In this issue

Richmond Center completes ‘arts village’
Campus celebrates 50 years as university
StoryCorps taps WMU memories
Dear friends:

You will receive this magazine shortly after I finish my second tenure as president of Western Michigan University. On July 1, Dr. John M. Dunn is due to begin his post as eighth president of WMU, and I am happily headed for re-retirement.

I am delighted to relinquish the leadership role to John Dunn. I have come to know and like him tremendously, and he has my full support, trust and friendship. Our Board of Trustees made an excellent choice by selecting John and Linda Dunn to be our president and first lady.

Once again, I leave WMU with great gratitude for the support of the faculty, staff, alumni and friends of the institution. I leave also with great confidence in and respect for the extraordinary quality of what goes on in classrooms everyday.

Throughout this magazine, you’ll find stories about some of those people who make WMU the special place it is. Take a moment, please, to read about Drs. Irma Lopez and Sushi Datta-Sandhu, who have just been lauded for their teaching by the students and alumni who revere them. And be sure to note the astounding record of accomplishment amassed by Betsy Kuhle, who has coached 10 MAC championship tennis teams in her time at WMU.

I invite you as well to feast your eyes on photographs of the magnificent new art exhibition building made possible through the generosity of James and Lois Richmond, who chose to honor their alma mater by helping us construct the Richmond Center for Visual Arts. Plan to visit soon and see this wonderful facility in person.

Thank you for all you do to support Western Michigan University. Enjoy your summer reading.

Warmest regards,

Diether H. Haenicke
President Emeritus
Western Michigan University
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Cover photo by John Gilroy

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John M. Dunn named eighth president of WMU

Dr. John M. Dunn has been named the eighth president of Western Michigan University and took office July 1.

Dunn, who has served as interim chancellor of Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, since 2006, was selected by unanimous vote of the WMU Board of Trustees at the board’s April 27 meeting. His appointment follows a nationwide search that began last fall and involved all key University constituencies and the public.

“Dr. Dunn is the right choice at the right time to lead Western Michigan University,” said Dan Pero, chair of the WMU Board of Trustees. “He is energetic and experienced. He has earned a reputation as a consensus builder. And he is committed to making the student experience at WMU the best in Michigan and the country.”

Before being named SIU’s interim chancellor, Dunn served as provost and vice chancellor there since 2002. He says his interest in the WMU position was piqued by the similarities between WMU and SIU, a research university with more than 21,000 students, an extensive portfolio of grants and contracts, a number of major research centers and a historical background as a state teachers college.

“I am particularly impressed with WMU’s continuing commitment to quality in its undergraduate and graduate programs. From my years at research universities, I know that the benefit of educating students in a research environment adds immeasurably to their university experience,” Dunn said. “I am excited about my new duties at WMU and am honored to be able to serve others in my new role as president. During the interview process, I was struck by the sentiments shared with me by those who participated—faculty, staff and students. Their presence, questions and obvious pride in WMU helped me determine that this was the right place and choice for me.”

An educator for more than 30 years, Dunn was dean of the University of Utah’s College of Health before moving to SIU, holding that post from 1995 to 2002. Before that, he was at Oregon State University for 20 years, last serving as associate provost there from 1990 to 1995. Also at Oregon State, Dunn was assistant dean of Health and Human Performance from 1987 to 1990, chair of the Department of Exercise and Sport Science from 1980 to 1987, and director of the university’s Special Physical and Motor Fitness Clinic.

Internationally known for his research and writing about the long-term health of individuals with disabilities, Dunn is the author of more than 50 professional papers and book chapters. He is a past president of the Research Consortium of the American Alliance for Health Physical Education, Recreation and Dance; past editor of Quest, a professional publication for kinesiology scholars; and president-elect of the American Academy of Kinesiology and Physical Education.

Dunn, who began his teaching at the University of Connecticut in 1972, earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Northern Illinois University in 1967 and 1969, respectively. He earned his doctoral degree in physical education from Brigham Young University in 1972.

Dunn and his wife, Linda, are the parents of three adult children who live around the nation.

WMU’s search for a new president was led by University Trustee Ken Miller, who served as chair of a 14-member presidential search advisory committee made up of faculty, staff and students from across the University. It also included representation from the University’s alumni base and the local community.

University community pens book of heartfelt messages for Virginia Tech

A book of condolences bearing the messages of some 700 members of the WMU community was delivered to the Virginia Tech campus community in late April, just days after the April 16 shooting on that campus.

For three days following the tragedy, students, faculty, staff, alumni and area residents filed into the Bernhard Center to share sentiments of support and convey their sympathy over the loss of life at the Virginia campus.

The signed pages were then bound into a book and sent by WMU Interim President Diether Haenicke to Dr. Charles W. Steger, president of Virginia Tech.
Advertising team builds Cadillac campaign for national competition finals

A team of advertising students from the University's Department of Marketing came in second in the 2007 EdVenture Partners Cadillac National Case Study Competition.

The four-person team from WMU's advertising and promotion program was one of two selected as finalists from among 53 teams from universities across the country that competed. After making the cut and being named a finalist, the WMU team traveled to Detroit in May to present its case study to top executives from Cadillac and Modernista, Cadillac's advertising agency. The other finalist and eventual winner was a team from Iowa's Morningside College.

The assignment for the competition was to attract a younger demographic of auto buyers and improve the image and reputation of the Cadillac division. The WMU team developed a fully integrated marketing and communications plan for the Cadillac CTS brand.

Members of WMU's team were Laura Gera of Elk Grove, Ill.; Shannon Bailey of Waterford, Mich.; Janice Ojczyk of Fort Gratiot, Mich.; and Michelle Jovanovic of Calumet City, Ill. All four are senior advertising and promotion majors. The team's faculty advisor was Dr. JoAnn Atkin, WMU assistant professor of marketing.

WMU has participated in the EdVenture Partners Cadillac National Case Study Competition for the past four years, placing in the top 10 nationally each year. Atkin uses the competition as the capstone project for advertising and promotion majors enrolled in her upper-level marketing class, Integrated Marketing Communications Campaigns.

