PROFESSIONAL REFLECTIONS

ALUMNI EDITION 2016-17

The magazine for the College of Education and Human Development at Western Michigan University.

60 OVER 60

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS WITH 60 ALUMNI STORIES
A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

7 LIBBY MACQUILLAN
7 GREGORY STACEY
8 SHANTEL FESSLER
8 SARAH PRICE
9 ASHLEIGH ROGERS
9 KYLE GLEASON
10 MICAH ZUHL
10 ROB KENNEDY
11 MIKE MCCARTHY
12 TIM LESTER
13 RONICKA HAMILTON
13 DARRICK TOVAR-MURRAY
14 JANE STEELE
14 KRISTEL BRINEY
16 AMY DUNHAM
16 KATHRINE HYATT
16 BEN WILLIAMS
17 MICHELLE BIEKE
17 COURTNEY SKINNER
17 AMBER HUNT
17 KERRY JOHNSON
17 ALLISON PERLIN
17 BECCA HAYES
17 SARA SEABRIGHT
17 KRISTIN RAHN
17 DAN KRASINSKI
17 GRACE GIETZEN
18 LAURA HOSLER
18 D. O’NEAL OLLIE
18 PHIL GIETZEN
Dear CEHD Friends,

Greetings from the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) at Western Michigan University (WMU) and welcome to the 2016 fall issue of Professional Reflections, the official magazine of our college.

From its beginnings as a teacher’s college in 1903, WMU has grown into a national research university while its original mission of preparing future educators has been carried forward and fulfilled by CEHD.

CEHD has been consistently ranked by the US News and World Report as one of the best education schools in the nation. Our 68,229 worldwide living alumni share the benefits of their education each day. They are making an impact on the global society and have achieved great success in a variety of education and human development fields. Validating the quality of education that they receive from our college, their accomplishments are a point of pride for us, each one of us.

This year, we are celebrating the 60th anniversary of CEHD as a stand-alone academic unit at WMU. In this special edition entitled “60 Over 60”, we take time to reflect on how well we are “Continuing the Tradition of Success” deeply rooted in our college’s history. Our success is shown through the recognitions we receive, the professionals we train and graduate, the facilities we share, the contributions we make to the local community and the legacy of the university. Particularly, we are highlighting 60 deserving alumni of various programs in the college. They are a small but representative sample of the good our alumni create in the world.

Thank you for taking time to review this special edition of our magazine. I trust that you will have a fantastic reading experience.

Thank you.

Best Wishes,

Ming Li, Ed.D.
CEHD Dean
CELEBRATING

60 YEARS
Alumna Libby MacQuillan received her masters degree in family and consumer sciences with a concentration in dietetics in 2010. Since then, MacQuillan has had many roles in the field. She has worked as a bariatric clinical dietitian, a part-time instructor of dietetics, a private practice dietitian, a school nutrition expert, and a lactation consultant. Currently, she is working for Grand Valley State University (GVSU) as an assistant professor of clinical dietetics. She is also entering the final year of the Interdisciplinary Health Science doctoral program at GVSU. As part of her doctoral studies, MacQuillan is conducting research on nutrition related to pregnancy and birth outcomes.

Dual alumnus Gregory Stacey is currently working as an acute care clinical dietitian for Spectrum Health. Upon graduation from both the undergraduate dietetics program and the masters program in family and consumer sciences with a concentration in dietetics, Stacey began his work for Spectrum Health Blodgett Campus. Stacey also serves as a guest lecturer for professional and community events.

“The foundation of nutrition knowledge begins in undergraduate years, but there is so much more to learn. Believe in the power of food and let your knowledge shape you the same way you hope it will shape the people who entrust their health to you,” Stacey states.
SHANTEL FESSLER
BS ‘11, DIETETICS

Alumna Shantel Fessler is currently a registered dietitian and physician assistant at the Michigan Gastroenterology Institute. After completion of her dietetic internship, Fessler worked mostly with oncology patients as a clinical dietitian. From there, she decided to apply to WMU’s physician assistant program and was accepted.

Upon graduation, she accepted her current position where she alternates between an outpatient clinic and inpatient clinic at Sparrow Hospital. While inpatient, Fessler assists the physicians in Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy (PEG) tube placement and helps medically manage symptoms and diseases.

