

AAPT Distinguished Service Citations

January 8, 2007

David and Christine Vernier. The story of how the folks of Vernier Software and Technology came to be such valued supporters of AAPT is well told in Chuck Robertson's "From Mousetraps to Macintoshes" (*TPT*, **30**, Nov. '92). The strong teamwork of David and Christine has allowed them to develop and market some of the best technology for physics teaching labs around the world. It would be in David's realm to design, build, and update affordable software and hardware tools that work and survive in the classroom, and Christine became the driving force providing the needed business, organizational, and interpersonal skills while working with Vernier staff and physics teachers each day.

Their first AAPT involvement and national exposure (of a then garage and backroom business) started with contacts and friendships made at the summer meeting of 1982 in Ashland, Oregon. David's 15 years of physics teaching and his real desire to help working teachers resulted in a deep sense of belonging to the organization, and soon they were both putting time, effort, and resources into AAPT projects. They have commonly teamed with Paul Stokstad in reaching out to amusement park physics, supporting PTRA and AAPT section activities, and have so often provided equipment for lab workshops. After 14 years of conducting MBL workshops, Tom O'Kuma recalls, "In the early years of the MBL workshops, Dave and Chris used to ship the sensors, interfaces, curriculum, and software that we used . . . Through the years, more and more workshop sites had the equipment, but Dave and Chris would still

ship crucial “missing pieces” of equipment and curriculum. They always did this at no cost to us, but substantial cost to them. It was never about future product sells. It was always about a way to show the physics better and a way to get students motivated to learn.”

In these and many other ways this wonderful team has impacted the teaching of a significant fraction of AAPT’s membership. For their steady efforts to help all of us show and enjoy good physics in our classrooms and labs, their strong support of so many AAPT projects, and even for their wonderful 25th anniversary party in the summer rain, we are delighted to present Distinguished Service Citations to David and Christine Vernier.

Dick Peterson
Past President AAPT
Awards Chair - 2006