"What the students do for this project is what they will actually do for a real client when they enter the advertising and promotion industry," Atkin says. "The experience of developing a campaign from start to finish and then presenting those ideas to industry professionals is invaluable."

April graduate wins Fulbright for study in Japan

Graduate Kendra Combs of Muskegon, Mich., was awarded the prestigious Fulbright Fellowship worth $36,000 to conduct a year of research in Japan on special education policies and pedagogy.

Combs graduated April 28, earning a bachelor's degree with highest honors. She was a psychology major with a minor in Japanese and a member of WMU's Lee Honors College. She will begin her research project in September at a destination in Japan to be determined by the Fulbright organization.

Sen. J. William Fulbright of Arkansas proposed the Fulbright Program, the U.S. government's flagship program in international educational exchange, to the U.S. Congress in 1945. In the aftermath of World War II, Fulbright viewed the proposed program as a much-needed vehicle for promoting "mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries of the world." Congress approved his vision and the program was signed into law by President Truman in 1946.

Math professor pulls students into ‘the Zome’

To build campus interest in geometry, a WMU math professor spent a blustery Saturday in March introducing a team of students to the joys of building a large-scale three-dimensional Zome model.

Dr. David Richter, assistant professor of mathematics, led a student team in the construction of the structure in the Lee Honors College main lounge. The physical model represented an arrangement of 120 identical objects in four-dimensional space, and Richter has characterized the effort as a Zome "barn raising."

While the geometric design Richter used in March has existed for about 150 years, the campus event marked the first time a Zome or any other three-dimensional model has been completed from this particular design, he says.

The word Zome is a fusion of the words zone and dome. The underlying geometry of a Zome is based on a system of 31 families of mutually parallel lines. These families are called zones. The word dome comes from the fact that the Zome was originally designed in the 1960s as a building framework by an architect. The Zome System emerged in 1992 as an educational toy.
Inside or out, it’s a masterpiece

The new Richmond Center for Visual Arts is the final element of a campus arts village and a home for the Frostic School of Art.

The latest addition to WMU’s West Campus is the Richmond Center for Visual Arts, a sweeping, copper-adorned eye-catching structure that puts art in front of passersby in a 20,000-square-foot sculpture garden that beckons them to come inside and see more. The center was designed by architects from SmithGroup’s Detroit office to be “a vessel that brings together light, art and people.” Its three galleries—one of them for students—are spread throughout the building’s first floor, along with a lecture hall and exhibition support offices. In addition to displaying more permanent works of art, the pebble-strewn sculpture garden surrounding the first floor will bring the works of nationally and internationally recognized artists to

Continued on page 6
Art School named in honor of artist, benefactor Frostic

The University’s art school has been rechristened the Gwen Frostic School of Art after one of its most famous alumni and WMU’s most generous benefactor.

Trustees approved the name change at their April 27 meeting, honoring Frostic, a celebrated Michigan artist, whose lifelong love affair with WMU culminated in bequeathing more than $13 million to the University. It is the largest single gift in WMU’s history.

Frostic died on April 25, 2001, the day before her 95th birthday. Widely known since the 1950s for her block print art, she died at her longtime home in Benzonia, Mich., where she operated Presscraft Papers, Gwen Frostic Prints of Benzonia.

The University is using her gift to foster artistic pursuits by funding the English Department’s Gwen Frostic Reading Series, enhancing art facilities and providing student scholarships in art and creative writing. Funds also go to business scholarships and three Gwen Frostic Medallion Scholarships.
A more than two-stories tall bank of windows streams light into the center’s lobby, where a wide staircase leads to the second floor containing a student lounge, administrative suite and advising offices. The center’s third floor is dedicated to graphic design and includes a state-of-the-art design center, digital print center, BFA studio, print center, client conference room, critique space and classrooms.

A standing-room-only crowd of nearly 500 people squeezed together in the center lobby on April 12 to dedicate the sparkling, 44,000-square-foot structure. Its $13 million cost was almost entirely underwritten by private donors, with major funding coming from James and Lois Richmond of Kalamazoo, the Gwen Frostic estate and the Irving S. Gilmore Foundation.

“Exactly 23 months ago to the day, we broke ground for this magnificent building, and I said, ‘Oh, Happy Day,’ ” recalled Dr. Margaret Merrion, dean of the WMU College of Fine Arts, at the dedication ceremony. “Today, it’s time to say, ‘Oh, Grateful Day!’

“According to G.K. Chesterton, ‘Gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder.’ Today, we are doubly happy with the wondrous Richmond Center for Visual Arts.”

Stories by Mark Schwerin
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Teaching awards revived to honor, celebrate University’s core mission

Two longtime University faculty members, revered by students for their instructional skills, are the first to be named recipients of WMU’s Distinguished Teaching Awards, a revival of a similar University program that for 35 years honored classroom excellence.

Dr. Irma M. Lopez, professor of Spanish, and Dr. Suhashni “Sushi” Datta-Sandhu, associate professor of political science, received the awards when the University held its academic convocation in February. The teaching awards carry a one-time cash prize of $2,000 and a subsequent increase in base salary.

Lopez and Datta-Sandhu were the first faculty members honored for teaching since 2001, when the last WMU Alumni Association Teaching Excellence Award was presented. That program, which began in 1966, extended the honor to 131 faculty members. In 2006, the new program was launched and will honor up to three full-time faculty members each year.

“These awards celebrate teaching, which is the core mission of our University,” says Dr. Katherine Joslin, professor of English, chair of the award committee and a 1997 recipient of the Teaching Excellence Award.

Lopez, a faculty member since 1994, is an expert on Mexican literature and Latin American women writers.

Teaching everything from introductory Spanish to graduate-level literature courses, she was praised for handling her teaching assignments with “professionalism, grace and passion.”

A former student who has gone on to a doctoral program at Harvard said Lopez’s work changed his life and played a key role in the career path he has chosen.

“Her ability to communicate with students on many levels, generate and share enthusiasm for the study of language and culture, and support students’ interests in interdisciplinary research is what truly distinguishes her as an outstanding teacher and mentor,” the student wrote.