SARAH PRICE
BS ‘14, DIETETICS

As a clinical dietitian for the University of Michigan Hospitals and Health Centers, alumna Sarah Price specializes in adult bone marrow transplant patients in addition to general medicine service. It is there that she is currently collaborating on a research study that takes a closer look at graft versus host disease in bone marrow transplant patients.

In 2015, Price was the recipient of a competitive scholarship from the Michigan Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Institute. With her scholarship, Price became a dietetic intern for the University of Michigan Health System where she provided coverage in the Neurology ICU, physical rehabilitation unit, cardiac ICU, among others.
Alumna Ashleigh Rogers was very active during her time at WMU. She was a student athlete participating on the Women’s Track and Field team as a hammer and discus thrower.

After graduation, Rogers began work as an exercise physiologist in non-invasive diagnostic cardiology for three years to accrue the appropriate amount of high patient responsibility contact hours that would make her a competitive candidate for physician assistant programs. After completing her master’s degree, Rogers began work in emergency medicine in Kinston, North Carolina, where she has worked in a small emergency room for the last two years.

KYLE GLEASON
MA ‘15, COACHING SPORT PERFORMANCE

Alumnus Kyle Gleason is currently a Spanish and mathematics teacher at Belleville High School. At Belleville High School, Gleason is also an assistant coach for the 8th grade basketball team and junior varsity baseball team, a job he began in 2015 upon graduation.

Prior to coaching at Belleville High School, Gleason served as a basketball and baseball assistant coach at Kalamazoo Christian High School. While a graduate student in the coaching sport performance program, Gleason had an assistantship with the WMU Athletic Department working in the Ticket Office.
Micah Zuhl is currently an assistant professor of exercise science for Central Michigan University, a role he has been in since August 2013. He teaches courses focused on clinical exercise, including electrocardiography assessment and diagnostic exercise stress testing.

Zuhl’s core research area is understanding the stress response of performing physical work (exercise) in various environmental conditions (mainly heat). He believes work in this area has helped us to better understand the risk of exercising in a hot environment along with ways to prevent, or minimize the negative impacts.

Rob Kennedy, along with WMU business alumna Elisa Dely, were both working as personal trainers at West Hills Athletic Club when they had an idea about how they could help more people achieve their fitness goals more easily. Genesis Fitness & Wellness offers in-home personal training for individuals who can’t, or don’t feel comfortable, going to a commercial gym facility.

The idea was originally targeted for senior citizens, but it quickly became apparent that people of all ages were interested in their services. The company has grown to include a staff of 16 personal trainers in Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids, nearly half of which are WMU alumni.
MIKE MCCARTHY
ALUMNUS SETTLES INTO NEW ROLE AS DETROIT LIONS OFFENSIVE LINE COACH

Mike McCarthy (MA ’14, sport management) became the offensive lines and quality control coach for the Detroit Lions in January of 2016. He spent the 2015 season as the offensive quality control coach with the Cleveland Browns.

His early career consisted of several different roles with several different teams. He was a video assistant with Rutgers University in 2007, a video coordinator intern with the New York Jets in 2008, an offensive line coach...
Former Bronco standout Tim Lester (BA ’00, secondary education) has been named head football coach at Western Michigan University, WMU Athletic Director Kathy Beauregard announced January 13, 2017.

Lester, who comes to WMU from Purdue University, completed a Hall-of-Fame playing career at WMU as a four-year starter at quarterback from 1996 to 1999, leading the Broncos to a Mid-American Conference championship appearance his senior season. Since then, he has risen through the coaching ranks, making a stop as an assistant coach at his alma mater during the 2005 and 2006 seasons.

Lester began his coaching career in 2003 and most recently was the quarterbacks coach at Purdue this past season, where he mentored sophomore signal-caller David Blough. Blough threw for 25 touchdowns and 3,352 yards, averaging over 279 yards passing a game in 2016.

Lester came to the Boilermakers from Syracuse, where he served as quarterback coach from 2013 to 2015 and doubled as offensive coordinator in 2014 and 2015 as well.

Prior to working at Syracuse, he was the head coach at Division III Elmhurst (Illinois) College from 2008 to 2012. Over five seasons, he posted a 33-19 record for a .635 winning percentage; the second highest in school history. In his final season in 2012, he led the Blue Jays to a 10-2 record and a CCIW conference championship as well as Elmhurst’s first-ever NCAA playoff appearance. It was just the third championship in school history and the first title since 1980. Lester was named the College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin Coach of the Year that season.

