

**For Immediate Release**

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**ALLEN MCCONNELL AND KENNETH COOK RECEIVE BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD  
GREELEY, Colo.(2009-06-10 00:00:00.0)**

Allen McConnell, director of the School of Accounting and Computer Information Systems at the University of Northern Colorado's Monfort College of Business, and Kenneth Cook, vice president - operations at State Farm Insurance Companies, have been awarded the Business Excellence Award for 2009 by the Monfort College of Business for their professional achievements, contributions, and support.

The award was created in 1998 to recognize individuals who have displayed academic excellence, exceptional service, and leadership in business, or have notably advanced the development and success of the college.

McConnell has been teaching accounting since the College of Business was founded in 1968. His primary teaching responsibilities have been in the financial accounting areas but have also included auditing, governmental, and managerial accounting. "For me, I've always been very happy at UNC," McConnell says, "It's been a good fit."

McConnell has been honored throughout the years by his peers including receipt of the CPA Making a Difference Award by the Colorado Society of CPAs and named the Beta Alpha Psi National Advisor of the Year. He is a member of several professional organizations including the American Institute of CPAs, but he says his greatest achievement is the many lifelong friendships he has developed with his students at the College of Business.

"Many of the alumni have been very successful," said Ronald Reed, accounting professor at the College of Business. "And as they look back they tell me they may have not done it without the advice of Allen McConnell."

Cook came to UNC with a baseball scholarship in 1976 and planned on becoming a teacher and a coach, but instead changed his major to business and graduated in 1980 with a dual degree in marketing and finance. He received an MBA from the College of Business in 1984 by continuing his education through night classes while working for State Farm. Cook says, "The irony is that in my job, what I love most is the teaching, coaching, and mentoring."

Cook relocated to Florida with State Farm, where he spent six years, before he returned to Greeley in 1998. Upon his return, he contacted the dean of the College of Business to ask how he could give back to the college that had done so much for him. What started out as becoming a member of the Dean's Leadership Council continues today, with Cook and the other alumni and business leaders recommending strategies to accomplish the college's mission of delivering an excellent undergraduate business program. He also serves as the chair of the UNC Foundation Board.

"He believes in a positive return on his investment and he has seen the types of results that the College of Business has produced over the years in its graduates," said Tim Jares, associate

professor of finance. “Several graduates are State Farm employees.”

The awards were presented at the Monfort College of Business 40th Anniversary celebration held on May 1, 2009 at The Ritz-Carlton hotel in Denver with more than 400 guests in attendance. Both the Monfort College of Business and The Ritz-Carlton are recipients of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

#### About the Monfort College of Business

The Kenneth W. Monfort College of Business at the University of Northern Colorado focuses exclusively on excellence in undergraduate business education. This unique focus has led to national and international recognition for the college including becoming the first and only business program to receive the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award from the Office of the President of the United States, and the only undergraduate-only program worldwide to be accredited by AACSB International in both business and accounting. Over six successive years Monfort’s graduating seniors have scored in the top 5 to 10 percent on nationwide standardized exit exams. Students earn a degree in Business Administration with emphasis options in accounting, computer information systems, finance, general business, management, or marketing. For more information, visit Monfort’s Web site at [mcb.unco.edu](http://mcb.unco.edu).