Datta-Sandhu, a faculty member since 1970, is an expert in the field of African studies and is the creator and supervisor of WMU’s study abroad program in Cape Town, South Africa. She teaches in the area of international and comparative politics, and her offerings include a popular course called Women in Developing Countries. A colleague who wrote in support of her nomination praised her ability to provide her classes with a richer cultural appreciation of developing countries and appreciation for their differing political needs.

A student who wrote in support of her nomination said, “Dr. Datta-Sandhu has a way of looking at a student which says, ‘I know what you are capable of, and I cannot wait to see you achieve it.’ We, in turn, cannot wait to make her proud of us.”
Broncos shine both on and off the playing field during 2006-07

There was good news on and off the playing field for Bronco teams and individual scholar-athletes this past year, and a lot of the best news came in the academic arena.

Five Bronco teams were recognized for being in the top 10 percent of their respective sports in the NCAA's annual academic progress report. The five teams are baseball, men's basketball, gymnastics, women's tennis and volleyball. Twenty-seventeen athletes in 14 different sports were named to all-conference academic teams during 2006-07, and men's basketball standout Joe Reitz was named an Academic All-American.

Basketball star Carrie Moore was named the Mid-American Conference's Co-Player of the Year for 2007. She is the all-time leading scorer in WMU women's basketball and the first MAC player ever to lead the nation in scoring through an entire season. Moore also became the first Bronco to don a WNBA uniform, signing as a free agent with the Phoenix Mercury and appearing in a preseason contest against Chicago.

Both the men's and women's tennis teams advanced to their respective NCAA tournaments, and two members of the track and field team advanced to the NCAA national competition. Becky Horn qualified in the 800-meter run, and Kristalyn Mauch qualified in the shot put.

Freshman Mark Letestu became the fifth Bronco to be named Central Collegiate Hockey Association Rookie of the Year. Letestu led the team in goals, assists and points and was the nation's top freshman scorer. Less than one week after earning top rookie honors, Letestu signed a two-year agreement with the Pittsburgh Penguins.

Men's basketball standout David Kool and golfer Elise Swartout also earned honors as the MAC's top rookies in their respective sports.

For the second year in a row, the football Broncos produced an Associated Press All-American and MAC Player of the Year. Ameer Ismail was named to the AP All-America Second Team and was selected as the MAC Defensive Player of the Year. Greg Jennings, now a starting wide receiver with the Green Bay Packers, was named an AP Third Team All-American one year ago and was the MAC co-offensive Player of the Year.

WMU earned its first football bowl appearance since 1988, playing the University of Cincinnati in the inaugural International Bowl in Toronto. In what proved to be an exciting contest, Cincinnati edged the Broncos, 27-24, and both teams shared in a bit of college football history. It will be the first time a bowl game had been played outside of United States since the 1937 Bacardi Bowl in Havana.

Bronco alumni and fans packed the Rogers Centre's Windows restaurant for a sold-out, pre-International Bowl event sponsored by the WMU Alumni Association.

Inaugural International Bowl featured WMU Broncos vs. the University of Cincinnati's Bearcats.

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‘Fly Team Michigan!’ taps state's aviation potential

WMU and four Michigan community colleges have joined forces to make the state a powerhouse in aviation education and boost the reach of economic development in the aviation sector for communities around Michigan.

The principals of a new collegiate association, “Fly Team Michigan!,” met in Lansing in March to formalize their agreement in a signing ceremony at the office of Michigan Lt. Gov. John Cherry, who added the state’s endorsement for the effort. The four community colleges joining with WMU in the statewide effort are Delta College, Jackson Community College, Lansing Community College and Northwestern Michigan College.

The agreement will allow Michigan to build a cost-efficient network of aviation education programs that can work toward sharing assets; set up large-scale cooperative purchasing agreements to acquire needed equipment and supplies; collaborate on research, development of new aviation methods and course materials; recruit and market; and expand job placement programs.

“Expanding access to higher education is a critical component of our plan to transform Michigan's economy,” said Cherry of the collaborative effort. “This cooperative agreement will not only expand access to aviation training for students, but will streamline costs and strengthen economic development efforts in this growing field.”

Through the arrangement, students in aviation disciplines at the four community colleges will enjoy a seamless transition from their associate’s degree programs to WMU’s four-year baccalaureate program. They can then continue their careers by moving into one of the exclusive bridging agreements WMU enjoys with regional air carriers and local partners.

“We want Michigan to be recognized as the leader in aviation education,” says Capt. Rick Maloney, dean of WMU’s College of Aviation. “This is an opportunity to start collaborating and explore the future of what aviation education can be. All of us have been building the quality of our individual programs, and we’ve been very successful. Together, however, we’ll be able to build a system that will produce the most highly qualified and sought-after aviation professionals in the nation. We’re out to support each other and each other’s communities.”

Maloney says the agreement has been in the discussion stages for about two years, as the partners explored each other’s programs, philosophies and values to ensure the members of Fly Team Michigan! shared a common set of goals.

“We’re very comfortable with each other and the driving forces for our programs,” Maloney says. “We all have an unwavering focus on flight safety, a commitment to integrity and a goal of providing the very best in aviation education. This is really a one-time opportunity to build on those shared values and establish statewide collaboration. It’s good for our students and good for the state.”

University business, finance chief retires after four successful decades

The end of a WMU era was assigned an official date—June 30, 2007. That’s the official retirement date of Robert M. Beam, vice president for business and finance, who for 42 years helped hold the campus purse strings and develop University budgets through good times and bad.

Beam began his WMU finance career as an assistant budget officer right after his 1965 graduation from the University. It was a time when gas was 31 cents per gallon and state funding covered most of the cost of educating WMU students. He went on to earn an MBA from the University and witness dramatic growth and change affecting every part of the institution.

Beam, who worked for five of WMU’s first seven presidents, began his career under then-President James Miller, missing only the administrations of Dwight Waldo and Paul Sangren. His retirement was slated for the day before WMU’s eighth president, Dr. John M. Dunn, was scheduled to take office.

In his role at the University, he oversaw such areas as the physical plant, purchasing, public safety, human resources and all of the University’s finance operations. He also served since 1985 as the treasurer for the WMU Board of Trustees.

