

**April 10, 2015**

## Dinner marks service anniversaries, recalls memories

*By Nancy Doolittle*

At the 60th Service Recognition Dinner – the last one he and Robin Davison would host and Vice President Susan Murphy would emcee – President David Skorton recognized 368 staff members who have served Cornell for 25, 30, 35, 40 or more years.

Among the honorees were three who have worked at Cornell for 45 years – Mariann Carpenter, Stuart Peck and Frances Benson – and 30 staff members who have worked at Cornell for more than 40 years but who were not celebrating a fifth-year anniversary this year. In total, their employment at Cornell represents more than 10,000 years of service.

Skorton said, “Your skills and experience are beyond count and description, and Robin and I are very delighted to have the chance to honor you tonight.” He also thanked staff who are retiring this year and expressed his appreciation to all staff for the “friendship and kindness you’ve shown Robin and me over the years.”

Noting this is Cornell’s sesquicentennial year, Vice President Mary Opperman said: “Whether you have worked at Cornell for 25 or 45 years, all of your efforts and dedication have helped us ... You are a part of Cornell’s legacy.”

Opperman drew a brief sketch of what Cornell would be like without its staff: There would be no one to plow the streets in the winter, no police protection, no one to fix a leaky roof or install



Robert Barker/University Photography

Frances Benson is recognized for 45 years of work at Cornell during the 60th Service Recognition Dinner April 6 in the Ramin Room in Bartels Hall.



Robert Barker/University Photography

President David Skorton presides over his final Service Recognition Dinner. The dinner honored 368 Cornell staff members who have served Cornell for 25, 30, 35, 40 or more years.

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new software on computers, no websites and no food to eat or coffee to drink. “Your contributions make a huge difference every single day,” she said.

After Murphy noted key events from each of the years that awardees began their Cornell careers, **the Backtalk Band performed a song from the same era.** Murphy recounted activities Skorton was involved in at that point in his life, as well, going all the way back to the first year the Service Recognition Dinner was held, in 1955, when Skorton was in grammar school.

In addition to the **Backtalk Band**, the student a cappella group Class Notes performed.