

2002 Recipient of the CREDIT Adult Learner of the Year Award

Seaman Jeffery Lagana jumped ship on September 12, 2002, from the container vessel Maersk Texas near the coast of Panama to be the guest of honor at the 2002 Adult Learner of the Year awards ceremony held September 19 and sponsored by ACE's Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials (CALEC).

The Adult Learner of the Year Award is presented annually to an adult learner who uses ACE college credit recommendations to earn a college degree or advance his or her career. Recipients must demonstrate outstanding achievements in their community or workplace while successfully balancing the demands of family, career, and education.

Lagana, a resident of Cheltenham, Maryland, left the ship with the full approval and assistance of both the management of Maersk Line, Ltd., and the leadership of the Seafarers International Union, who sponsored his nomination for the award.

After graduating from St. Mary's Ryken High School in 1995, Lagana enrolled in the engineering program at the University of Maryland. After three semesters, he realized that he did not want to be an engineer so he left Maryland to "get away on his own and experience life."

In January 1997, at age 19, he enrolled in the first class of the unlicensed apprentice program at The Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education, a vocational training facility located in Piney Point, Maryland, and operated by the Seafarers International Union.

Lagana's leadership qualities were evident and he was selected chief bosun for Class 561. He continued to upgrade his vocational and academic skills while sailing. He was one of the first students from the unli-



CREDIT presents Seaman Jeffrey Lagana with the Adult Learner of the Year Award. From left to right are William Eglington, director of vocational education, Seafarers Harry Lundeberg School of Seamanship; Michael Sacco, president, Seafarers International Union, Atlantic, Gulf, Lakes, and Inland Waters District, AFL-CIO; Susan Porter Robinson, ACE vice president and director, Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials; Jeffrey Lagana; David Heindel, secretary/treasurer, Seafarers International Union, Atlantic, Gulf, Lakes, and Inland Waters District, AFL-CIO; and Jan S. Downing, operations manager, Maersk Line, Ltd.

censed apprentice program to complete the Able Seaman course, and he earned three college credits for completing English 102: Composition and Literature. Later, he became the first Seafarer to earn the Nautical Science and Technology Certificate at the Paul Hall Center.

The combination of earning the certificate and completing other credit courses recommended by ACE, led him to apply for—and win—one of the \$20,000 scholarships offered by the union in 2001.

"Based on my success in both vocational and academic courses taken at the Paul Hall Center, I applied for and won a \$20,000 college scholarship from the Seafarers Health and Benefits Plan," he said.

Lagana returned to the University of Maryland at College Park, maintained a 4.0 grade point average, and earned a bachelor's degree this past August with a double major: environmental science and policy, and geography.

As for future career plans, he hopes to launch a career geared toward stopping the degradation of the land, water, and atmosphere.

"Working in the maritime industry has afforded me the opportunity to travel to numerous countries throughout the world," said Lagana. "I have witnessed many different cultures and landscapes while working aboard commercial vessels, some of which were disturbing, especially in developing countries. These encounters sparked my interest in the relationship between people and the environment."

"Looking back, I attribute my success in furthering my education to the ACE-recommended courses taken at the Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training. It was through these courses and the advancements they brought that I developed the motivation to return to the classroom to continue my education as an adult," he said.

For information about the Seafarers Harry Lundeberg School of Seamanship, visit their web site at www.seafarers.org.