Three receive 2008 Distinguished Alumni awards

A prominent teacher-entrepreneur, researcher and businessman have been selected by the WMU Alumni Association to receive its most prestigious honor, the Distinguished Alumni Award.

The award was established in 1963 to recognize graduates of WMU who have achieved a high level of success in their professions. The 2008 recipients will be recognized at a reception and dinner Friday, Oct. 3.

They are: Richard Koehn, president and chief executive officer of Sensry Animal Care Inc. in Salt Lake City; Nick Triantafilopoulos, director of polymer innovation for the Akton Technology Center of OMNOVA Solutions Inc.; and Charles Valluzzo, CEO of McDonald's of Baton Rouge, La.

Koehn heads Sensry Animal Care, a start-up company devoted to developing cutting-edge animal care products. He earned a bachelor's degree from WMU in 1961 and a doctorate from Arizona State University in 1967, then went on to teach at the University of Kansas for three years.

Triantafilopoulos is an internationally recognized expert in coating process technologies and rheology. He earned a bachelor's degree in physics from the University of Athens in 1963 and a doctorate in 1967. He then continued his research at Arizona State University and the University of Kansas.

Valluzzo heads Sensry Animal Care, a start-up company devoted to developing cutting-edge animal care products. He earned a bachelor's degree from WMU in 1961 and a doctorate from Arizona State University in 1967, then went on to teach at the University of Kansas for three years.

Triantafilopoulos is an internationally recognized expert in coating process technologies and rheology. He earned a bachelor's degree in physics from the University of Athens in 1979 and a master's and doctorate degrees in paper science and engineering from WMU in 1981 and 1985, respectively.

Valluzzo is one of McDonald’s largest franchise holders, overseeing 53 stores as CEO of McDonald’s of Baton Rouge. He graduated from WMU in 1962 with a Bachelor of Business Administration in marketing.
Distinguished Faculty Scholar nominations due in January

Nominations are due Jan. 23 for the 2009 Distinguished Faculty Scholar Award. Up to three recipients will be selected.

The recipients will be honored at a future ceremony and receive a $2,000 honorarium that becomes part of their base salaries, a plaque, and an opportunity to present a Cameron Lecture and exhibition or performance.

Titled “Senator Obama Goes to Africa,” the documentary was shot and produced by Chicago-based filmmakers Hercules and Keith Walker and captures Obama’s return to his family’s roots on an emotional journey to Africa. Hercules and Walker also produced the acclaimed “Forgiving Dr. Mengele,” which was premiered at WMU last year.

Emeritus road warrior to give talk

John Geisler, emeritus in counselor education and counseling psychology, will recount the history of what is now known as U.S. 12 at 2 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 8, in Wildwood Hall’s Heinz Emerti Lounge. The talk is titled “From Moccasins to Main Street: A Droll, Quixotic, Quaint, Erudite and Whimsical History of the Sauk (Native American) Trail in Michigan Through Its Various Iterations.”

Tech, public policy focus of talk

The United States is the most technologically sophisticated society that has ever existed, but this also means it’s the most technologically dependent, according to a visiting scholar who will be speaking at 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 8, in D-109 of the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences Building.

Dec. 4 for awards presentation

Applications must be submitted online by Dec. 4 for the 2008 Clifford G. Christians Ethics Book Award. Applications may be submitted with the award in acknowledgment of his publications being systematically directed toward specific questions that helped advance knowledge in physical education and recreation for individuals with disabilities.

The award was presented at the 2008 Annual Summer Conference of the National Consortium for Physical Education and Recreation for Individuals with Disabilities held in Reston, Va. To be nominated, individuals must be recognized as a research scholar in the area of physical education and recreation for individuals with disabilities.
Study and Work Abroad Fair expands global horizons

The University’s 2008 Study and Work Abroad Fair will be held from 4 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 8, in the Bernhard Center’s South Ballroom.

The free event will allow students and members of the campus and local communities to learn how they can earn academic credit while studying and working abroad.

Some of the summer programs that will be described are open to mature high school students as well as adults who are interested in travel and learning but are not attending college. Also, nearly all types of student financial aid may be applied toward study abroad programs, including money received through the Kalamazoo Promise and Michigan Education Trust funds.

The fair is being sponsored by the Haenicke Institute for Global Education and includes several new features this year. Among them are:

- Expanded opportunities for overseas internships due to broader collaboration with WMU’s Career and Student Employment Services.
- Presentation of three informational sessions, Study Abroad 101 for High School Students from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m., Intern Abroad for Academic Credit from 5 to 6 p.m., and the Study Abroad 101 panel discussion from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. with financial aid staff members and students who have previously studied abroad.
- Implementation of a high school outreach program, through which juniors and seniors in the local area have been formally invited to the fair.
- Prize giveaways sponsored by STA Travel as well as a free pop and slice of pizza, while supplies last.

