni awards. Each individual selected represents the best that the University brings to the state, and the national and international communities.

The 2009 award recipients include individuals who have pioneered in education, enriched the lives of Utah’s troubled youth, and embarked on groundbreaking scientific discoveries.

“The award acknowledges four of our most outstanding alumni and two highly respected adopted alumni,” says Alumni Association Executive Director John Ashton. The award recipients will be honored on February 24, 2009, at the Little America Hotel during the Founders Day celebration, an annual series of events that commemorate the University of Utah’s founding in 1850.

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS AND ALUMNA AWARD RECIPIENTS

Richard E. Kendell MEd’70 PhD’73 has dedicated his life to education. Recently retired as Utah’s Commissioner of Higher Education, Kendell was previously executive director of the Utah Partnership for Education, deputy to the governor for education and economic development, and superintendent of schools for the Davis School District. He has also taught and served as an administrator at the University of Utah.

William J. Rutter MS’50 is a leader in biotechnology research. His work at the University of California, San Francisco, and Chiron, the biotech firm he co-founded more than 25 years ago, led to several early advances in biotechnology, including the first cloning of the insulin gene, the
development of a process for making a vaccine against the hepatitis B virus, and research leading to the first sequencing of the HIV genome.

**Beverley Taylor Sorenson BS’45** is a tireless advocate of arts education for children. In 1995, Sorenson, a former elementary school teacher, established the nonprofit foundation Art Works for Kids, dedicated to enriching the lives and improving the minds of Utah children through innovative arts education. In 2008, the Sorenson Legacy Foundation pledged a generous gift to support a groundbreaking new interdisciplinary program at the U that will train fine arts and education students to teach music, dance, visual arts, and theater in elementary school settings.

**Andrew A. Valdez JD’77** has devoted his adult life to helping young people in trouble. Currently a judge in Salt Lake City’s Third District Juvenile Court, Valdez describes in his memoir how—growing up poor and fatherless—a chance friendship with a successful businessman helped him envision a previously unimaginable future for himself. Since his appointment to the Third District Juvenile Court, Valdez has developed a court-based mentoring program, partnerships with community education schools, and opportunities for female juvenile offenders to work off restitution obligations.

**HONORARY ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENTS**

**Chase N. Peterson and Grethe Ballif Peterson** have served as exceptional envoys for the U for many years. Chase taught at the U of U School of Medicine while maintaining a medical practice before leaving to serve as dean of admissions and vice president at his alma mater, Harvard. He returned to Utah as the University’s vice president for Health Sciences and then served as president of the University from 1983-1991, overseeing significant campus growth. Grethe has served as executive director of the University’s Tanner Lectures on Human Values since 1987, editing collected volumes of the lectures every year. She founded and chaired the Governor’s Task Force on Child Sexual Abuse.