He has been succeeded by Lowell Rinker who served under Beam as assistant, then associate vice president for business, beginning in 1992.
Chemist wins two research grants to study copper-based disease

A WMU chemist recently received two grants to fund research toward understanding the cellular acquisition of copper and how in-born defects of this process lead to a rare disease.

The National Science Foundation awarded Dr. David Huffman, assistant professor of chemistry, $595,000 to conduct research on the molecular details of copper transport. A portion of the grant will be used to promote science both locally and as far away as institutions in Kenya.

Huffman also received $30,000 from the Wilson Disease Association, the first grant ever awarded by the association.

The NSF’s five-year grant was made through the organization’s Faculty Early Career Development Program, known as the CAREER Program. CAREER grants recognize and support the early career work of teacher-scholars who are expected to become the academic leaders of the 21st century. They number among NSF’s most prestigious and competitive grants and are based on faculty proposals for creative career development plans that effectively integrate research and education.

Huffman’s CAREER project, “Characterizing the Mechanism of Copper Exchange in Copper Transfer Proteins,” looks at how copper-transporting proteins interact with each other to make sure that copper reaches its correct target in the cell.

“Copper is an essential nutrient for life, vital for the functions of cell growth and maintenance,” Huffman says. “Copper is required for cellular respiration, assists in iron transport and helps detoxify dangerous free radicals.”

Huffman is working with a team of six graduate students, three undergraduates and one local high school student to explain the chemical details of copper transport and to understand how defects in this process can lead to Wilson disease, a rare affliction occurring in only about 1 in 30,000 people. This genetic disease only occurs when an individual receives a defective gene from both parents and results in the buildup of copper in the brain and liver that can cause neurological symptoms and liver disease.

Huffman will use a portion of the grant to train local high school teachers to promote science careers to students, develop a career component within the University’s biochemistry curriculum and create partnerships with universities in Kenya to foster student training and faculty exchanges with WMU.

He has already initiated this educational component of his work by traveling this past October to the University of Nairobi and Egerton University in Kenya.

In addition to the CAREER award, Huffman’s Wilson Disease Association grant will help study the mutations of the Wilson protein that cause the genetic disease.

“We first need an understanding of why these mutations cause the disease. This could provide a basis for new treatments,” Huffman says.

State of Michigan honors Rozelle for tirelessly promoting organ donations

Michigan Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land honored a popular WMU professor this spring for his selfless work in promoting organ donation and for encouraging his students to help register hundreds of prospective donors.

Land presented David L. Rozelle, associate professor of accountancy, with a Shining Star award, which is bestowed on those who demonstrate exemplary donation efforts. Rozelle, a 37-year employee of WMU, also is a heart transplant recipient.

“David is a credit to his university, community and state,” Land said. “He teaches his students not only to be successful accountants, but caring citizens as well. With David’s guidance and encouragement, Western is a leading institution in promoting the cause of organ donation. The future is brighter for many people in need of transplants because of the example David sets and the commitment he displays.”

Following his heart transplant in 2001, Rozelle returned to work and began promoting donation. He encouraged the Beta Alpha Psi accounting fraternity to promote donation on campus and in the Kalamazoo area.

In 2005, the WMU chapter of Beta Alpha Psi recruited nearly 830 people to join the Organ Donor Registry during a four-week competition. During the past two years, the students signed up more than 1,600 registrants.

Rozelle also was honored in February with WMU’s 2007 Distinguished Service Award, in part because of his work in promoting organ donations. He plans to retire at the end of 2007.
Golden achievements

WMU marks 50 years as a university

Feb. 26, 2007, marked Western Michigan University's 50th anniversary as Michigan's fourth public university.

On the same date in 1957, then-Gov. G. Mennen Williams signed into law a bill making Western Michigan College the state's fourth public university. The move recognized the increasing complexity of the institution and the diversity of course offerings. Then-WMU President Paul V. Sangren was on hand at the governor's office in Lansing to witness the signing.

The bill that Williams signed into law was introduced to the Michigan Legislature by Sen. Carlton H. Morris, who had visited WMC in October 1956 for the dedication of the Gary Center. During the ceremony, Morris voiced his willingness to introduce such legislation. Sangren responded quickly to the offer and secured letters of support for the move from the presidents of Michigan's three existing universities—the University of Michigan and Michigan State and Wayne State universities. Morris' bill passed the Michigan Senate by unanimous vote and quickly won approval in the House as well.

Western's designation as a university came less than a year after Wayne State became a university and less then two years after Michigan State won the designation. The University of Michigan was established in 1817, before Michigan was a state and its status was written into Michigan's original 1837 constitution.

During the past 50 years, WMU has marked a number of milestones along the path to becoming the nationally recognized research university it is today. Here are just a few of the banner moments along the way.

1950s

1957—Gov. G. Mennen Williams signs a bill creating Western Michigan University, as then-President Paul Sangren looks on. At the time, WMU had 6,500 students and four schools that became WMU's first colleges as well as a young graduate education division.

1960s

1962—First International Congress of Medieval Studies held on campus, an event now regarded as one of the world's premier annual gatherings of medieval scholars.

1962—Lee Honors College established as a school, making WMU's program one of the oldest collegiate honors programs in the nation.

1964—First Board of Trustees named by then-Gov. George Romney after a new state constitution takes effect, providing WMU with an eight-member governing body to oversee the University and establish polices.

1968-69—First doctoral degrees awarded, as programs in science education, chemistry, sociology and educational leadership begin producing the first of more than 2,000 alumni who have since earned doctoral degrees.
1972—Michigan’s first College of Fine Arts created at the University, bringing together the areas of dance music and art, which were joined four years later by the Department of Theatre.

1976—College of Health and Human Services established, making WMU the first U.S. school to formally combine health and human service curricula into a college.

1976—WMU Foundation formed by a group of alumni and friends who see the need for an independent, tax-exempt corporation to promote and provide private financial support for the University.

1982—Basic computer literacy becomes a graduation requirement, making WMU the first school in the nation to require such skills of its graduates.

1989—The “Campaign for Excellence,” an ambitious capital campaign, is launched and eventually surpasses its $55 million goal, bringing in $62 million to support University programs.

