

September 2018

**CEHD**

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

**W**

## COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

### CEHD GRADUATE NAMED TOP TEACHER



Laura Chang

Laura Chang is a second-grade teacher at Sunset Elementary School in Vicksburg and a part-time instructor of special education and literacy studies at Western Michigan University. The two-time WMU graduate learned of her selection during a surprise visit from Interim State Superintendent Sheila Alles while Alles was in Vicksburg in May to highlight the school's academic success.

"Educators like Ms. Chang are key in moving Michigan to become a top-10 education state in 10 years," Alles said. "She is knowledgeable and provides relevant and meaningful teaching and learning experiences to her students. She is a compassionate, positive and inspirational role model."

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**W**  
10.03.18  
**GIVING DAY**

**GIVING DAY** *in the*  
College of Education and Human Development

[wmich.edu/education/givingday](http://wmich.edu/education/givingday)



#### **GOLDEN APPLE AWARD WINNERS**

Award recipients to be honored at the annual Golden Apple and Keystone Awards Ceremony

[Click for more >>](#)



#### **EMERGING SCHOLAR AWARD**

Dr. Maria Selena O. Protacio receives Emerging Scholar Award for research in literacy

[Click for more >>](#)



#### **NIGHT OF EXCELLENCE**

Three CEHD alumni to receive the Outstanding Alumni Award at first annual Night of Excellence

[Click for more >>](#)



#### **A COACH'S QUIET ASCENT**

Cody Piechocki, CEHD alumnus, hired as head coach of Kalamazoo Growlers

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#### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**10.04.18** GOLDEN APPLE & KEYSTONE AWARDS

**10.05.18** HOMECOMING & FAMILY WEEKEND

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Editors: Nicole Leffler,  
Tyler Sonnenberg-Ward  
[wmich.edu/education](http://wmich.edu/education)



@WMUCEHD

# WMU grad and instructor is named state's top teacher

CONTACT: JEANNE BARON  
JUNE 8, 2018 | WMU NEWS



Chang

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—The state Department of Education announced **May 18** that **Laura Chang** is the 2018-19 **Michigan Teacher of the Year**.

Chang is a second-grade teacher at Sunset Elementary School in Vicksburg and a part-time instructor of special education and literacy studies at Western Michigan University. The two-time WMU graduate learned of her selection during a surprise visit from Interim State Superintendent **Sheila Alles** while Alles was in Vicksburg May 18 to highlight the school's academic success.

"Educators like Ms. Chang are key in moving Michigan to become a top-10 education state in 10 years," Alles said. "She is knowledgeable and provides relevant and meaningful teaching and learning experiences to her students. She is a compassionate, positive and inspirational role model."

Chang earned a bachelor's and a master's degree from WMU before going on to teach in the Vicksburg school. She was chosen for the teacher of the year honor following a multi-level process that began with more than 430 teachers being nominated by students, staff and community members and included being one of the 10 people out of that pool to be named a Michigan Regional Teacher of the Year.

A panel of statewide education stakeholders interviewed the regional winners before naming Chang as its top pick.

## PRAISED FOR TALENTS, PERSONALITY

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Chang is the **first person from Kalamazoo County to win Michigan's top-teacher award**. In the announcement of her selection, she earned special praise from **Gov. Rick Snyder** as well as her colleagues in the Vicksburg Community Schools.

"Preparing our young people to succeed in a healthy 21st-century economy is becoming increasingly more important to their future achievement, and teachers like Ms. Chang—who are able to engage students at a young age—are exactly what our state and the students who call it home need," Snyder said in a written notice of her selection.

"I appreciate the incredible work that Ms. Chang has done, and will continue to do, to prepare Michigan students to be successful later in life."

Vicksburg Superintendent **Charles Glaes** described her as "that rare classroom teacher who principals rely upon, parents lobby for, colleagues admire and enjoy working with, and students love." In addition, Sunset Lake Principal **Amie McCaw** noted that Chang "has dedicated her life to education and helping others reach their goals" and despite serving in several roles, "never lets the pressure get to her."

## OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE PERSPECTIVES

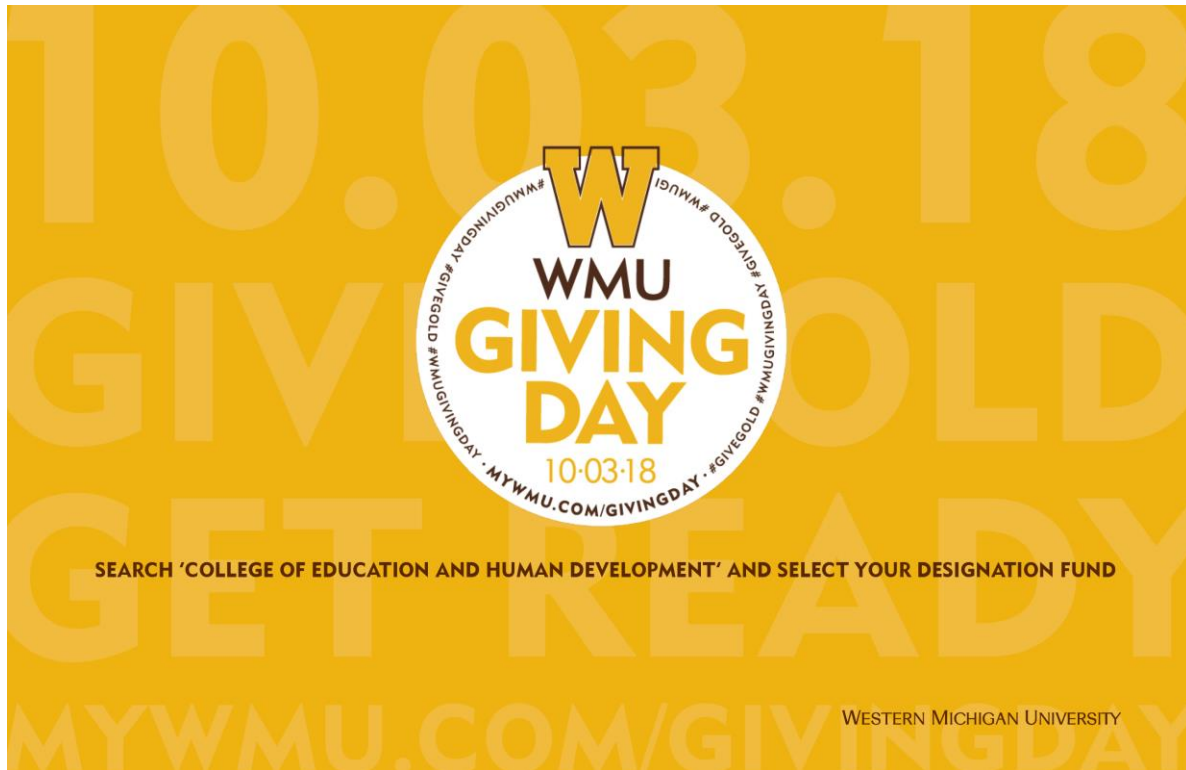
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The Michigan Department of Education uses the teacher of the year program to recognize outstanding educators across the state and create an avenue for them to share their voice with the department and other education stakeholders as they work to make Michigan a top-10 education state in 10 years.

As the state's newest top teacher, Chang will chair the Michigan Teacher Leadership Advisory Committee, which is comprised of each year's cohort of regional teachers of the year. She also will have a nonvoting seat on the State Board of Education during its regular monthly meetings.

For more WMU news, arts and events, visit [WMU News](#) online.

# WMU Giving Day



**WMU Giving Day** kicks off at midnight on **October 3, 2018**, with a goal to encourage 1,903 Broncos to make a gift to the University.