Lester served as an assistant at North Central College (2007) and Elmhurst (2002-03). He was the head coach at Division II Saint Joseph’s College in 2004, leading the Pumas to a five-game improvement his first season from the year prior (2-9 to 7-4 record) on his way to Independent Football Alliance Coach of the Year honors. In addition, Lester coached at the prep level, serving as offensive coordinator at Saint Benedict High School in 2001 and at his alma mater, Wheaton Warrenville South High School, in 2000.

with the College of New Jersey in 2009, and was again a video assistant at Rutgers University in 2010. McCarthy then spent two years as the video coordinator with WMU’s football program in 2010-11.

During his first year with the Lions, McCarthy assisted offensive line coach Ron Prince and helped lead the Lions to win the wildcard game and compete in the playoffs.
Ronicka D. Hamilton was named the director of the highly-acclaimed Seita Scholars support program for former foster youth at WMU and began her new position January 3, 2017.

Hamilton joined the WMU staff in 2000 where she initially spent nearly a decade of her university career in the Division of Multicultural Affairs, most recently serving as finance specialist. She joined the Seita Scholars program in 2009 as a campus coach and became its first senior campus coach in 2013. Since 2013, more than 225 professionals around the country have been trained in the model.

Dr. Darrick Tovar-Murray is an associate professor in the counseling program at DePaul University, where he is the 2011 recipient of the Excellence in Teaching Award. Tovar-Murray has published articles and book chapters in top-tier national journals such as the Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, the Career Development Quarterly, and the Western Journal of Black Studies. He is currently on the editorial board for The Career Development Quarterly and the Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development.

His scholarship developed out of his interests in using multiculturalism as a tool for addressing power, privilege, and oppression.
Dr. Janeé Steele is a licensed professional counselor who currently works in a private practice specializing in the treatment of adults and children with depression and anxiety. Beyond her work in private practice, Dr. Steele teaches in the Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology at WMU and at Walden University in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program.

Dr. Steele has conceptual and research-based publications in Counselor Education and Supervision, the International Journal for the Advancement of Counseling, and the Handbook of Counselor Education, and continues to maintain an active research and publication agenda.

Kristel Briney is a senior academic advisor in the mechanical engineering department at the University of Michigan (UM). She has a strong interest in student development and uses a lot of the education and training received during her master’s program in her day-to-day interactions advising undergraduate and graduate students.

Briney coordinates several projects in the Academic Services Office including the time schedule, teacher evaluations, midterm assessments, final degree audits, overrides, and student orientations. Briney is a National Certified Counselor.
MAKE A DIFFERENCE

& GUIDE
Amy Dunham is currently the school programs director at Gryphon Place in Kalamazoo, Michigan. She is responsible for overseeing the Gatekeeper Suicide Prevention Program and the Peer Mediation/Restorative Justice Program, which is a conflict resolution program. Dunham previously was a presenter for the Gatekeeper program for four years before being promoted. In addition, Dunham trains and supervises school staff, updates curriculum, and writes grants.

Dunham currently serves on the WMU Family Science Advisory Board working with fellow alumni and current WMU faculty.

Kathrine Hyatt is the fund development and community relations coordinator for Parent to Parent of Southwest Michigan. Hyatt writes grants, maintains contact with funders, follows-up with grant reports, and researches new funding opportunities.

In the past three years her job has also come to include translating data into organizational outcomes for funders, implementing new family events and fundraising strategies, constructing budgets for each grant application, working with local community mental health agencies to ensure payments, managing staff training requirements, and more.

Ben Williams works as the Michigan Department of Education’s Legislative Liaison in the Office of Public and Governmental Affairs, working directly for State Superintendent of K-12 Education Brian J. Whiston.

As a lobbyist for the Michigan Department of Education, he sees directly how children are affected by unmet needs at home and works to improve educational services to meet those needs, and also looks at how unmet needs at school can affect family life. By looking at how educational issues, legislation and departmental policies in Michigan serve children, he is able to effectively work to better address the needs of Michigan families and children.
MEIJER ALUMNI

VERSATILE DEGREE OFFERS VARIETY OF OPPORTUNITIES AT LOCAL RETAILER

Many CEHD graduates end up working close to WMU. These six textile and apparel studies majors found diverse opportunities at the Southwest-Michigan-owned Meijers, which as these ladies have found, is much more than just a grocery store. Their jobs show the versatility of their degrees.

