

2011 Pacesetters

Business Pacesetter:

Joan Brett



Jeremy Papasso | Camera

Joan Brett, founder of the Culinary School of the Rockies, cooks salmon with tomato sauce and mustard and creme fraiche sauce at her home in Boulder.

By **Elleni Theodora Cladis**
For the Camera

Imagine turning your hobby, or something you love to do, into something much more than a part-time passion. Imagine turning it into a way of life that allows you to educate, influence and positively affect the world around you.

Welcome to Joan Brett's life. When she moved to Boulder in 1971, Brett was one of the first practicing female attorneys in the city. But culinary pursuits were never far from her mind.

"I've always loved to cook; it's always been a passion of mine," says Brett, recipient of this year's Pacesetter Award in Business. In 1991, she turned that passion into the Culinary School of the Rockies.

"I didn't go in with any career thoughts," she says, "but thanks to my supportive husband, the school went beyond my wildest dreams."

The school quickly outgrew its first humble campus — her house — and a year later, Brett moved it into its present location on Table Mesa Drive.

In 1996, Brett created the school's first professional program and externship in Provence, France,

where students studied and cooked under the stern eyes of discriminating French chefs, learned the fine art of buying from farmers markets and made connections with growers and producers.

In 2006, Brett brought the first Farm to Table Culinary Arts program in the United States to Boulder. The program enables students to learn and to hone their craft in a working farm and food studies center in Boulder County.

"(Brett) once told me that food is love, and that's something that says a lot about her," says Peggy Wrenn, a long-time friend. "She has a community vision and has used her business to put her money where her mouth is and further that vision."

For Brett, the best part about the culinary school and the farm to table program has been seeing her vision in action and watching "people's whole perspectives on food change as they learn to take that food and make it into something great ... in addition to having fun, of course!"

Quality of Life Pacesetter:

John Wallace



Cliff Grassmick | Camera

John Wallace, works out with clients at the East Boulder Recreation Center..

By **Elise Trivers**
For the Camera

For the past 18 years, John Wallace has averaged more than 150 hours a year of volunteer work. He works as a coach and mentor for disabled people who play basketball, softball, soccer, volleyball and floor hockey.

Wallace also volunteers at the Eisenhower Elementary School Geography Bee, the city of Boulder Neighborhood Workshop, Eco-Cycle and the Beyond Limits Racing Team that helps people with disabilities to train and run the Boulder Boulder.

Wallace has won this year's Pacesetter Award for Quality of Life.

"The respect he has for the people he works with is amazing," said Colleen Fitzgerald, of Boulder Parks & Recreation's EXPAND (Exciting Programs Adventures and New Dimensions) program. "He has helped us for so long, and it's not that he does one program a week. He's here two and three nights a week, he helps with fundraising, with special events. He really does what's needed to help the

program and the individuals he works with."

In addition to coaching, Wallace, who is affectionately known as "Big John," helps set up and break down events and raises funds; he was the single highest fundraiser for the annual EXPAND Duck Race.

"That's the best thing about it, that I've met so many people, athletes, the families, parents and other volunteers," Wallace said, adding that he has a good time volunteering.

"It's the fun. They enjoy it, they can have fun and play, so I can enjoy it and have fun and play," Wallace said. "It's time for me to help these people and that's what I've been doing."

Wallace is often at the East Boulder Community Center on weekends, working out or playing sports with athletes outside of scheduled events.

"He's incorporated the EXPAND program as a part of his life rather than as a program that he volunteers with," Fitzgerald said.

Education Pacesetter:

Richard Garcia

By **Joe Kovack**
For the Camera

The academic achievement gap in education is growing in Boulder County. Richard Garcia wants to close it.

Since receiving his master's degree in education from the University of Colorado at Boulder in the mid-1970s, the former migrant farm worker has served as a federal program director for the North Conejos School District, associate director of the National Chicano Health Organization in Denver and director of bilingual education programs in the Boulder Valley School District, among many other positions.

Garcia is currently the executive director of the Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition, an organization he founded to close the academic achievement gap in Colorado, especially among low-income migrant families.

"Our mission is to provide equitable, educational opportunities for families and children," Garcia says. "We started to move from random acts of parental involvement to more focused, comprehensive activities for families."