WMU Giving Day is your chance to give back to WMU during our 95th Homecoming Week. All gifts made between **Oct. 1–6** will count toward WMU Giving Day.

Not only do publications like U.S. News and World Report base their rankings in part on alumni giving, but they also factor in student retention and graduation rates. Too often, talented students are forced to abandon or delay their education for financial reasons, and donor support can help them stay in school by providing scholarships funds, travel funds, emergency medical aid and more.

Since 1903, Broncos have been helping Broncos succeed at Western Michigan University. WMU Giving Day is the opportunity for Broncos to lift one another up to make WMU the institution of choice in Michigan, and to ensure all students who seek to make a difference in the world have the opportunity to do so with an education from WMU.

## GET INVOLVED. TEXT GIVEGOLD TO 51555.

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Here's how you can get involved in WMU Giving Day and help support students from the College of Education and Human Development:



### Donate

**Text GIVEGOLD to 51555** or visit the [WMU Giving Day page](#) between Oct. 1-6, and make a gift of any amount. You will be able to designate your gift however you choose. To support CEHD student scholarships, search for "College of Education and Human Development", and select your designation fund.

New this year, Broncos who give \$55 or more during Homecoming Week will receive an exclusive pair of Broncos socks!

### Spread the word

Share the news and goals of WMU Giving Day, and **encourage your network of Broncos to give back** to CEHD. Participate in a [MyWMU Giving Day challenge](#) for the chance to win additional funds to designate to the area of your choice. Challenges can be won by getting others in your area to donate or sharing your reasons for giving on social media with **#GiveGold**.

## HEAR STUDENT STORIES

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“

MY SCHOLARSHIPS HELPED ME TO ACHIEVE MY PERSONAL GOAL OF GRADUATING IN 4 YEARS BY HAVING THE ABILITY TO ATTEND SCHOOL IN THE SUMMER WHEN FINANCIAL AID WAS NOT AN OPTION.

NOLAN ROGERS



A woman, Hailey Weiss, is shown in a parade setting, wearing a dark, sequined dress and holding a large American flag. In the background, a marching band member in a white uniform is visible. The entire image has a warm, orange-brown tint.

“

RECEIVING MY SCHOLARSHIP HELPED TO MAKE MY DREAM OF TRAVELING ACROSS THE WORLD POSSIBLE. IT OPENED MY EYES TO ANOTHER CULTURE AND ALLOWED ME TO MEET WONDERFUL PEOPLE ALONG THE WAY.

HAILEY WEISS

A man, Enrico Montalvo, is shown from the chest up, wearing a black t-shirt with a large yellow 'W' logo. He is standing in front of a wall covered with a world map, a plate of food, and several photographs of groups of people. The image has a warm, orange-brown tint.

“

WHEN I BEGAN MY ACADEMIC CAREER, I NEVER THOUGHT I COULD STUDY ABROAD DUE TO FINANCIAL REASONS. RECEIVING THE GILMAN SCHOLARSHIP IS A REALIZATION THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO ACCOMPLISH GOALS WHICH MAY SEEM UNOBTAINABLE AT FIRST GLANCE.

ENRICO MONTALVO





A photograph of Paige Schoenborn, a young woman with dark hair, smiling and standing in a tropical environment with palm trees and other foliage. She is wearing a pink tank top and has a backpack strap visible. The image has a warm, orange-toned overlay.

“

STUDYING ABROAD WAS THE HIGHLIGHT OF MY ACADEMIC CAREER. THE SCHOLARSHIPS I RECEIVED ALLOWED ME TO FOCUS ON LEARNING, BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND DEVELOPING PERSONALLY INSTEAD OF WORRYING ABOUT MY FINANCES.

PAIGE SCHOENBORN

A photograph of Brianne Hayes, a young woman, wearing a black graduation gown and cap, standing on a paved path in front of a large brick building. She is smiling and has her arms slightly out. The image has a warm, orange-toned overlay.