Michelle Bieke (BS ’81, textile and apparel studies) manages quality and testing of the Meijer Own Brand apparel; Courtney Skinner (BS ’04) works to ensure the colors of garments are correct; Amber Hunt (BS ’07) does merchandising for the Juniors department; and Kerry Johnson (BS, ’99) is a buyer for women’s plus size clothing. Allison Perlin (BA ’14) makes sure the right products get to the right stores at the right time; Becca Hayes (BA ’11) does all the floor plan layout work for the toys and electronics departments chain wide; and Sara Seabright (BA ’13) coordinates new store marketing during Grand Openings and beyond. They love working at Meijers for different reasons, among them the people they work with, the fast pace, and opportunities for problem solving. Their degrees from Western helped prepare them for both the creative and business side of the fashion industry.

Sara Seabright not pictured.

KRISTIN RAHN
BS ’09, INTERIOR DESIGN

Alumna Kristin Rahn is the manager of grants and strategy at Habitat for Humanity in Kent County where she oversees high-level partnership opportunities, government and private grants, and government advocacy.

Rahn began her work with Habitat for Humanity as a sustainable development program coordinator after a year with AmeriCorps*VISTA.

DAN KRASINSKI
BS ’09, ATHLETIC TRAINING
MS ’11, ATHLETIC TRAINING

Dual alumnus Dan Krasinski is currently a performance coach for Next Level Performance, with a focus on strength training, speed and agility, and athlete nutrition. In this role, Krasinski helps build local student athletes.

Prior to working for Next Level Performance, Krasinski was an athletic trainer for Kalamazoo College.

GRACE GIEZEN
BS ’12, RECREATION

Alumna Grace Gietzen works as the communications and social media specialist for Universal Forest Products—the largest producer of wood and wood alternative products in North America.

She also currently serves on committees for the Kent County Parks Foundation and the West Michigan Environmental Action Council.
Alumna Laura Hosler has recently taken ownership of GreenStreet Marketing and Design, a company she has been manager and art director of since 2012. GreenStreet is an all-inclusive, full service advertising and branding partner that combines creative vision with strategic thinking. She helps clients leverage expertise in corporate communication, branding, marketing and graphic design.

LAURA HOSLER  
BS '03, TEXTILE AND APPAREL STUDIES

As the facilities general services coordinator at Zoetis, alumnus Phil Gietzen oversees day to day operations for the Veterinary Medicine Research & Development line at the Zoetis global R&D headquarters.

PHIL GIE TZE N  
MA '12, SPORT MANAGEMENT

After 26 years as a program manager at the Douglass Community Association, alumnus D. O’Neal Ollie has focused his time on community involvement. He is currently involved with Communities in Schools of Kalamazoo and Prevention Works. He is also working as a success coach and family program facilitator at Loy Norrix High School in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

D. O’NEAL OLLIE  
MS '04, SPORT MANAGEMENT

Prior to his current role, Gietzen worked as the assistant director of facilities and game operations in the WMU Athletic Department.
Kori Jock (BS ’05, textile and apparel studies) is the cheek executive officer (yes, you read that right!) at La Vie en Orange (LVEO), an underwear company that uses recycled and eco-forgiving materials, like thrifted t-shirts and unbleached elastic, in their hand-made women’s, men’s, and trans-friendly underwear. The company grew from Jock making underwear for herself, to selling women’s underwear on Etsy, to a full-time business. Before becoming the full-time CEO of LVEO, Jock worked in the non-profit sector.

During her time at WMU, Jock volunteered for Great Lakes PeaceJam, co-founded the Merchandising Opportunities & Design Association, and was a member of the track team which gave her practical experience and honed her time management skills. Unable to reconcile her love for fashion with the environmental and social impacts of the industry, Jock leveraged her volunteer and event-planning experience to get a part-time program coordinator position with Greater Kalamazoo Girls on the Run. She later worked as a coordinator at Great Lakes PeaceJam.

After following her heart to Seattle, she joined the development team at Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, a non-profit immigration law firm where she helped more than double their annual budget. While she loved the work, Seattle didn’t feel like home, so Jock searched for something that felt like home in an unfamiliar place: making underwear. She had been making her own underwear for years and always had in the back of her mind that it could be a business.