1991—WMU first appears on U.S. News & World Report’s list of top national universities recognizing fewer than 150 American public universities judged to be national in stature, quality and scope. In 1999, WMU moves into top-100 status.

1997—University granted its own chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the oldest and most widely recognized academic honor society in the country, making WMU one of only 91 public institutions in the country so authorized.

1999—College of Aviation created just two years after a new aviation campus was opened in Battle Creek, Mich., bringing to seven the number of degree-granting colleges at WMU.

2000—The Carnegie Foundation classifies WMU as a Doctoral/Research-Extensive University, making it one of only 102 public universities in that top category.

2003—As campus celebrates centennial, College of Engineering and Applied Sciences moves to new complex on the Parkview Campus, which it shares with the Business Technology and Research Park.

2005—New Health and Human Services Building opens as centerpiece to the University’s Oakland Drive campus.
College of Arts and Sciences
Alum brings prize-winning film to campus

A screening of “Forgiving Dr. Mengele,” an award-winning documentary by WMU alumnus Bob Hercules, took place on campus in April.

Hercules, a graduate of WMU’s School of Communication and owner of the Chicago-based television production company Media Process Group, filmed the documentary along with Cheri Pugh, a film archivist at the WPA Film Library. The film won the Special Jury Prize at the 2006 Slamdance Film Festival and the Crystal Heart Award at the 2006 Heartland Film Festival.

The feature-length documentary tells the story of Auschwitz survivor Eva Mozes Kor, who with her twin sister Miriam was a victim of Nazi doctor Josef Mengele’s genetic experiments. Her determination to heal herself by forgiving the Nazis is chronicled in the film.

College of Aviation
New pacts boost job prospects for grads

An agreement signed in April with AirNet Systems Inc. became the College of Aviation’s fourth new bridging agreement designed to give aviation grads an edge in securing jobs in industry.

The AirNet agreement will secure job interviews for students who have 450 hours of flight time, a letter of recommendation from a WMU chief flight instructor, and good performance and training records. The college has inked bridging agreements in 2006-07 with ExpressJet, ASA and American Eagle.

Ohio-based Air Net provides air transport services for small package shippers and banking customers to more than 100 cities across the nation. The company has hired dozens of WMU graduates over the years.

College of Engineering and Applied Sciences
Bridge construction event attracts regional engineering professionals

More than 30 civil and construction engineers from around southwest Michigan converged on WMU’s engineering campus in March for the latest information on bridge innovations.

The “Bridge Design, Management, Assessment and Rehabilitation Workshop” was planned by college engineers along with American Public Works President Dennis Randolph, who happens to head nearby Calhoun County’s Road Commission. The event, the first of several bridge-related conferences being planned, attracted presenters from around the country, including two from the Federal Highway Administration.

The main objective was to provide engineers in the region with state-of-the art information about bridge work, with a special emphasis on rapid bridge construction for the first event in the series.

Haworth College of Business
Talented business student wins national scholarship—again

A WMU student learned this spring that she is one of 10 business students nationwide to win a scholarship from the world’s leading business software company.

Elizabeth Aven, a senior majoring in integrated supply management from Edwardsburg, Mich., has won a 2006-07 SAP Americas Scholarship. The award was presented by SAP Americas, a subsidiary of SAP AG, which was founded in 1972 as Systems Applications & Products. The scholarship recognizes outstanding undergraduates pursuing a degree in business, computer science, mathematics or engineering, and includes $10,000 for educational costs.

Aven’s latest honor came just months after she received another prestigious award in her discipline—the R. Gene Richter Scholarship for talented students in supply chain management. She is WMU’s second consecutive winner and one of six students in the nation so honored.
College of Education

Teacher Education Career Fair draws 140 school districts

Job opportunities and the nationwide demand for WMU-trained teachers were showcased in April when more than 140 school districts from around the nation attended the 19th annual Teacher Education Career Fair.

The event was designed to help potential employers recruit teachers for K-12 educational systems for the 2007-08 school year. This year, the number of districts on the hunt for new employees topped 140 and representatives came from across Michigan and some 20 other states.

College of Fine Arts

Theatre named for former chair

The Department of Theatre’s longtime chair is retiring from WMU with a theatre named in his honor to mark his contributions to the campus and community.

Formerly known as the Multiform Theatre, the innovative theatre space in the Gilmore Theatre Complex has been renamed the “D. Terry Williams Theatre.” The name for the performance space was unveiled during a May celebration of Williams’ 25-year career at WMU. For 23 of those years, he served as department chair and oversaw a dramatic enhancement of the University's reputation in national theatre circles.

Attending the event were colleagues, friends in the community and a number of former students. In addition to the theatre named in his honor, supporters also established the D. Terry Williams Endowment for Theatre Student Enrichment to continue his tradition of support for students.

Williams came to the university in 1982 to serve as department chair. In 2005, he stepped down from that position and returned to the faculty.

College of Health and Human Services

Nursing honor society officially chartered

The University's nursing honor society gained official chapter status in an international organization during a ceremony in March.

The WMU Bronson School of Nursing Lilian Wald Nursing Honor Society was chartered as the Upsilon Epsilon Chapter by the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International. Approval for the charter was last fall, just two years after the 2004 creation of the WMU nursing honors society.

Membership in the honors society is by invitation only and is extended to those undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty and professional nurses in the community who have demonstrated superior scholastic, leadership and nursing achievements and standards. The international nursing honors society has 446 chapters located at 512 institutions of higher education throughout the United States and in more than 90 countries.

Lee Honors College

Hearit named dean of college

Dr. Keith M. Hearit has been named to a two-year appointment as dean of the Lee Honors College, effective July 1.

Hearit, who has served as interim dean of the college since January, previously was associate dean of the college for a year. An associate professor of communication, he has been a WMU faculty member since 1996. Prior to coming to WMU, he taught at Northern Illinois University, Indiana University at Kokomo and Purdue University.