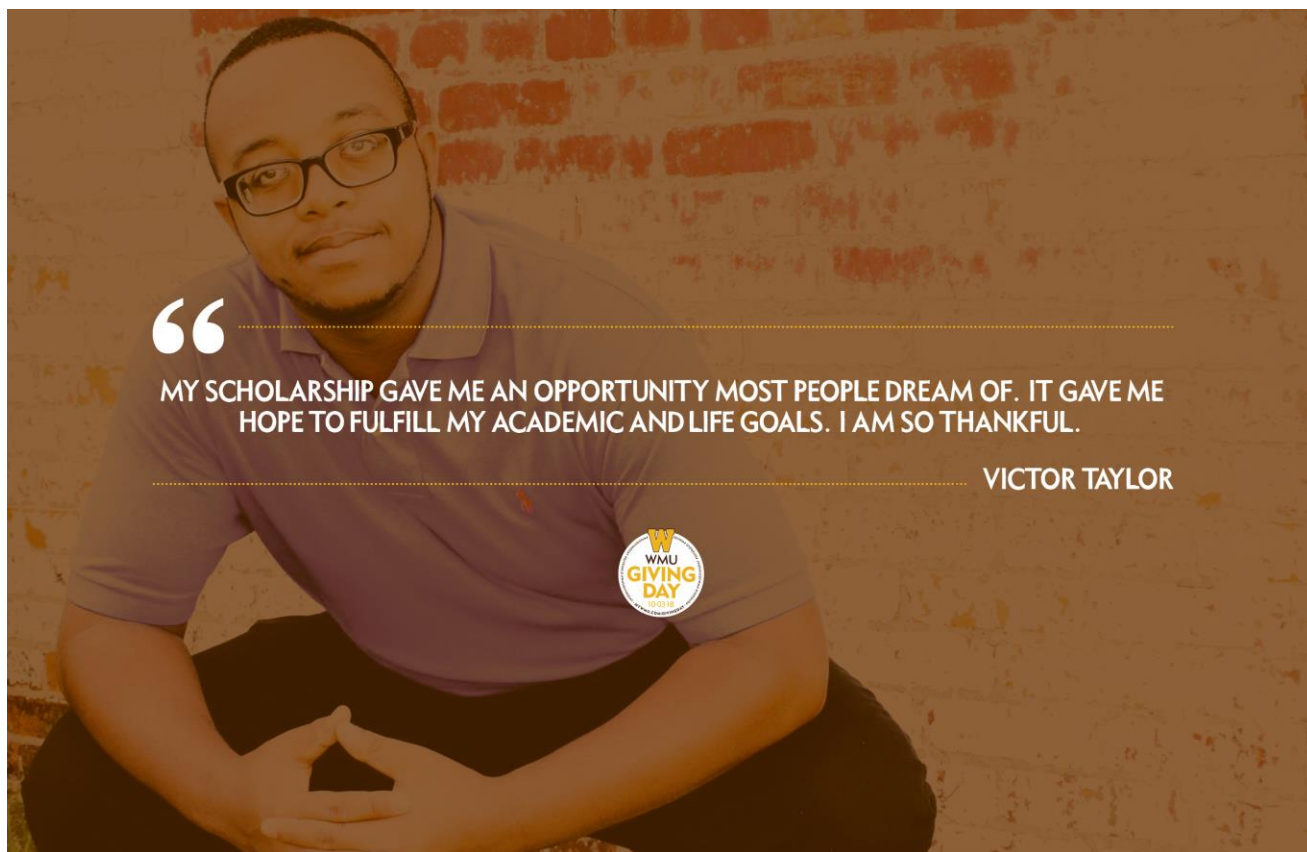
“

THE FINANCIAL RELIEF THAT CAME WITH MY SCHOLARSHIP WAS EXTREMELY HELPFUL WHILE AT WMU. NOW AS A HEAD START TEACHER I SEE HOW MUCH GIVING BACK CAN REALLY IMPACT A STUDENT'S LIFE, AND IT NEVER CEASES TO AMAZE ME.