Seattle proved to be fertile ground to start a business and Jock left the non-profit world to move back to Kalamazoo and commit to her business full-time in 2013. Jock has successfully married her passion for textiles with social and environmental justice.

LVEO has been mentioned in Red Book Magazine and featured in ESPN’s Marathon Gear Guide.
Alumna Sara Russo (BS ’03, textile and apparel studies) has worked for Lear Corporation as a trim engineering release manager for the past nine years. She is one of the program’s first graduates to use her design talents in the automotive interior design sector and has encouraged and mentored a number of fellow alumni to do the same. Russo continues to support the program by serving on the advisory board and by guest lecturing in classes.

Ashley Levine (BS ’07, textile and apparel studies) is an associate designer for casual sleepwear at Victoria’s Secret in New York City, where she has the freedom to create brand and trend appropriate collections. Levine is able to travel overseas and work with factories, which has given her the opportunity to truly understand the production process. She finds it very rewarding to go to the stores and see her products and collections on the selling floor.

As general manager for Jimmy Choo in New York, Courtney Dunn (BS ’05, textile and apparel studies) oversees all aspects of the multi-million dollar business, including leading the store team, managing operations and assisting in store buys. Courtney loves the ownership she feels in her job. “I have to be a true entrepreneur,” she explains. “The most important thing is that I love what I do and the inspiration I am able to share with my team.”
MAKE A DIFFERENCE

& TEACH

LORI HENRICKSON
BA '07, ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

TRACY FOSTER
BA '96, ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

RICHARD ALLINGTON
BA '68, ELEMENTARY EDUCATION; MA '69 LITERACY STUDIES
LORI HENRICKSON
BA ‘07, ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Alumna Lori Henrickson teaches science and leadership at Webb Middle School in Clark County, Nevada and in May, 2016 she traveled to the White House for the National Teacher of the Year event. While she didn’t get to meet the President during her trip to the White House, she did attend the press conference and see the National Teacher of the Year presentation, and went on tours of the Blue, Red, and Green rooms. Henrickson and other guests were also treated to an acoustic set by Nate Ruess of the indie pop band “Fun.”

Henrickson was also invited to be a part of a round table discussion with the President and two other teachers while he was visiting Nevada in 2012.

TRACY FOSTER
BA ‘96, ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Corunna Public Schools kindergarten teacher and CEHD alumna Tracy Foster co-authored a children’s book titled “Benson’s Adventures in Michigan,” with Corunna Public School principal Shannon Cooper-Tuma.

The book includes excursions to various Michigan locations with photographs and interesting information, along with a challenge for each location. More importantly, the book helps families and school districts provide children with travel experiences that teach children about the different ideas and opportunities that can arise when they travel outside their own neighborhoods. For more on this story visit mywmu.com.

RICHARD ALLINGTON
BA ’68, ELEMENTARY EDUCATION; MA ’69 LITERACY STUDIES

Richard Allington is a professor of literacy studies at the University of Tennessee and is a past president of the International Reading Association and the Literacy Research Association. He received the Outstanding Dissertation Award and the William S. Gray Citation of Merit from IRA for his contributions to the profession.

In addition, Allington has twice been a co-recipient of the Albert J. Harris Award from IRA in recognition of his research contributing to the understanding of reading and learning disabilities. Allington was inducted to the Reading Hall of Fame in 1994 based on his years of service, his contributions, and his reputation in the reading profession.
ALUMNA ASHLEY GREEN
PHD ‘15, EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Alumna Ashley Green currently serves as the International Studies and Programs (ISP) Assistant Dean of Administration at Michigan State University (MSU). While Green has only been in this position since April of 2016, she has more than a decade of experience in higher education and student affairs. As assistant dean of administration of ISP, Green will lead the charge for MSU’s global initiatives related to research, instructional, outreach, and engagement activities.

Green’s doctoral research and dissertation at Western Michigan University focused on the experiences and motivation of successful African American first-generation college students.

MARK RAFFLER
MA ‘01, EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Mark Raffler is currently an Educational Consultant in the content areas of English language arts and social studies at the Kent Intermediate School District (KISD) in Grand Rapids, Michigan. After nine years as an elementary teacher at Plainwell Community Schools, Raffler left the classroom and entered school administration as an instructional technology specialist and trainer for the Grand Rapids Public School District.

