Association announces 1995 Distinguished Alumni Award recipients

“...We all play parts when we face our fellow men,” author and critic H. L. Mencken once said. This year, Western Michigan University is putting a new twist on his statement by accentuating “play” as it gets face to face with alumni returning to campus October 27 and 28 for Homecoming.

Alumni will be treated to a variety of activities, fun, and excitement throughout the 1995 celebration of “The Many Faces of Western.” Our students, faculty, and staff will be putting their best face forward to welcome graduates back to campus. You’ll have a chance to cheer as the Bronco football team faces Mid-American Green State University on Saturday afternoon and the hockey Broncos face off against Providence University on Friday and Saturday evenings.

In addition to the traditional Homecoming events sponsored by the WMU Alumni Association, families can also meet and greet “Sesame Street’s” Susan—a familiar face to many. Bring your camera, get an autograph, have your face painted, juggle, or take part in creative story-telling with some of WMU’s creative arts students.

Numerous other special activities will be going on during the weekend. This issue of the Westerner includes a complete schedule of all Homecoming events, such as open houses, dances, tailgate parties, and much more. Also featured are convenient order forms for the Alumni Association’s annual Homecoming brunch and Distinguished Alumni Awards Dinner, as well as the football game against the Bowling Green Falcons.

On the last page of this issue, you’ll find a fall events calendar highlighting a variety of Miller Auditorium and University Theatre offerings, performances by WMU musical groups, and athletic team contests. Such a calendar appears regularly in ACCENTS, the Alumni Association’s newsletter, ACCENTS is mailed quarterly to all dues-paying association members and provides details about WMU events in Kalamazoo and across the country. Alumni who aren’t current members of the association are invited to join thousands of fellow graduates by completing the membership application form on page 2 of this issue. Now don’t be bashful Broncos, get reacquainted October 27 and 28 as you meet, mingle, create, and celebrate the many faces of Western.

The many faces of Western

In 1975, he was named division sales manager for the Midwest. After a series of other promotions within the supermarket chain’s Chicago and Midwest markets, Bolton was named vice president, deli and bakery merchandising in 1982.

During the next ten years, he received several more top-management promotions to such positions as vice president of grocery and bakery merchandising, vice president of marketing, and executive vice president of marketing.

When first promoted to the vice president level, Bolton was cited for his broad background of experience and creative yet practical ideas. In addition, his “action-orientation” and merchandising experience were termed “irreplaceable.”

An active member of various business and community organizations, Bolton has been chairperson of the Greater Chicago Food Depository Board of Directors and a member of the Chicago Urban League Board of Directors. He also served as chairperson of the LaGrange (Illinois) Police and Fire Commission for six years and chairperson of the St. Clitus Board of Education for four years.

Coss, a partner in the Troy, Michigan, law firm of Dean & Fuller, P.C., majored in accounting at WMU. After graduation, he was hired by what was then Touche Ross and Company in Detroit. In 1969, Goss joined Price Waterhouse & Company in Washington, DC. A few years later, he left his senior accountant position there to continue his education.

He earned a master’s degree in journalism from the University of Illinois in 1972, then entered Georgetown University Law School, where he was the articles editor of the school’s law journal. He received a juris doctorate degree in 1974 and went on to become a nationally recognized trial lawyer.

Of his days as a WMU student, Goss says he remembers that the campus climate was open, all of his teachers had time for him and the other students, and he received an excellent education.

“My B.B.A. from WMU enabled me to join two of the best worldwide certified public accounting firms and to work on their best accounts. Also, as I went on to get a master’s degree . . . and a law degree . . . I found that my (WMU) preparation for those challenges was all that I

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December 21 is the reservation deadline for the Western Michigan University Marching Band, Bronco cheerleaders, and the Bronco mascot.

Student Tailgate
11:30 a.m., Kentlaw Track, WMU

Homecoming football game against
Green Bay University
Saturday, October 28, 2:00 p.m.

National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) Homecoming and Service banquet
Saturday, October 28, 6:00 p.m.

Distinguished Alumnae Awards Dinner
Saturday, October 28, 6:00 p.m., East Ballroom, Bernhard Center, WMU

Hockey game against Providence
Contact: Athletic Ticket Office at (616) 387-3741 or (616) 382-7600
Saturday, October 28, 7:00 p.m., Lawson Arena, WMU

A Funny Thing Happened
On The Way To The Forum*
Contact: Gimbel Theatre Complex Ticket Office at (616) 387-6027
Saturday, October 28, 2:00 p.m.

Academic Unit Activities
Alumni are cordially invited to join classes, chairpersons, and staff at the following Homecoming events:

Education College
Contact: Karin Carl at (616) 387-2965
Pre-brunch reception
9:00-10:30 a.m., Saturday, October 28, Bernhard Center, WMU

Engineering and Applied Sciences College
Contact: Linda Hope at (616) 387-4033
Pre-brunch reception
9:00-10:30 a.m., Saturday, October 28, Bernhard Center, WMU

Health and Human Services College
Contact: Shari Satterlee at (616) 387-3664
Post-game visitations
Saturday, October 28, Student Recreation Center, WMU

*Admission fee required
Goodfellows and in 1991 received the group's Man of the Year Award. In addition, he is a member of the Adrian College Board of Trustees, has served on the boards of directors for both WMU and Georgetown alumni associations, and is currently a member of the WMU Foundation Investment Committee. He and his wife, Rita, are members of the WMU President's Club. The couple has two daughters, one of whom is presently enrolled at WMU.

Roberts is vice president of General Motors Corporation (GM) and general manager of its Truck Division, which became an undergraduate business student at WMU in the 1969-1970 while working at a La Sieger plant in Grand Rapids.

Because I was working full time and supporting a family, I needed a quality school of business within driving distance of Grand Rapids.” Roberts recalls. “I looked at the choices available to me really thought Western was indeed the best decision. My decision to attend Western was of divine wisdom."

In the April 25, 1995, issue of Forbes, Roberts was described as “one of the few GM executives with a well-rounded resume—manufacturing, marketing, component operations, and personnel.”

His GM career began in 1977 as a salaried employee-in-training at the former Diesel Equipment Division in Grand Rapids. He was involved in various positions of greater responsibility, including assistant superintendent of manufacturing and director of quality assurance. After the Diesel Equipment and Rochester Products divisions were consolidated, Roberts was named the plant manager in 1981.

In 1983, he transferred to Rochester, New York, as the division’s assistant executive manager. Two years later, he was appointed plant manager of GM’s North Tarrytown, New York, assembly facility.

When asked why he believes to be his most significant professional achievement to date, Roberts looks back to his days at the Tarrytown plant. “I guess I really mean the poised of what we achieved there. The hourly and salary workers put together to work that plant around, to improve the quality, to get costs in line, and to ultimately have to develop a new product to the plant rather than shut it down.”

In April 1987, Roberts was elected vice president of General Motors, a position he held until November 1992. At that time, he was appointed president of the company’s North American white-collar work force of 122,200, the Wall Street Journal said he faced “a huge challenge as GM attempts to trim its overstuffed, far-flung bureaucracy that even insiders concede is hindering the company’s efforts to deal with fierce competition.”

After overseeing the trimming of 40,090 jobs, Roberts left the automaker to become vice president for truck operations at Navistar, particularly young people.