2003 Award Recipient

Professor Denise Nicoletti

Denise Nicoletti was an admired and respected colleague and a friend to many. A role model and a mentor to young women exploring the world of engineering, she was the visionary behind the idea of an outreach program at WPI that started slowly but grew into a shining example: Camp Reach. This summer academic program for girls entering the 7th grade seeks to generate interest in engineering and technology and to enhance self-confidence and motivation toward education. There are currently 180 alumnae from this program, which is growing steadily.

Her passion for attracting young women to the field of engineering extended beyond Camp Reach. As the only female faculty member in the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department, she started Women in Electrical and Computer Engineering (WECE) before there was a women's program at WPI. In addition, Denise authored a handbook on maternity leave for faculty colleagues. She also made certain to take time for other women on campus through phone conversations or lunch invitations.

Denise had become interested in developing a K-12 engineering curricula, as well as student learning outcomes assessment in the ECE department. She played an integral part in three successful grant proposals to the National Science Foundation, helping to bring in more than a million dollars in funding for projects in these areas.

It's difficult to know all of the many ways in which Denise effected change on campus, in her department and through Camp Reach. What is easy to know is her commitment to WPI, to girls and women in engineering, and to other women and their professional pursuits. She was truly a remarkable woman, and the world and the WPI community are better for her too-brief presence among us. WPI is at a loss without her, but there is comfort in knowing that her work continues and will never be forgotten.

On behalf of the WPI community, it is with great honor that we present to the Nicoletti family the William R. Grogan Award for Support of the Mission of WPI.