Raffler is a member of a team of English Language Arts Leaders across the state supporting the development and implementation of an English Language Arts Curriculum. This curriculum is designed to support literacy instructors to bring the Common Core State Standards to life for their students.

JUDGE GERSHWIN DRAIN
BA ‘70, SECONDARY EDUCATION

Judge Gershwin Drain was nominated by President Barack Obama to become a judge with the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan and was confirmed for the position by an act of the US Senate in 2012. Throughout his career, Drain has worked in various positions in the legal system, beginning in 1972 as a law clerk for Michigan’s Third Circuit Court.

He subsequently served as counsel for the Detroit Department of Transportation, an attorney in the Federal Defender’s Office for the Eastern District of Michigan, a judge on what had been the Recorder’s Court for the city of Detroit, and a judge on Michigan’s Third Circuit Court.
Valerie Krzewski (BA ’13, secondary education), known as “Ms. K” by her students, teaches high school English at Kalamazoo Central High School. When challenged by a student that she couldn’t rap, she answered, “of course I can, I’m an English teacher.” She wrote a rap for her students to prove that rap and poetry are rooted in the same tradition. She wanted to get them more excited about learning the poetry of authors like Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman. The first rap went over so well that she added to it, recorded it and posted it to Facebook to share with her mother. The video started circulating and received over 60,000 views. This rap (google “answering the rap challenge”) can be found on YouTube.

Valerie loves her students and thinks it’s important to make these kinds of connections for them. Language is always changing and Ms. K has opened a door for students and teacher to exchange current slang for the “slang” of the poetry they read together in class. Valerie’s unique teaching methods and dedication to her students make her a successful teacher of 10th grade English.
KOURTNEY BAKALYAR
BS ’07, SPECIAL EDUCATION
MA ’12, EVALUATION
EDD ’16 SPECIAL EDUCATION

Dr. Kourtney Bakalyar is the coordinator for the Autism Service Center at WMU. Bakalyar was a graduate assistant in the Department of Special Education and Literacy Studies where she completed a correlational study investigating trends in special education MTTC scores, streamlined the iWebfolio process, and supervised an undergraduate practicum experience.

DENNIS ARCHER
BS ’65, SPECIAL EDUCATION

The American Bar Association (ABA) awarded its top accolade to alumnus and former trustee Dennis W. Archer.

Gathering in San Francisco for its annual meeting in August, the ABA honored Archer with the 2016 ABA Medal for his lifetime of achievement. Given for outstanding service to the law and legal profession, the medal is regarded as the association’s most prestigious award.

BREEANNE MARTIN
MA ’16, CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

BreeAnn Martin teaches business at Gull Lake Highschool, a dream she realized after earning her bachelor’s degree in public relations and marketing. After obtaining her master’s degree, Martin now holds a teaching certification in business, marketing, management, and technology.

In 2016, Martin was named WMU’s Career and Technical Education outstanding alumni.
AMANDA CURTIS
ALUMNA GIVES BACK TO WMU WHILE CHASING HER DREAMS

Amanda Curtis (BA ’12, interior design) loves her profession so much she practices it three different ways in three different jobs! After making the scary decision to leave her first job after graduation, a junior designer job with an international firm that seemed like a dream job, Curtis took what she thought would be a short-term position as a visual merchandiser with Art Van furniture.
ANGELA HARNESS
ALUMNA USES GRAPHIC SKILLS TO HELP DESIGN A MORE EFFICIENT OFFICE SPACE

Angela Harness (BS ’13, interior design) has designed many spaces, such as healthcare facilities, educational institutions and retail stores since graduation. She has worked in many branches of the commercial interior design world but feels that she has finally found something that is creative, flexible and engaging. Harness has recently moved from Tampa, Florida to Denver, Colorado to work as a project coordinator for Kestrel Architecture, a small firm in downtown Denver that allows her to grow professionally.

As project coordinator, Harness handles all aspects of any given project, and because she works at a smaller firm, she is able to blur the lines between each profession involved in the building process of a space. From the time Harness begins to plan out the space to the time the contractors begin their work, a completely cohesive and creative process takes place, and she is passionate about being a part of that.

