

Ralph Price's All-Around Dedication Earns Recognition

By Susan McGinley

Since 1976, thousands of students have taken Ralph Price's nutritional sciences course, NATS 104: Food, Nutrition and You. Filled with multimedia presentations, hands-on projects, and practical information, it has become one of the most popular of the general education biological science Tier 1 classes at the University of Arizona, garnering consistently high ratings from students.

Price, a professor in the nutritional sciences department of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, is the honored recipient of the 2003 Provost's General Education Teaching Award. In his nomination packet, colleagues and students alike note his enthusiasm, organizational skills, knowledge and love of his subject, deep appreciation for undergraduate students, and dedication to mentoring others as a "teacher's teacher." He has won five other teaching awards.

Price leads the team of faculty, graduate assistants and student preceptors that delivers NATS 104 to more than 2200 students annually. With 500 stu-

dents in each class, it is a tremendous undertaking to keep the course fresh. To hold interest, Price incorporates current songs—he once sang a duet with a football player, and brings cartoons and images into the class sessions to convey serious nutritional information in an entertaining way.

"I ask questions to at least awaken them," Price says. "I like to get the students to relate their bodies and nutrition with what they're eating." Students assess the nutrient content of their actual diets over a three-day period, do nutritional case studies, and learn about the effects of various diets, pregnancy and lactation, physical fitness, anorexia and bulimia, and alcohol on the body.

"As a consequence of exposure to NATS 104, we have also seen a steady increase in the numbers of students transferring into our major programs of study," says Linda Houtkooper, nutritional sciences department head. "This is a direct result of Dr. Price's influence in the classroom."



M. Hartshorn

During his 35 years at the UA, Price has also directed the Better Process Control School, delivering his food safety certificate program to more than 5,000 enrollees. He is an elected Fellow of the Institute of Food Technologists, one of only twelve individuals honored annually nationwide. Fluent in Spanish and Portuguese, he has made presentations worldwide on various aspects of food safety and the uses of multimedia and the Internet in science.

As one student wrote, "His style of teaching does not make the students feel overwhelmed but rather encouraged to learn about nutrition for their own benefit and longevity of life." ☒