His dedication to narrowing the achievement gap has earned Garcia the 2011 Pacesetter Award for Education.



David R. Jennings | Camera

Richard Garcia skims through a children's book used to teach parenting techniques at the Colorado Parent Information and Resource Center in Westminster.

The CSPC offers parental leadership team training to help parents understand where their child is struggling, provides methods to help their children at home and how to work with the schools.

Josie Heath, president of The Community Foundation Serving Boulder County, nominated Garcia

for his ongoing work to improve education.

"Richard (has) the wisdom ... to really advocate the kinds of products and systems that engage teachers, parents and the community (that help) children have a richer experience as they get ready to learn," Heath says.

Environment Pacesetter:

Gwen Dooley

By **Courtney Holden**
For the Camera

Gwen Dooley has seen Boulder evolve.

She remembers her days as an undergraduate at the University of Colorado in 1957, when horses grazed and cottonwoods grew on the expanse that is now the Twenty Ninth Street Mall.

Those memories and the contrast with the town changing around her left her with a sense of personal responsibility to preserve the environment where she's biked, hiked and gardened for decades.

Dooley's career in advocacy began in 1973 and extends to the present, with stints on Boulder City Council, the city of Boulder Open Space Board of Trustees, the city of Boulder Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the Board of Directors for PLAN Boulder County.

Dooley is the Pacesetter in the Environment category.

"You love a place; you love it, and you try to maintain what you love about it," Dooley said. "If people love it to death, there's not going to be anything left."

Among the projects she's been involved in: a soft reclamation of Boulder Creek and condemnation of development west of Colo. 93.

"Gwen's always been in there in the



Mark Leffingwell | Camera

Gwen Dooley at her home near downtown Boulder.

trenches ... trying to protect the environment," said physics professor emeritus Albert Bartlett, who nominated Dooley for the award. "She's been a central, hardworking person."

Dooley knows the battle to preserve open space will continue well into the future.

"You're never done," Dooley said. "You have to constantly fight to keep the environment desirable and

healthy."

Dooley's 50 years of residency have also made her familiar enough with Boulder to see different vantage points, realizing there can be more than one "right" side to an environmental argument.

"She was willing to reach across this false divide ... across the aisle, so to speak," said Jason Vogel, president of the Boulder Mountainbike Alliance.

Youth Pacesetter:

Cecelia Kluding-Rodriguez

By **Elise Trivers**
For the Camera

Cecelia Kluding-Rodriguez has made a big impact on the world, and she isn't even old enough to enter a voting booth. The New Vista High School senior participated in her first protest march while in middle school, and has reported for Boulder's KGNU radio from every continent (except Antarctica) on human rights issues such as torture, activism, gay rights and corrupt elections.

Kluding-Rodriguez is the winner of this year's Youth Pacesetter Award

In addition to her work at KGNU, Kluding-Rodriguez works with VOICE (Voice of Immigrant Children for Education and Equality); participates in marches and rallies with Si Se Puede, and works for SHAPE (Sexual Health and AIDS Awareness Peer Education).

"Cecelia shows that neither a young age nor school commitments need get in the way of involvement in one's community, country and world," said Kluding-Rodriguez's teacher Nina Endler, who nominated her for the award.

Kluding-Rodriguez continues to embrace activism.

"I have marched against the war in Iraq at the Democratic National Convention in 2008, marched for the re-



Mark Leffingwell | Camera

Cecelia Kluding-Rodriguez, 2011 Youth Pacesetter.

moval of Sheriff Joe Arpaio in Phoenix, Ariz., marched for GLBTQ rights, and forever will I continue until there is nothing that we need to march for," Kluding-Rodriguez wrote.

She says she was pepper sprayed in Phoenix, alongside an 18-month old baby and 8-year-old boy.

"Witnessing police attack (and) assault people is the hardest thing I have ever seen," she said.

Kluding-Rodriguez now has a criminal record because of a recent arrest while covering the annual School of

the Americas Watch Vigil in Columbus, Ga. She is the youngest person to have been arrested while documenting the vigil as a member of the press.

"I hope that I will never lose my passion for the things I do now: informing my communities about all types of issues, education-school, equity and justice for every individual regardless of an identity or status," she said. "I hope to inspire people around me and in my life to become active about the things they care about."