Hearit is an expert in crisis communication and issue management and has just completed a book on corporate response to allegations of wrongdoing. He earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Central Michigan University in 1986 and 1988, respectively, and completed his doctoral degree at Purdue in 1992.
Two weeks into her chemotherapy treatment for cancer, Dr. Susan Vlahas Ponchillia, a Western Michigan University professor of blindness and low vision studies, tugged on one of her blonde curls, and the hair fell right out.

Her husband, Dr. Paul Ponchilla, WMU associate professor of blindness and low vision studies, offered to shave her head to “just get rid of it all at once” and make her transition easier. Susan leaned over a paper grocery bag as Paul used an electric razor on her hair.

“And I remember afterwards, you said, ‘Don’t look in the mirror,’” Susan recounted to Paul. “So I looked in the mirror, and it was just such a horrible moment that I had to say something funny. So I called you a bad name. Then we both laughed.”

Susan’s cancer, Paul losing his sight in a 1974 hunting accident and three near-death experiences the couple had while traveling together in the Arctic were recorded in April as part of a national initiative to document everyday history and the unique stories of America.

The Ponchillas’ recording was one of about 125 interviews conducted in Kalamazoo by StoryCorps, a national oral history project featured on National Public Radio. Local people paired up for 45-minute slots to tell...
their stories. A few minutes of about 20 of the stories, like the Ponchillias’, were broadcast on the University’s public radio affiliate WMUK 102.1 FM; and a select few may be picked for National Public Radio in June or July.

Most of the stories were not new revelations, but the act of recording them for historical purposes and the format of the intimate interviews was significant.

“I knew the stories, but I never heard the emotion you had until that interview,” Paul said to Susan when she talked about almost drowning in a deep, fast arctic river and being concerned for Paul on the shore by himself.

StoryCorps recorded the interviews from a mobile studio parked in Kalamazoo’s downtown Bronson Park for more than three weeks.

To recruit participants from broad backgrounds, WMUK Development Director Gordon Bolar met beforehand with representatives from 30 local community organizations covering the arts, health and human services, and various cultural and socioeconomic groups and encouraged them to sign up their members for half of the interview slots. The other 60 slots were open on a first-come, first-served basis to the general public. The waiting list for these public interviews was in the triple digits, according to Bolar.

“You had really all walks of life represented,” he says. StoryCorps “empowered everyday people to get on the radio and tell their stories, not just the celebrities. There are wonderful stories out there with virtually every person you meet.”

WMU graduate student Anya Wiley interviewed her half-sister Johanna Barksdale of Birmingham, Mich. Barksdale’s story covered a range of emotions from her excitement over Wiley being born to her sadness over her father’s absence in her life growing up.

“I’m definitely an advocate for history being told by those who lived it. It gives people a glimpse into real relationships,” says Wiley, who is studying sociocultural studies and educational thought.

During another interview, Rachel Liepman, who has attended WMU for graduate work, listened as her father, Dr. Michael Liepman, told his story of being passed up as valedictorian of Kalamazoo’s Loy Norrix High School in 1964 despite his top grades because he is Jewish.

“You can tell how much it fueled his fire. It made him realize he would never want to judge people that way,” Rachel says.

“There are so many different stories that make up the fabric of our community,” added Dr. Liepman, who is a WMU adjunct professor in the College of Health and Human Services, clinical professor of psychiatry at the Michigan State University Kalamazoo Center for Medical Studies and medical director of the Jim Gilmore Jr. Community Healing Center.

Kalamazoo was picked as a StoryCorps site after WMUK applied last summer through NPR. The only other StoryCorps stop in Michigan was a year ago in Ann Arbor.

StoryCorps started in 2003 by Sound Portraits Productions, an independent production company based in New York City. The first soundproof “StoryBooth” opened in New York’s Grand Central Station. In 2005, the project hit the road for its first national tour with two custom-built “MobileBooth Airstream” trailers outfitted with recording studios.

The oral histories will be stored at the Library of Congress and will be accessible to future generations.

To hear local StoryCorps interviews featured on WMUK, visit the radio station’s Web site at www.wmuk.org and click on the link “Listen to StoryCorps Kalamazoo Interviews.” ■

Story by Deanne Molinari

Paul and Susan Ponchillia and Paul’s guide dog, Elle
Three honored with honorary degrees during December, April commencements

A renowned West Michigan legal figure, a scholar who helped build the University’s science research and graduate capabilities, and an alumnus who carved out an international reputation in community economic development were awarded honorary degrees during December and April commencement ceremonies.

In December, an honorary Doctor of Law degree was awarded to Judge Richard A. Enslen, senior judge for the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Michigan, and an Honorary Doctor of Science degree to Jacqueline Buck Mallinson, who retired from WMU in 1988 after a decades-long career in science education. In April James F. Hettinger, president and chief executive officer of Battle Creek Unlimited was awarded an honorary Doctor of Public Service degree.

Enslen was honored for “his great achievements as a judge and as a citizen of this community.” Nominated to the federal court in 1979 by President Jimmy Carter, Enslen announced his retirement in 2005, formally taking on senior-judge status. His 27 years on the bench included oversight of a host of controversial cases. Among the most notable were those dealing with Indian fishing rights, conditions in Michigan prisons, civil rights and Title IX gender equity in Michigan schools.

A native of Kalamazoo, Enslen has had a lifelong relationship with the University that began when he was an undergraduate.

Mallinson was honored for her “high level of professional achievement and her outstanding service to the University.”

Mallinson established a national reputation in her field before coming to WMU. With her late husband, Dr. George Mallinson, a longtime dean of WMU’s Graduate College, she worked tirelessly to build the University’s graduate programs and expand its science facilities. The couple is credited with helping to launch some 50 programs at WMU, including some of its most celebrated graduate offerings, such as blindness and low vision studies and physician assistant. She played a major role in developing the Rood Hall and Everett Tower science complex.

Marketing team tackles New Orleans tourism issues, places third nationwide

A team of marketing students from WMU placed third this spring in a national competition in New Orleans.

A team from the University’s chapter of the American Marketing Association was one of eight teams chosen earlier this year to present its plan to bring back tourism to New Orleans at the AMA Collegiate Case Competition. The competition brought together more than 1,000 of the nation’s top marketing students and their faculty advisors.

