FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2017 ACADEMIC WOMEN’S ASSOCIATION AWARDS – UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

(Edmonton, Alberta, 31 August 2017) The Academic Women’s Association-University of Alberta is pleased to announce the winners of this year’s AWA awards. Dr. Janine Brodie (Arts) and Dr. Dilini Vethanayagam (Medicine & Dentistry) as the joint winners of the Academic Woman of the Year Award and Ms. Danika Jorgensen-Skakum (Women and Gender Studies) as the winner of the Bente Roed Graduate Student Award. The 2017 winners will receive their awards at the AWA’s reception and awards ceremony, which will be held on 12 October at the Faculty Club.

“The AWA award winners all display a powerful combination of activism and scholarship, each working in their own fields and at differing career stages to lead the way in challenging barriers, in addressing the impact of gender and race on university structures, and in assuring our communities remain accountable to working toward a socially just future,” says Dr. Carrie Smith-Prei, Chair of the AWA Awards Committee.

First awarded in 1992, the AWA’s Woman of the Year Award is given to an academic woman or female-identified person in recognition of her contributions to the advancement of women and equity-seeking minority groups in the University of Alberta community, either over the course of her career or through current achievements in scholarship, teaching, and/or activism. Since 1999, the AWA’s Bente Roed Graduate Student Award, valued at $500, is given to a University of Alberta student in recognition of academic achievement and for community engagement that advances the status of women and equity-seeking minority groups.

The Academic Women’s Association is the major voice for the advancement of women and female-identified persons at the University of Alberta. It provides opportunities for networking and mentoring, and recognizes and celebrates the achievements of academic women and female-identified persons.

This year’s awards committee was chaired by Dr. Carrie Smith-Prei (Modern Language and Cultural Studies) and included Past President, Dr. Sheena Wilson (Campus St. Jean), Dr. Nat Hurley (English & Film Studies), Dr. Naomi Krogman (Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences), and Dr. Bukola Salami (Nursing).

For more information:

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For more information about AWA, please visit our website at https://uofaawa.wordpress.com/.

Attached: Biographies of the 2017 award winners
ABOUT THE AWARD WINNERS

ACADEMIC WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD – JANINE BRODIE

Dr. Janine Brodie has been named 2017 AWA Woman of the Year together with Dr. Dilini Vethanayagam. First awarded in 1992, the AWA’s Woman of the Year Award is given to an academic woman or female-identified person in recognition of her contributions to the advancement of women and equity-seeking minority groups in the University of Alberta community.

Dr. Brodie is a Distinguished University Professor and a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in Political Economy and Social Governance in the Department of Political Science at the University of Alberta. Dr. Brodie has written extensively on many of the core challenges in Canadian politics and public policy, including women in politics, gendered social policy, citizenship equality, and neoliberal governance. Her 1985 book, *Women and Politics in Canada*, was the first book published on gender and politics in Canada and is recognized as a benchmark study in this now well-established field. Dr. Brodie is the author or co-author of eight books, including *Politics on the Margins* (1995), and (with I. Bakker) *Where are the Women? Gender Equality, Budgets and Canadian Public Policy* (2008). She is also the editor or co-editor of six others, including (with M. Cohen), *Remapping Gender in the New World Order*, and *Contemporary Inequalities and Social Justice in Canada* (UTP, 2018).

Before moving to the University of Alberta to Chair the Department of Political Science in 1997, Dr. Brodie taught at York University where she held the John Robarts Chair in Canadian Studies and served as the Inaugural Director of the York Centre for Feminist Research. She was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 2002 and served as the Director of the English social science division of the RSC for five years. Dr. Brodie was awarded a Trudeau Fellowship in 2010 and the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012. In 2014, she received the Royal Society of Canada’s Innis-Gerin medal for “distinguished and sustained contributions to the literature in the social sciences.” In 2017, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of Carleton University, Dr. Brodie was named as one of the Faculty of Public Affairs’ 75 most distinguished alumni.

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**Academic Woman of the Year Award – Dilini Vethanayagam**

Dr. Dilini Vethanayagam has been named 2017 AWA Woman of the Year together with Dr. Janine Brodie. First awarded in 1992, the AWA’s Woman of the Year Award is given to an academic woman or female-identified person in recognition of her contributions to the advancement of women and equity-seeking minority groups in the University of Alberta community.

Dr. Vethanayagam is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry (FoMD). She is a Respirologist and Asthma Specialist, and developed the Edmonton HHT Center for this rare genetic disease, and the Canadian Severe Asthma Network (CSAN). She developed the outreach initiative for the FoMD, the Refugee Lecture Series, with the curriculum disseminated through a web-based portal, to de-stigmatize and increase awareness of the challenges faced by refugees entering Canada and to review common medical concerns faced by them. She has been an active member of the General Faculties Council at the University of Alberta over the past 4 years, and just completed her 3 year term as the GFC representative to the Council of Student Affairs. Over the past year she was the GFC rep to the newly formed Dean’s Advisory Committee through the Vice-Provost and Dean of Students. She introduced the FoMD outreach initiative on Student Mental Health last fall. This July, she will be starting her new role as the GFC rep to Senate.

Dr. Vethanayagam was inspired to achieve her own career goals early in life by her mother, who following her immigration to Canada (in her 30’s) had to pursue a completely different career while raising a young family with her husband here in Edmonton. She moved from McMaster University in 2003 back to her hometown of Edmonton with her family (husband Jonathan and two daughters Tiana and Tristan) and started work at the U of Alberta – at that time the only Academic Clinician in her division (Adult Pulmonary). With a lot of active mentorship from many Academic Clinicians within the Departments of Medicine and Pediatrics - including another recipient of the same AWA award a few years prior - she was able to encourage other women to enter Academic Practice within Pulmonary Medicine as both as residents and faculty members.

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Danika Jorgensen-Skakum has been awarded the Bente Roed Graduate Student Award. Since 1999, the AWA’s Bente Roed Graduate Student Award, valued at $500, is given to a University of Alberta student in recognition of academic achievement and for community engagement that advances the status of women and equity-seeking minority groups.

Danika Jorgensen-Skakum is a graduate student in the Gender and Social Justice program in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Alberta. Originally from Southern Alberta, she received her BA in Women and Gender Studies from the University of Lethbridge. Her research focuses on the Death Positivity/Acceptance Movement, death studies, and the social justice of death and dying – particularly in the context of the Anthropocene and in the face of mass extinction(s). Danika is also interested in feminist publishing histories, feminist legal studies, and theorizing a transformative justice approach toward the criminalization of minors (and especially girls) for so-called "sexting" behaviour.

Prior to enrolling in her Master's program, she worked at Boyle Street Community Services and the Bissell Centre in Housing First. When she's not working on her thesis, she likes to play board games, bake, and explore Edmonton with her partner, Lindsey.

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