BRIANNE HAYES







“

MY SCHOLARSHIP GAVE ME AN OPPORTUNITY MOST PEOPLE DREAM OF. IT GAVE ME HOPE TO FULFILL MY ACADEMIC AND LIFE GOALS. I AM SO THANKFUL.

VICTOR TAYLOR



# Golden Apple and Keystone Awards

## GOLDEN APPLE AND KEYSTONE AWARDS CEREMONY

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The Golden Apple and Keystone Awards are given to honor outstanding individuals who graduated from the College of Education and Human Development at Western Michigan University. [View individual award eligibility criteria](#). Award recipients are honored at the annual CEHD Golden Apple and Keystone Awards Ceremony.

### **Golden Apple and Keystone Awards Ceremony**

Thursday, October 4, 2018

5 p.m. - Reception

5:30 p.m. - Dinner and award ceremony

**Location**

WMU Fetzer Center  
2251 Business Court  
Kalamazoo, MI 49008

For more information or to register, please visit the [event registration page](#).

## 2018 CEHD GOLDEN APPLE AND KEYSTONE AWARD RECIPIENTS

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### 2018 Golden Apple Award Recipients

**Dr. Manuel Brenes** (Ph.D. '12, Evaluation, Measurement and Research)

Principal, San Juan Diego Academy

[Read his biography](#)

**Tracy Daniel** (B.S. '87, Physical Education; M.A. '92, Physical Education)

Physical education instructor and coach, Comstock Public Schools

[Read her biography](#)

**Dr. John Severson** (B.S. '87, Secondary Education; M.A. '94, Educational Leadership; Ph.D. '13, Educational Leadership)

Superintendent, Muskegon Intermediate School District

[Read his biography](#)

### 2018 Keystone Meritorious Achievement Award Recipient

**Dr. Kenneth Schmidt** (M.A. '03, Counseling Psychology)

Executive director, Trauma Recovery Associates

Pastor, St. Catherine of Siena Church

[Read his biography](#)

# Literacy education expert to receive Emerging Scholar Award

CONTACT: JEANNE BARON  
SEPTEMBER 4, 2018 | WMU NEWS

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—A young faculty member who already is becoming known internationally in the field of literacy studies will be honored by Western Michigan University as an emerging scholar during a campuswide awards ceremony this month.

**Dr. Maria Selena O. Protacio**, associate professor of special education and literacy studies, will receive the Emerging Scholar Award during WMU's Fall Convocation activities at **11 a.m. Friday, Sept. 14**, in the Bernhard Center.

The event will feature WMU President Edward Montgomery's State of the University address as well as the presentation of four other sets of annual campuswide awards: the Distinguished Faculty Scholar, Distinguished Teaching, Distinguished Service and Annual Make a Difference awards. It is part of daylong convocation activities that start at 8:30 a.m.

## EMERGING SCHOLAR AWARD

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Launched in 2006, the Emerging Scholar Award program acknowledges the accomplishments of WMU faculty members who are among the rising stars in U.S. higher education. It is designed to celebrate the contributions of faculty who are in the first decade of their careers at WMU and who, by virtue of their contributions to scholarship or creative activity, have achieved national recognition and demonstrated outstanding promise to achieve renown in their continuing work.

## FAR-REACHING RESEARCH

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Dr. Maria Selena O. Protacio

A WMU faculty member since 2012, Protacio focuses her investigations on the literacy motivation and engagement of English learners. Her publications related to that rarely researched area are filling an important gap in the literacy literature. She also has conducted research on the parental and family engagement of immigrant families in the United States.

A key aim for Protacio is to reach teachers, given that they are the ones most likely to impact the lives of English learners. As one nominator put it, she has been doing "far-reaching, impactful work in literacy," and "her dedication to improved literacy outcomes for English language learners and immigrant families is unmatched."