WMU staff members will be on hand to answer questions about financial aid, health and other issues. Attendees also will have the chance to speak with WMU students who have studied and worked abroad, WMU professors who coordinate programs and courses around the globe, and representatives from non-WMU organizations touring more than 100 study and work programs conducted worldwide.

For more information, go to www.wmich.edu/studyabroad or contact Joe Milostan, WMU study abroad outreach coordinator, at study-abroad@wmich.edu or 387-5890.

Service—October

The following faculty and staff members are recognized for 40, 35, 30, 25, 20, 15, 10 and five years of service during October.

40 Years—George R. Kohrman, information technology.
35 Years—Klazina A. Welch, industrial and manufacturing engineering.
30 Years—Mitchell P. Beare, Bernhard Center.
25 Years—Joyce Lynn P. Fooy, intercollegiate athletics; Nancy L. Kablitz, dining services-Valley #1; Willie T. Murray, multicultural affairs; Robert R. VanDyke, dining services; Lonnie Wesseling, physical plant-building, custodial and support services; and Shirley D. Bishop, physical plant-building, custodial and support services.
20 Years—George D. Broomell, information technology; Juana Snell, physical plant-building, custodial and support services; James A. Visser, School of Public Affairs and Administration; Janice S. Weaver, cash operations; and Arnita Williams, physical plant-building, custodial and support services.
15 Years—Jacqueline R. Angel, Sindecuse Health Center; Joanne L. Bartetta, education field placement; Thomas W. Norton, chemistry; and Arthur J. Smith, information technology.
10 Years—Catherine B. Hennessy, information technology-telecommunications, and Ann M. Trevino, dining services.
5 Years—Rayne S. Aaron, Children’s Place, and Muradillah K. Ghantasala, mechanical and aeronautical engineering.

Obituaries

Henrietta “Yetta” Ackerson, a retired WMU staff member, died Sept. 10 in Kalamazoo. She was 84.

Ackerson came to the University in 1959. At the time of her retirement in 1986, she was the coordinator for the Administrative Work Center in the Office of the President.

Paul A. Robbert, emeritus in art, died Sept. 22, in Holland, Mich. He was 80.

Robbert came to the University in 1957 as an instructor and retired in 1998 as a professor. He served as acting chair of the Department of Art in 1972-73 and also established the papermaking curriculum. He taught graphics, papermaking, printmaking, drawing and painting.

An acclaimed artist both nationally and internationally, Robbert exhibited widely in the United States and abroad.

Robbert was a founding member of the Kalamazoo Book Arts Center. A celebration of his life will be held from 3 to 6 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 5, at the center, located in the Park Trades Center, 326 W. Kalamazoo Ave., Suite 103.

An exhibition of his work will be on display at the center during the Art Hop on Friday, Oct. 3, and will continue through Oct. 31.

TowerPinkster gift supports WMU sustainability efforts

A leading West Michigan firm is creating a new endowed scholarship that will support WMU students who want to pursue careers in environmental sustainability.

TowerPinkster, an architecture and engineering firm recently created the TowerPinkster Endowed Scholarship for mechanical and electrical engineering majors.

When fully funded, it is anticipated that at least one scholarship will be awarded annually to a full-time junior or senior enrolled in one of the majors and expressing an interest in environmental design and building. As part of the new scholarship arrangement, recipients of this award will be designated “TowerPinkster Scholars” and be given an opportunity to apply for an internship with TowerPinkster.

From left: WMU President John M. Dunn; Arnold Wilk, president and chief executive officer of TowerPinkster; Tom Mathison, TowerPinkster principal; and WMU Dean Daniel M. Ulyszyk, College of Engineering and Applied Sciences.

The creation of a scholarship for students in environmental design and building fits well with TowerPinkster’s reputation as a leader in sustainable initiatives and also serves as a new pride point in WMU’s ongoing efforts to support environmental and energy alternatives.

Last year, TowerPinkster’s downtown Kalamazoo office at 242 E. Michigan Ave. became the first facility in southwest Michigan to receive Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, certification.

Last spring, WMU received the 2008 Environmental Award from the Kalamazoo Regional Chamber of Commerce in recognition of three important initiatives: implementing sustainable design practices in new campus buildings; committing to major storm water management improvements throughout the main campus in Kalamazoo and developing a centralized energy usage control system.

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Walker Institute offers groundbreaking conference

The tremendous diversity of peoples and cultural traditions in Michigan will be examined in depth during a groundbreaking statewide conference Thursday and Friday, Oct. 9-10, in the Fetzer Center.

