

CU Advocate of the Year Awards ^[1]



CU Advocates of the Year 2013-18 From left: Colin Finch (2015), Alvin Rivera (2013), Christina Beck (2017), Jane Dillon (2018), CU President Bruce Benson, Kimbirly Orr (2016), George Gramer (2014)

Each year, several CU Advocate of the Year award honorees are recognized to showcase the breadth of advocacy activities among members. There is one award that is deemed the marquee award - CU Advocate of the Year - that is given to an individual who demonstrates exceptional advocacy at multiple levels on behalf of the University of Colorado's four campuses. All awardees are recognized for their hard work in advocacy efforts, adamant spirit of volunteerism for a greater good, and making higher education a priority. The CU Advocate of the Year awardee is selected by the CU Advocates Advisory Board.



2018 CU Advocate of the Year Jane Dillion



Karen Tuke
Staff Advocate of the Year



Michelle Sze
Student Advocate of the Year



Kat Vierzba
Community Advocate of the Year

Previous CU Advocate of the Year Awardee and Selective Awards

2017 - Cristina Beck



Christina Beck, executive assistant to the athletics director at CU Boulder, is the CU Advocate of the Year. She brings intense dedication and passion to her work in athletics, transcending activity on the fields of play. Beck also volunteers her time at functions serving the campus and beyond, serving as a conduit between community members and the sports they're passionate about.

Her advocacy for CU athletics begins at the many games she attends and extends to the greater university, where she enthusiastically connects with a wide variety of people on a first-name basis.

CU Advocate of the Year selective awards

- **Darren Chavez**, CU Staff Advocate of the Year
- **Johnnie Nguyen**, CU Student Advocate of the Year
- **Destin Mehess**, CU Community Advocate of the Year

2016 - Kimberly Orr

Kimbirly Orr | 2016 CU Advocate of the Year



A past president of CU alumni chapters in metro Denver and Los Angeles, Orr is credited with raising awareness of the CU Advocates program among a wide circle of colleagues. Kimbirly has demonstrated a great level of grassroots advocacy to help support and promote CU in her

own unique way, and leveraging her leadership role with the Forever Buffs Metro Denver Alumni Chapter and the alumni boards and organizations she selflessly serves on,” Assistant Vice President Michele McKinney said. Orr regularly promotes joint events with the CU Advocates and works to advance the program via social media, marketing concepts and regular attendance at CU events. “I was overwhelmed to receive such a prestigious award from my alma mater,” Orr said. “I gratefully serve on the CU Advocates board because I believe CU Advocates is the most important program in the CU system. It provides great opportunities to volunteer, to serve and to become educated about everything CU is doing on all four campuses.”

CU Advocate of the Year selective awards for 2016:

- CU Advocate Travelers of the Year | Marty Coffin Evans and Robert Trembly
- CU Advocate for the Greater Good | Herb Fenster
- CU Advocate Cheerleader of the Year | Cam Low
- CU Advocate Supporter of the Year | Zachary Rothmier

2015 - Colin Finch

Colin Finch, 2015 CU Advocate of the Year



Colin Finch was chosen from among the group’s 3,000 members as Advocate of the Year. Michele McKinney, assistant vice president, said Finch has recruited more than 20 new CU Advocates and led a partnership with CU Advocates and the Forever Buffs Boulder Alumni

Chapter to establish CU Scoop, a near-monthly series of educational programs for members of both groups in Boulder. Besides serving as president of the Boulder Alumni Chapter, he is a board member of the CU Director's Club and CU-Boulder alumni advisory board. "I'm overwhelmed and honored by receiving this award but this is really for all of you who are here tonight," Finch said. "You go above the call of duty to support this program and we would not be where we are today without you. Your support helps us further the goals of CU, allowing it to strive and accomplish great things."

CU Advocate Selective Awards in 2015:

- CU Advocate Volunteer of the Year | Jane Dillon
- CU Advocate Informant of the Year | Wendy Fiedler
- CU Advocate Marketeer of the Year | Kimbirly Orr
- CU Advocate Recruiter of the Year | Bernard Slack

2014 - George Gramer

George Gramer | 2014 CU Advocate of the Year



"I've loved CU ever since I was a high school student," says Gramer, who earned bachelor's magna cum laude ('73) and master's ('74) degrees in Spanish (CU-Boulder and the other universities on his list all boasted renowned Spanish and mathematics programs when he began pursuing his education). "It's an extremely important honor," says Gramer, who received the award Tuesday night at the Denver Country Club at a reception hosted by

President Bruce and Marcy Benson. “To be recognized by the University for the second time is an extremely high honor.” As a U.S. Army intelligence officer, Gramer gave 29 years of service to the military in a career that took him far from his Midwestern roots, across the nation and overseas to Panama, Honduras, South Korea, and Bosnia. “Wherever I went and met other Buffs, we were all proud to be Buffs,” he says. “Anytime I met an officer from CU, we immediately had that bond.”

2013 - Alvin Rivera

Alvin Rivera | 2013 CU Advocate of the Year



Benson recognized Rivera for the “enthusiasm, passion and action” he brings to his role as a CU Advocate. He noted that Rivera has worked with CU’s Government Relations team to build support from elected officials on bills important to CU. Rivera co-chaired two events in Pueblo, where he lives, welcoming incoming CU students, and another event focusing on prospective students, including those in CU’s pre-collegiate program. Rivera’s career has included serving in administration at the University of Denver and the University of Texas-El Paso. He contributed to numerous civic and governmental entities and served in education capacities for Presidents Clinton and Carter.

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