Protacio has been making significant contributions to her field most recently as the principal investigator for a \$2.6 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education awarded in 2017. The project is providing professional development to 160 in-service and 44 pre-service teachers to better prepare them to address the needs of English learners, ensuring that Protacio's reach will be felt for many years to come.

"This grant will not only substantially increase the number of ESL teachers in Michigan," a WMU administrator wrote in nominating her, "but also will contribute to the literature on effective teacher education and professional development for teachers of English learners."

Other nominators noted that, through her high-quality research and biliterate, bilingual background, Protacio generates excitement about her field in established as well as budding teachers.

"As a teacher-educator, I know of no more impactful an accomplishment than to foster a sustained interest in research and professional inquiry among K-12 teachers," a colleague at one university wrote. "In our field, this has the greatest potential to impact the ways that teaching and learning occur. It has the greatest potential to substantively expand the life options of young people who need and deserve the best that we can offer."

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

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Those nominating Protacio also praised her as a mentor who has played an instrumental role in the career development of both her students and colleagues around the country as well as a leader who has worked tirelessly to advance the literacy field through her service work on and off the WMU campus.

At WMU, Protacio is an advisor for the Master of Arts in teaching English to speakers of other languages and has chaired three planning committees related to ESL. In addition, she co-edits the Reading Horizons Journal, an international, peer-reviewed journal, and has been a reviewer for a variety of other academic journals and conferences. Protacio also has chaired the Southwest Michigan Reading Council Research Studies Committee, co-coordinated a National Reading Conference, and served on groups such as the Literacy Research Association's Ethnicity, Race and Multilingualism Committee and Michigan Department of Education's Committee Revising ESL Standards.

Protacio earned a Bachelor and Master of Arts from the University of the Philippines-Diliman in 2001 and 2004, respectively; a Master of Education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2007; and a doctoral degree from Michigan State University in 2013. Prior to earning her graduate degrees, she worked as an English teacher in the Philippines, which is her native country.

**For more WMU news, arts and events,** visit [WMU News](#) online.

### Related stories

[Two will receive WMU's Distinguished Service Award](#) | Sept. 4, 2018

[Three professors to be honored with Distinguished Teaching Awards](#) | Sept. 4, 2018

[University to honor its top four staffers](#) | Sept. 4, 2018

[World-renowned economist to receive distinguished scholar award](#) | Sept. 4, 2018

[WMU's Fall Convocation will celebrate achievement, State of University](#) | Sept. 11, 2018

# 2018 CEHD Outstanding Alumni Award







## WMU NIGHT OF EXCELLENCE

The CEHD Outstanding Alumni Award is one of the University's highest alumni awards and is given to alumni who bring distinction to their alma mater through professional achievements and who have enjoyed a high level of success in their careers. Award recipients are honored at the inaugural WMU Night of Excellence.

## **WMU Night of Excellence**

Friday, October 5, 2018

6 p.m. - Reception

6:45 p.m. - Call to dinner

7 p.m. - Three course dinner and award ceremony

### **Location**

WMU Read Fieldhouse/University Arena

1660 Ring Road South

Kalamazoo, MI 49008

For more information or to register, please visit [WMU Night of Excellence](#).

## 2018 CEHD OUTSTANDING ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENTS

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**Lloyd Dean** (M.A. '78, Educational Leadership)

President and CEO, Dignity Health

[Read his biography](#)

**Rochelle Gores Fredston** (B.S. '05, Textile and Apparel Studies)

Founder and executive director, Learning Lab Ventures

[Read her biography](#)

**Dr. Robert Simmons III** (B.S. '97, Elementary Education)

CEO, See Forever Foundation and Maya Angelou Schools

[Read his biography](#)

## The quiet ascent of Cody Piechocki, head baseball coach of KVCC and the Kalamazoo Growlers

Updated Jun 14, 2018; Posted Jun 14, 2018



1

209 shares

By [Kalamazoo Growlers](#)

The news came as a surprise for many when 26-year old Cody Piechocki was hired as the new head coach of the Kalamazoo Valley Community College ("KVCC") baseball team after the retirement of coaching legend Bernie Vallier. Six years later, Piechocki has quietly demonstrated that he was the right man for the job.