A team from the University of Pennsylvania placed first, while a team from the University of Nevada-Las Vegas came in second. WMU was third, and the remaining finalists were from: British Columbia Institute of Technology, Loyola University-New Orleans, Texas State University San Marcos, University of Nevada-Reno and University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

In all, 155 teams from Canada, Puerto Rico and the United States competed earlier in the competition’s first round. The top eight were selected in a blind review by 55 judges from industry marketing or advertising positions, with each case reviewed by four judges. The top eight presented their plans to representatives from the New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau and its ad agency.

WMU’s team was led by Lisa Siedlak of Lake Orion, Mich. Other team members were Brittany Miller of Livonia, Mich.; Shannon Meath of Midland, Mich.; William Raikes of Milan, Mich.; Dan Corbett of South Haven, Mich.; Matt Blouin of Milford, Mich.; and Nanami Miyachi of Tokyo. Their faculty advisor was Esther Page-Wood, WMU instructor of marketing.
2007

OCTOBER
2–4  Annie

NOVEMBER
2–3  CATS
6   American Indian Dance Theatre
    Hanay Geogogah, Artistic Director
9   Take 6
    Special Guest opening by the
    NAFA GospelFest Choir
10  NBC's Last Comic Standing Live Tour
24  B.B. KING
30  Clay Aiken Christmas
    performing with the KSO

DECEMBER
5–6  DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS
14  Odds Bodkin's StoryBlast!
    Performed at Shaw Theatre inside
    the Gilmore Theatre Complex
16  A Year with Frog and Toad

2008

JANUARY
13  A Columbia Artists Production
    ST. PETERSBURG
    BALLET THEATRE
    Swan Lake
15–20  Menopause the Musical®
    Performed at Shaw Theatre inside
    the Gilmore Theatre Complex
22–24  EVITA
27  JUNGLE JACK HANNA

FEBRUARY
1  BLAST!
9   The Best of Gold Company: The 30th Anniversary Show
    Dr. Stephen Zegree, Director
22  The Peking Acrobats®
23  Canadian Brass
26–29  MAMMA MIA!

MARCH
1–2  MAMMA MIA!
29  RING OF FIRE—The Music of Johnny Cash

APRIL
8–10  MOVIN' OUT
19  Cherryholmes
20  Miller Auditorium presents
    Five by Design in Radio Days
    a Five by Design Production

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Considering returning to school for a graduate degree? Interested in taking some courses to help you in your career? Or maybe you’re looking for educational opportunities to assist in a career change? WMU branch campuses have programs and courses to help you take that next step.

Check out our fall 2007 course offerings at: www.eup.wmich.edu/FallEnrollment

WMU branch campuses are conveniently located in eight locations around Michigan, and offer a variety of graduate and undergraduate programs in the areas of management, education, engineering and wellness. Our academic program offerings and attention to customer service contribute to a quality educational experience.

Branch Campus Locations:
Battle Creek  Muskegon
Grand Rapids  South Haven
Holland  Southwest
Lansing  Traverse City

The Benefits of Western Michigan University... Wherever You Are.
After four years of intensive collaboration, WMU's Dr. Annegret Paul and 17 other mathematicians and computer scientists from around the world successfully mapped a 120-year-old mathematical puzzle and attracted the attention of the international media in the process.

The team was convened by the American Institute of Mathematics in Palo Alto, Calif., to map a theoretical object known as "Lie group E8." The Atlas of Lie Groups Project is funded by the National Science Foundation.

Lie (pronounced Lee) groups were invented by the 19th-century Norwegian mathematician Sophus Lie to express the symmetry of three-dimensional objects such as spheres, cones and cylinders. E8 is the most sophisticated Lie group with 248 dimensions, and it was long considered impossible to solve.

E8 is so complicated that its handwritten solution would cover a grid that would measure more than seven miles on each side—so large that it could cover a piece of paper the size of Manhattan.

To understand using E8 and all its possibilities requires calculation of 200 billion numbers. The problem’s proof involves about 60 times as much data as the Human Genome Project, which contains all the genetic information of a cell.

The final successful result of the E8 calculation was unveiled in March at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, during a news conference in Boston that Paul attended. Partners included MIT, Cornell University, University of Michigan, University of Utah and University of Maryland.

Mapping E8 is a "stepping stone," according to Paul, who came to WMU in 1999. The mapping of E8 could lead to discoveries in mathematics, physics and other fields and new technology.

"The breakthrough is being able to translate these mathematical questions into something that a computer can do," Paul says. “There is still a lot more we need to do.”

Three young faculty members at WMU are the first to earn Emerging Faculty Scholar Awards in a new program designed to honor academia’s rising stars.

Dr. Mitch Kachun, associate professor of history; Dr. Carla M. Koretsky, associate professor of geosciences and environmental studies; and Dr. Kirk T. Korista, associate professor of physics; received their awards during WMU's Academic Convocation ceremonies in February.

The new program was launched to acknowledge 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 have achieved national recognition and demonstrated outstanding promise to achieve renown in their continuing work.

Kachun, a WMU faculty member since 2001, has focused his research and scholarly publications on American history, and he is recognized as a leading scholar on the topic of African American historical memory. His recently published books include “Festivals of Freedom: Memory and Meaning in African American Emancipation Celebrations,” published in 2003, and last year's “The Curse of Caste; or the Slave Bride: A Rediscovered African American Novel,” which has generated national attention for changing the timeline of the development of African-American literature.

Koretsky, who joined the WMU faculty in 2000, is a scientist who specializes in the biogeochemistry of aquatic environments, mineral surface geochemistry and the thermodynamic properties of aqueous metal-organic complexes. She is the advisor for the interdisciplinary geochemistry major she established at the University, and her current research, supported by the National Science Foundation, is focused on addressing fundamental questions on the biogeochemistry of coastal and inland wetlands, which are increasingly impacted by human activities.

