

Former UNH Prof. David Olsen Receives Patriot Award from NHESGR

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Former UNH professor of natural resources David P. Olsen (center), with his former graduate student Lee Alexander (right) and NHESGR's John Pappas.

Former UNH professor of natural resources David P. Olsen received the Patriot Award at a ceremony on campus last week. The honor recognizes Olsen's support of a former

graduate student, Lee Alexander, who between 1977 and 1979 pursued a master of science degree while also serving in the Navy Reserve. Alexander nominated Olsen for the award, which was presented by John Pappas of the New Hampshire Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Committee ([NHESGR](#)). Several of Olsen's former faculty colleagues and graduate students attended.

"It was Prof. Olsen's unwavering support that greatly contributed to me successfully completing my masters degree," said Alexander at Friday's ceremony in the War Memorial room at the MUB. "Despite the fact I was away one weekend every month and served various times on active duty, he made sure that it did not adversely affect my graduate study program."

Alexander recalls the late 1970s as a time when anti-war sentiment lingered, and the general public did not always hold in high regard Vietnam-era service members. He says Olsen intervened on his behalf several times in "his quiet, behind-the-scenes way, making sure I didn't get any grief."

The Department of Defense established ESGR in 1972 to promote cooperation and understanding among reserve members and their civilian employers. The Patriot Award recognizes an individual supervisor who demonstrates meaningful support of a reserve member.

Alexander went on to obtain a PhD from Yale University and became an internationally recognized electronic charting and e-navigation expert. Today he is an independent consultant and research affiliate professor at the UNH Center for Coastal and Ocean Mapping.

Olsen retired from UNH years ago, but his advising hasn't stopped. Alexander says the two get together about once a month, and they always fall right back into the familiar roles of adviser and student.



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