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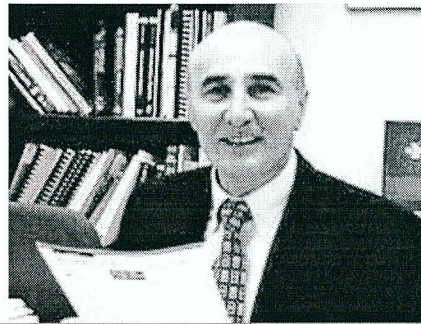
Wednesday  
November 30,  
2005

News

## Math grad wins Illinois Professor of the Year honors

11/23/05  
Paul Francuch

**Vali Siadat: "He's a man who makes a profound difference in the lives of students each semester."**



Contrary to popular notion, sometimes those who can, do teach really well.

UIC alumnus Vali Siadat has won several awards for teaching, but last week he hit the top. He was named the 2005 Illinois Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

A teacher for 31 years and now distinguished professor and chair of the mathematics department at Richard J. Daley College, Siadat was cited by the

Siadat earned a Ph.D. in mathematics, then a Doctor of Arts in mathematics education "to improve my teaching of mathematics at the undergraduate level," he said.

"I was attracted to the Ph.D. program in pure math because of interest and encouragement from my adviser, Prof. Yoram Sagher."

Sagher, UIC professor emeritus of mathematics who is now on the faculty at Florida Atlantic University, was Siadat's adviser for both doctoral degrees.

"Whatever he was asked to, he did," Sagher said of his former student. "He never complained about working hard.

"He was not a born teacher," Sagher added, "but he transformed himself into a great teacher. He's a man who makes a profound difference in the lives of

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students each semester.”

Sagher said he and Siadat spent about five years analyzing testing data and preparing lessons Siadat gave at local community colleges. They developed a technique that came to be known as the “Keystone Method,” which uses frequent quizzes and reviews to keep mathematical concepts fresh in the minds of students.

“I think that is the most important and closest thing to my heart,” said Siadat. “The Keystone Method has received widespread national attention.”

Sagher noted the method has been successfully used by other students, notably Ph.D. alumni Paul Musial, assistant professor of math at Chicago State University.

Siadat initially came to the U.S. from Iran to study electrical engineering at the University of California, Berkeley. He worked for a while in Silicon Valley before moving to Chicago, where he lives with his wife, two daughters and stepdaughter.

“When I moved to Chicago, there was an opportunity to teach at different colleges,” he said. It proved to be a life-enhancing career change, not only for him, but his students.

“I have found teaching very rewarding because it impacts so many lives,” he said.