“The Peoples Conference: Ethnic and Racial Diversity in Michigan” is open to the public and being sponsored by WMU’s Lewis Walker Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnic Relations.

The WMU community is encouraged to register for the full two days, one day or a half-day at a cost of $125, $70 or $35, respectively. Registration is continuing online at www.wmich.edu/walkerinstitute or call 387-3287.

The event will include presentations by several authors who have written volumes for the “Discovering the Peoples of Michigan” book series co-edited by Arthur Helweg, emeritus in anthropology.

In addition, break-out sessions will allow attendees to interact with panelists in lively discussions of a variety of topics.

Go to www.wmich.edu/walkerinstitute to register online, download the conference brochure or learn more about the featured speakers.

WMU schedules fall influenza, meningitis vaccination clinics

The WMU community may be vaccinated against influenza and meningitis at five clinics this fall as well as at the Sindecuse Health Center during nursing walk-in hours.

The clinics are open to WMU students, faculty and staff members and their eligible dependents; and retirees and emeriti.

They will take place Monday, Oct. 6, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the College of Health and Human Services Building; Thursday, Oct. 9, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the College of Aviation campus at the W.K. Kellogg Airport in Battle Creek, Mich.; Wednesday, Oct. 15, (special accommodations for retirees and emeriti), from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the third floor of the Sindecuse Health Center; Tuesday, Oct. 21, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. in rooms 157-159 Bernhard Center; and Wednesday, Nov. 15, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the indoor tennis court area of Student Recreation Center during the WMU Health and Wellness Expo.

Arrangements have been made to fund the full cost of flu vaccinations administered by the Sindecuse Health Center to employees, and their eligible dependents, covered by WMU’s Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan FPO insurance plan.

For complete details, including costs for non-covered vaccinations and non-covered WMU community members, go online to www.sindecuse.com or call 387-3287.

Homecoming 2008

by congregating at one of the organizational or corporate tents that will be set up off of Oakland Drive by the College of Health and Human Services Building. A favorite gathering site for WMU graduates is the Alumni Association Homecoming PigFest, which is the official Homecoming celebration for alumni of all ages.

More information about WMU-sponsored activities taking place during Homecoming week, including cost and registration details, is available by visiting www.wmich.edu/homecoming and clicking the links for “Student Events,” “Alumni Events” and “Campus Events.”

On Campus with Jeff Alexander

“Our job is to fix anything driven on campus that has Western’s logo on it,” says Jeff Alexander, supervisor for garage operations in physical plant-general services.

“This means we fix everything from the generators to lawn mowers, golf carts, vans, bobcats and even ice resurfacing machines.”

Alexander, who has been in his current post for the past eight years, came to WMU in 1998 following three years as a custodial supervisor with the Kalamazoo Public Schools and 15 years as a service representative with Pitney Bowes.

After a stint as a custodial supervisor here, Alexander became a recreation and sport supervisor in charge of maintaining the Waldo Stadium football field as well as the University’s sports and recreation playing fields and buildings. “It was enjoyable, but intense,” he recalls.

Alexander now manages three full-time staffers and is in charge of WMU’s garage operations, which have to be self-sustaining. In addition to overseeing mechanical repairs, he maintains inventory, works closely with purchasing to write specifications and bids for new vehicles, keeps on top of new technology such as electric hybrid engines, and fields more than a few “service” calls.

“We can’t work on vehicles owned by WMU students and employees, but I try to answer their questions and give them direction,” Alexander says. “I feel blessed with my guys. All of our people are state of Michigan certified master mechanics and meet ASE national standards. They can pretty much fix anything. You can’t go any place else and get it done better or cheaper.”

Much of Alexander’s time is spent on the job. “I usually put in 10- to 12-hour days. Something always walks in the door. You just absorb it and keep moving,” he says. “I’m also something of a perfectionist! The taxpayers need to get their money’s worth, and if we do it right, our equipment at WMU is going to last.”

A Kalamazoo native, Alexander dabbles in photography, and both he and his wife, Marjorie, take classes at WMU. They live in Oshtemo and have two children who attend other colleges, a daughter majoring in zoology and a married son studying architecture in graduate school. Alexander’s mom, Judy, a KPS retiree, helps WMU out by attending other colleges, a daughter majoring in zoology and a married son studying architecture in graduate school. Alexander’s mom, Judy, a KPS retiree, helps WMU out by attending other colleges, a daughter majoring in zoology and a married son studying architecture in graduate school. Alexander’s mom, Judy, a KPS retiree, helps WMU out by attending other colleges, a daughter majoring in zoology and a married son studying architecture in graduate school.