

2018 Dickson Awardee: John Wheeler

In retirement, John has been giving back by building closer ties between the campus and the larger community, contributing time and generous financial support to programs that expand opportunities for first-generation college attenders, and to programs that strengthen community life in San Diego. John has been an active and committed member of the Emeriti Association and has been very highly involved in its Chancellor's Scholars program. From 2008 to 2011, John served as Chair of the UCSD Emeriti Mentor Program. He has provided extensive mentoring to students in that program as well as UCSD students in the Guardian Scholars Program, serving foster youth who become UCSD students, and a donor to Promises2Kids, a local non-profit organization that supports youth from disadvantaged backgrounds by providing them with skills training and scholarships to prepare for college.



He has provided extensive mentoring to students in the City Heights through the Reality Changers program. He has served on the Board of Directors of the Luther View housing complex in Pacific Beach for low-income seniors, serving as president in 2007. He has been essential in other organizations which focus on underserved communities, such as the Board of Directors of the Christian Community Service Agency, a San Diego program that provides emergency services to individuals and families in need, and in 2007, he became a founding and sustaining donor to Juan Carlos Organization, a local non-profit organization that presents programs of fitness and socialization training for people with severe disabilities. For 19 years, from 1997 to 2015, he was one of a half dozen people who planned, prepared and hosted the Annual Pacific Beach Community Thanksgiving Dinner, a sit-down turkey dinner, free and open to all, presented in the spirit of neighborliness.