



News Release

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[Nancy Livingston](#)

Public Relations

651-779-3222

Fax 651-779-3470

[Century College](#)

3300 Century Avenue North

White Bear Lake, MN 55110

Century O&P Instructor Haddon Wins National Honor

Century College instructor Edward Haddon will receive the Outstanding Educator award at the American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists' annual meeting March 16 to 19 in Orlando, Fla.

Haddon has devoted his life to the Orthotics and Prosthetics program at Century, the only college in the country that offers training in both orthotics and prosthetics from the technician to the practitioner level.

Haddon has worked at the college for 35 years.

"I have been really, really fortunate," said Haddon, a longtime Vadnais Heights resident. "I am associated with a profession that transforms people's lives. At the end of every day when I go home, I feel God's pleasure. And I think that's true of most people in O and P."

Century's Orthotics program prepares students to care for patients with disabling conditions of the limbs and spine. The Prosthetic program prepares students to provide prostheses for those individuals who need limbs due to trauma, disease or congenital conditions.

The technician courses teach the fabrication skills needed to successfully complete a functional orthotic or prosthetic device. The practitioner programs provide the students with the patient management skills needed to work closely with physicians to prescribe and fit patients with various orthotic and prosthetic devices. Students typically start in technician programs but some choose to advance to the practitioner level. To enter the practitioner programs, students must first earn their bachelor's degree.

Haddon, the first graduate of the now-closed University of Minnesota Orthotics and Prosthetics Program, also earned a degree from Northwestern University's O and P program in Chicago. Haddon later was one of the first hires when the former 916 Vocational Technical Institute (a forerunner of Century College) started the first technician program in 1975.

In the early days of the program, Haddon and his peers were busy writing curriculum, purchasing equipment and organizing their laboratory on the third floor of what is now East Campus. The program reorganized and moved to the first floor two years ago, making access easier for patients who regularly visit the program.

"Student interest in the program was there from the beginning," said Haddon. Orthotics and Prosthetics attracts students who have mechanical as well as creative abilities, and students are most successful when they have a strong motivation to help others. About 12 percent of students in the program have a physical disability themselves.

Haddon is known for his cheerful smile, his ready laugh, his willingness to help raise money for student scholarships and his sincere interest in other people. He has many outside interests, including flying his small plane around the country, and spending summers on a remote island on Rainy Lake in Canada. His island retreat has no television and spotty cell phone service. "You get back to the basics up there," he said. In 1999, Haddon fell out of a tree on the island and broke his back. A friend who was with him put him in a wagon, pulled him to his boat and transported him to a hospital in International Falls. Eight days

later, Haddon was back in his cabin recovering from compression fractures and vertebrae and soft tissue damage. He returned to Century in the fall.

Haddon and his wife have no children of their own, but over the years they have become very close to many of the O and P students. Haddon has attended students' weddings, baby showers, birthdays, picnics and funerals. He has been around long enough to teach the sons and daughters of some of his early students.

One of the students Haddon got to know well is Melissa Stockwell, the first female American soldier to lose a leg in the Iraq war. In 2007, Melissa was named the Century College Exemplary Student and she delivered the college commencement address. Many audience members were moved by Melissa's complete lack of self pity and her outright joy at having found a profession that allows her to help others. Having competed as a swimmer in the 2008 Para Olympics, she is currently working as a prosthetist in Chicago.

Haddon said O and P is a "real people profession," and it often becomes a family affair when patients bring their extended family members to appointments and fittings. The employment rate of O and P professionals is excellent (in the 90- percent range and up) and few leave the field, he said. The wounds associated with the current nine-year war in Iraq and Afghanistan have added to the demand for O and P professionals.

"Our O and P graduates have built the industry in Minnesota," said Haddon. "We can all be very proud of that."



Photo cutline: Ed Haddon, left, and student in Century O and P laboratory