His coaching style matches his personality: calm, steady, and methodical. But what Piechocki has achieved already in his young coaching career speaks for itself. In just six seasons at KVCC, Piechocki has won 131 games, which puts him in second place for most wins in program history. The Cougars received their first national ranking in program history in 2016, and Piechocki has produced the first Rawlings' Gold Glove recipient and the first Marucci Elite Hitter Award recipient in school history. A consistent postseason contender, the Cougars again reached the NJCAA Regional Tournament in 2018 and advanced to the Final Four. Piechocki has also helped 49 KVCC alumni get signed by four-year colleges.

His remarkable success with KVCC has led to new opportunities in his coaching career. In 2016, the Kalamazoo Growlers hired Piechocki as head coach for the 2017 summer collegiate season. In May of 2017, Piechocki signed with a professional baseball agency, Willis Sports



Agents. According to his agent, Sam Gilbertson, Piechocki was signed because of the talent and drive he has demonstrated already in his career. "In each coaching opportunity he has been given, Cody has excelled," says Gilbertson. "Here's a guy who has been coaching baseball since he was 19 years old. He connects well with his players and is extremely good at developing talent. We wanted to be a part of his promising coaching career and we think very highly of his character as a person."

A three-year varsity letter winner at Mattawan High School, Piechocki returned to his alma mater to begin coaching as an assistant varsity baseball coach in 2007. He then joined the collegiate coaching ranks as an assistant coach at Kalamazoo College from 2008-2009 before becoming an assistant coach at KVCC in 2010 and head coach in 2012.

To Piechocki, the success of his players off the field gives him more satisfaction than his win-loss record and other accolades. In 2018, the Cougars received an All-NJCAA Team Academic Award for the third time in his tenure, and they received an All-MCCAA Team Academic Awards for the fourth time. Eight of his players received MCCAA All-Conference player awards. In previous years, his players have also received Academic All-American awards. "I believe a coach is responsible for more than just developing his guys into better baseball players," says Piechocki. "My hope for each player is that they will leave our program having developed the habits and dedication necessary to succeed at life long after their baseball careers have ended."

After guiding the Growlers through a developmental year in 2017, his contract was extended for the promising 2018 season. In 2017, ten of the Growlers' players were drafted in the MLB Draft. The Growlers are a member of the Northwoods League, which is a proven leader in the development of elite college baseball players. Piechocki received his start in the Northwoods League as an assistant coach with the Battle Creek Bombers in 2013. He then served as the hitting and fielding coach for the Kalamazoo Growlers from 2014-2015. In his time with the Growlers, he has coached over fifty players who have been selected in the MLB Draft.

This year, Piechocki has successfully recruited players from the top baseball programs in the nation, including Virginia, Penn State, San Diego State, Clemson, Duke, Notre Dame, Oregon State, Boston College, Tennessee, and Baylor, among others. "When you look at the players Cody is able to get from across the nation, it shows how good of a reputation he has

with Division 1 coaches," Gilbertson notes. "It confirms his ability to develop young talent for that many coaches to trust Cody with their top players for the summer."

True to form, Piechocki declines to take the credit for his achievements. "Much of my success has been generated by the great number of coaches and administrators I have worked for and with over the past 13 years of my coaching career," he asserts. "I have been fortunate to learn from some brilliant individuals, and I am truly thankful to have had the opportunity to coach some outstanding young men."

The Growlers began their 2018 campaign on May 29. After ending last year by winning 8 of their last 10 games, the team has high hopes for a deep playoff run this year. Through it all, Piechocki will be back in his usual position, sitting on a bucket of baseballs in the shadows of the dugout, quietly orchestrating another successful season.