Harness states that, “while it is great to have a project end up exactly how I imagined it from the beginning, it is the most satisfying to see a complete project where the users are functioning so much better than they were before the space was designed.”

Harness is currently working on a small office space in Colorado Springs that will be completed early spring 2017. The watercolor vector rendering (pictured left) was designed by Harness with specific goals in mind. Her design was made with colors using the client’s logo and incorporates finishes that would allow for a flowing pattern as opposed to a specific installation pattern, such as a quarter-turn. The back wall of the space will feature a custom watercolor graphic that Harness created. Harness’s design also addresses the issue of sound that many open offices have. Her design uses many ceiling elements to diffuse the noise of daily conversation and telephone calls.

Four years and two promotions later, she is in love with the job because it allows her to work with the best of residential and commercial design in real time instead of on a computer screen. Curtis has also been running her own wedding stylist and decor specialist business, ARC Design Studios, since 2014. She loves being a part of the day everyone dreams of their whole life and most enjoys seeing a bride’s face when they walk into the venue that she’s staged for them. She works with a fun team made up of friends and family and recently participated in her first bridal show. Finally, Curtis recently accepted a position as a part-time instructor of interior design with Western Michigan University, coming full circle back to the department from which she graduated! She is grateful to the professors she had who felt confident enough in her abilities to hire her as a colleague. So far, she loves teaching and learns as much from her students as they do from her.
Alumnus Patrick Mixis (BS ‘14, food service administration) is helping to feed the world with each meal served out of his restaurant, Feed The World Café located in Oshtemo, Michigan.

As a student, Mixis worked with Dr. John Mueller, an entrepreneur professor at WMU, and developed a plan which they called ‘one for one,’ where a portion of every meal purchased at Mixis’ restaurant—then just a dream—would go toward helping the hungry. That was three years ago. Today, the restaurant has a routinely-updated menu that this past October featured simple yet delectable dishes with Mixis’ mark on them—fresh fish and seafood tacos, pulled pork sandwiches with homemade BBQ sauce, crispy pork belly with a blackberry chocolate pepper sauce and lemon blanched apples—to name a few.

The café has been open since early summer and, as of September 30, has donated enough money to purchase 4,200 meals for the hungry in Southwest Michigan, Mixis says, working with several local and regional food assistance agencies, including Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes and the South Central Food Bank of Michigan.

Like any entrepreneur, Mixis has experienced some of the less than savory aspects of opening a business. “The professors in my nutrition and institutional management classes helped me realize my whole mission,” Mixis says. “They made it enjoyable to learn how to apply the numbers to real-world situations. Many of my classes opened my eyes to the world and how to succeed in business. They gave me the tools to succeed.”

Mixis has no desire to stay put. His five-year plan is to franchise the one-to-one model, opening restaurants in larger cities creating unique menus for those locations that utilize region-specific ingredients and produce. He also hopes to sell a line of products with the Feed The World Café nameplate, which he has copywritten.
Amellia Versola

Alumna Amellia Versola (BS ’15, food service administration) currently works as a pastry assistant for Selden Standard. Selden Standard was voted Detroit’s restaurant of the year the first two years it was open and continues to earn accolades within the local and national culinary communities. Versola works alongside talented and passionate individuals who expand her culinary skills and help her to become a stronger leader and team player.

Dana Hanson

Recent alumna Dana Hanson (BS ’16, food service administration) is now a catering administrative assistant at the Four Points by Sheraton in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Currently, Hanson is still in training and is learning and growing in her position everyday. She believes this position will lend her extensive and invaluable knowledge to carry with her in future job positions and is excited to see where it may take her. As a new alumna, Hanson is on the path for success.

Breanne Larson

Alumna Breanne Larson (BS ’14, dietetics) works as a contractor within the Nutrition Labeling department of Kellogg. Working in the food manufacturing industry, especially with food laws and regulations, really sparked her interest in the overall food production process. In particular, Larson has become interested in the food safety and quality assurance aspects of the industry. She is currently working towards a master’s degree in food safety at Michigan State University.
Monica Lininger (Phd ‘12, evaluation, measurement and research; MA ’06, athletic training) spent a decade at WMU in various capacities before becoming an assistant professor at Northern Arizona University. Lininger’s current research focuses on the culture of concussion reporting and was funded by a grant from the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Department of Defense. She currently teaches research methods and athletic training courses at Northern Arizona University and taught similar courses while she was at WMU. Lininger was nominated for the 2016 Northern Arizona University Most Promising New Scholar Award.
Dr. Sam (SJ) Striker (MA ’99, Educational Leadership; PhD ’11 Educational Leadership) is the founder and president of Hollin-Phoenix Consulting, a service-oriented organization designed to bring the best socio-cultural information to government, military, public and private organizations.

