

United Methodist Church---University Scholar/Teacher of the Year Award Nomination  
Nominee: Cheri A. Young

Those who teach—who are delighted and energized by sharing knowledge—have always been some of my favorite people. The ability to explain a topic, an idea, or simply how to accomplish a task with enough depth and intricacy so that any ordinary human could understand, is a skill that amazes me. There are many who teach and many who teach well, and to teach with this kind of effectiveness is enough to educate a college student. However, to empower a college student requires a far different skill set and far greater array of talent. It requires an entirely different person. Cheri Young is one of those people.

If you have ever been in a classroom you have probably had a variety of experiences with ill-equipped teachers. There are those professors that are great at teaching but maybe not as knowledgeable about the topic at hand. There are professors who know a great deal about the topic and may even have experience in the field but should not be teaching anyone else how to do so. Maybe they are knowledgeable, great teachers, but are incapable of connecting or helping outside of the classroom. Then, all of sudden in the middle of your college career you are sitting in your seat on the first day of the semester and this fireball of a woman stomps in with an admittedly frightening confidence, takes hold of the room in an instant, captivates you with her energy, teaches you with unimaginable patience and articulate explanation, speaks knowledgeably about her experience and her research, and then drops everything when you walk into her office to thoroughly answer that stupid question you should already know.

I believe Cheri Young was born to teach. For a practical explanation, she is one of the most thorough people, not just teachers, I have ever known. If you read through an assignment or leave the classroom with questions, it is only because the questions she has asked and the explanations she has given have caused you to seek even more answers than you thought you would ever want. Cheri fuels a thirst for knowledge in her students because of her own curiosity and academic pursuit. She pushes them to seek out answers and to always ask why. Not only that but in her own explanations she is wildly articulate and patient in speech, never making you feel ashamed for asking a question.

Eventually I began to understand that if I went to Cheri with questions, she would ask even more difficult ones. Her inquisitive nature pushed me to pursue the highest level of excellence in the classroom, as she challenged me to never settle for anything mediocre in my academic and professional career. She taught me how to ask for more as a woman in the workplace, to walk all over fear, and to sprint across gender lines that often keep women from achieving all that we are capable of receiving. To have her as a professor and a mentor is a daring place to enter into. She expects more than I ever have known I was capable of gleaning from my career. Yet as she expects much, she gives so much more.

What Cheri will give you is a fight. She fought for me as a student through her encouragement and fights for me as a professional through her support. She fights for her community, fights for the highest standards in the hospitality program, and fights for the broken and needy in this city. With her attitude, enthusiasm, intelligence, and fight she is changing the nature of the hospitality industry as she empowers future leaders like myself to do so. Specifically, my involvement in her ACC mentorship-training program gave me

an even greater view into the way she fights for a community of people in need and her passion to assemble many to fight with her.

Encased in this warrior spirit is an enormous heart that beats for many. She operates with finesse in the balance of humility and confidence. Cheri's leadership is fueled by her service-oriented heart. Her door is always open, whether it is for guidance in the classroom or guidance in life. She has the incredible ability to listen actively, connect with any human being, and makes each person feel known and heard. Her kindness is unmatched and her capacity for empathy unprecedented. She will brag about you to everyone like a mother and will push you to your limits like a coach.

No level of skilled writing could begin to explain how worthy Cheri Young is of this award. She is a powerhouse of a woman, mother, wife, and educator. If you talk to her about the next research study she is conducting you may also have the privilege to hear about the fantastic dinner she prepared last night or the four-mile run she went on before you saw the sunlight. You will then begin to understand her inexhaustible capacity. She is firm, strong, intelligent, and as equally fierce as she gentle. She commands respect and is sincere, honest, willing, and approachable. People from all walks of life are drawn to her empowering character. Cheri is outstanding in every way and I will continue to call her for wisdom as long as she will pick up her phone, knowing full well I will be pushed to dare greatly with each conversation.

Megan Lloyd  
BSBA 2013 HRTM  
[meganflloyd@gmail.com](mailto:meganflloyd@gmail.com)