Dr. Striker has extensive experience as a social scientist and has experiences in North Africa, Iraq, Afghanistan, and other unstable areas. Prior to Hollin-Phoenix, Dr. Striker has worked as an educator, software consultant, military security consultant, research manager, and in the United States Air Force. His work with the military spans from the Department of Defense to several North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) units. During Dr. Striker’s deployments in Iraq, he trained and supervised nationals as well as Iraqi soldiers.

In February 2016, Dr. Striker published a book titled “The Humanity of Warfare: Social Science Capabilities and the Evolution of Armed Conflict,” which discusses the Counter-insurgency (COIN) doctrine, and the changing nature of conflict. The book addresses the importance of social scientists to the military and how beneficial they can be in understanding socio-cultural issues with a goal to protect vulnerable populations and occupying soldiers. He is currently working on his next book titled, “Building Bridges: Applied Social Science in a Trans-cultural World.”

In addition to Hollin-Phoenix and his new book, Dr. Striker has had many internal publications with NATO, and has been featured in The Afghan Paradox, and had many speaking engagements. He has also won many awards such as two Civilian Commendation Medals, NATO Service Medal, and Global War on Terrorism Medal.

Lininger says that her training in the evaluation, measurement, and research doctoral program (and her post-doc) helped her to refine her experimental design and statistical analyses while maintaining a strong measurement perspective in research. The combination of being a content expert and a methodologist has allowed her to serve as a methodologist on several projects within health-related research while maintaining her own areas of expertise.
2016 ALUMNI AWARDS

Bobby Hopewell
Keystone Meritorious Award

Kalamazoo Mayor, Bobby Hopewell (MA, ’14, organizational learning and performance) recipient of the Keystone Meritorious Award, is also the President and CEO of Mobile Health Resources. Born and raised in Kalamazoo, Mayor Hopewell has spent his entire adult career in the service of others. From his professional positions in healthcare to his board memberships and civic responsibilities, he has demonstrated leadership and passion for improving the lives of all citizens of Kalamazoo.

Tim Terrentine
Keystone Early Career Award

Tim Terrentine (BS, ’04, family studies) recipient of the Keystone Early Career Award, is the newly appointed VP of Development and Alumni Relations and the executive director of WMU Foundation and WMU Alumni Association. Previously, Terrentine worked with Southwest Michigan First and as the president of the Kalamazoo Regional Chamber of Commerce. His career success is marked by expertise in strategic planning, passion for empowering individuals through leadership programs, and the ability to inspire others to action.
Robert Ezelle
Golden Apple Award

Robert “Bob” Ezelle (BS ’94, physical education) recently retired as Chief Operating Officer of the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Kalamazoo, a position he held for more than thirty years. A lifelong Kalamazoo resident, Ezelle’s dedication to instilling a sense of worth and value into each of the Boys & Girls Club’s members and providing a safe environment that fosters holistic growth opportunities for Kalamazoo youth has impacted thousands of lives and inspired the respect of local, state, and national leaders.

Von Washington, Jr.
Golden Apple Award

Von Washington, Jr. (MA ’94, educational leadership) is the Executive Director of Community Relations for The Kalamazoo Promise. He develops and promotes ongoing initiatives around a common vision of making Kalamazoo a leading education community. The Kalamazoo Promise provides resident graduates of Kalamazoo Public Schools with up to 100% of their tuition and mandatory fees for up to 130 credits at Michigan’s public universities, fifteen private colleges and universities, and community colleges.

Teresa Weatherall Neal
Golden Apple Award

Teresa Weatherall Neal (MA ’00, educational leadership) is the superintendent of Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS). A Grand Rapids native, Superintendent Neal attended GRPS and has worked in the school system for over forty years. She has been instrumental in developing and implementing programs and initiatives that wrap support around students in need. She has a love for both the students of Grand Rapids and the city itself, and charges her staff to take ownership over their students and city as well.
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