Korista has been a WMU faculty member since 1997. His field of research is observational astronomy, and his focus is on the acquisition, measurement, analysis and interpretation of the spectra of cosmic gas clouds that hold the keys to the chemical evolution of the universe and the history of star and galaxy formation. Widely published and the recipient of major research grants from the NSF, NASA and the Hubble Telescope Mission, Korista routinely works in collaboration with scientists around the globe, and his work has been hailed by the international media, including Discover magazine.
Freshman wins rare chance to work at Cannes International Film Festival

Jacob Durrett of Battle Creek, Mich., closed out his freshman year in WMU’s School of Communication with a May trip to southern France and a stint working as an insider at the famed Cannes International Film Festival.

Durrett, who began making films in high school and launched the Battle Creek Film Festival in 2006, was selected to be a festival participant earlier this year through the highly competitive Student Program of the American Film Pavilion.

The American Pavilion has been the focus of the U.S. film industry’s presence at the Cannes International Film Festival since 1989. It serves as a communications and hospitality center for journalists, publicists, celebrities, filmmakers and motion picture executives working at the festival.

For the past 19 years, the American Pavilion has offered film students the chance to participate in its student program, which allows students to stay in Cannes for the duration of the festival, participating in educational workshops, seminars, pitch sessions, roundtable discussions and screenings. Approximately 140 students are accepted each year. Because the festival is not open to the public, this work-study program is highly competitive.

“Jake showed great passion for film and video from the first week I met him fall semester,” says Dr. Jennifer Machiorlatti, associate professor of film, video and media studies at WMU. “He edited the final video of our alumni keynote speaker Ed Gordon, and he demonstrates such potential. This was really a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for him. There were students from all the major film schools, many of them at the Master of Fine Arts level. I am proud that he represented Western Michigan University.”

Kanley Chapel, the University’s interfaith facility, was built in 1951 with the help of the William Kanley Estate. Kanley had been a WMU student and his mother, Anna Carstens Kanley, had earlier contributed to the purchase in his memory of part of the land the current main campus occupies.

Designed by architect Ralph C. Calder, the 11,393-square-foot-building is the site annually for a wide array of events ranging from baptisms and weddings to memorial services. At times of national crisis, like the evening of Sept. 11, 2001, it has been a gathering spot for students, faculty, staff and friends of the University.

A major feature of the chapel is a set of stained glass windows, with 73 individual panes. The first windows were designed by students under the tutelage of art instructor Hazel Paden and executed under the direction of art instructor Lydia Siedschlag. Those original windows and a group of windows added to the chapel at a later date, represent the only known student-designed stained glass windows in any U.S. campus chapel.
In that spirit, Steve Rhodes and his wife Ann have pledged a long-term gift

With more than 30 years invested in WMU and the School of Communication, most recently as its director since 1999, no one knows the school’s history of excellence, potential for the future or financial challenges better than Professor Steve Rhodes. Since stepping in as director, Steve has worked with faculty, students, alumni and emeriti to strategically position the School of Communication for growth in its academic reputation and to be recognized as a WMU center of excellence. From his perspective, no one knows better the financial resources it takes to be a center of excellence.

And no one appreciates more the commitment of others. “I know what it is like to try and promote the school and the good work being done by our students and faculty without funding. And I know what it is like for students and faculty to do without funding for crucial elements of their programs.” In that spirit, Steve and his wife Ann have pledged a long-term gift of $100,000 to the School of Communication. “We can think of no better way to thank those who have given so generously this year than to acknowledge their gifts by building on their investments.” The Rhodes’ gift will be given in partnership with a gift from Randy Doran, ’83, to establish the Doran/Rhodes Director’s Endowment to promote, enhance and improve the School of Communication.

With the launching of the “Second Century Capital Campaign,” Steve and Ann invite others to join them in making a financial commitment to the school. When combined with other gifts, no gift is too small. There are many ways to give and contribute. For information about making a gift to the School of Communication, contact Nick McLaren, director of development for the College of Arts and Sciences at: nick.mclaren@wmich.edu. To make gifts to other areas of the University, please return the attached reply form.
For the love of the game

Betsy Kuhle, WMU's longest-tenured coach and six-time MAC Coach of the Year, reflects on 25 remarkable years as a Bronco—on and off the court.

WMU tennis coach Betsy Kuhle has just led her women's tennis team to the 2007 Mid-American Conference Championship—her 10th MAC championship in 25 years at WMU—but it's hardly a time to sit back and relax. She has things to do.

Just in from her fourth NCAA Tournament in nine years and on campus for a few short days before heading to Atlanta for recruiting, Kuhle sits back comfortably in her chair. This year's MAC conference brackets serve as an appropriate backdrop, with “Western Michigan” spreading out to cover more space than any of the other names as it spills across the board in perfect tiers.

After an undefeated conference championship and trip to the NCAA tourney, the women's tennis coach is as energetic as ever, her face aglow as she recounts the accomplishments of this season, both amazing and unexpected.

“We had no idea we could do it again,” she says. “Last year we were good. We knew we were good and knew we should win. We really thought we had lost too much since then.”

After the 2006 season, the team gave up three of its strongest players: the MAC Tournament MVP, the MAC Player of the Year and an all-MAC player. The three were replaced this year with two new players and an addition to the singles lineup. Despite challenges, the women extended their winning streak and claimed the championship title in both regular season and MAC Tournament play.

Kuhle smiles. “We all looked forward to that challenge and enjoyed it,” she says.

The coach’s love for a challenge runs almost as deep as her love for the game. From mastering new sports—this year, it’s golf—to traveling the world, she’s always seeking out a challenge and looking to the next adventure.
This summer finds her on the Kal-Haven Trail, training intensively for an eight-day bike and barge tour from Amsterdam, Netherlands, to Bruges, Belgium.

“I can’t stand being indoors when there’s light left in the day,” she says.

Kuhle’s energy and competitive enthusiasm has earned her the title of WMU’s longest-tenured coach in any sport. A 2006 WMU Athletic Hall of Fame inductee, she’s been named MAC Coach of the Year six times. Although she appreciates the recognition, her ambition isn’t to be the best or most steadfast coach—it’s to build the best players.

“My goal is to get every kid a championship during their four years here,” Kuhle says. “That’s what I really want and what I work toward.”

In her 25 years at WMU, Kuhle has only seen one class graduate without experiencing firsthand what it’s like to win a championship. Every day she works to improve technique, perfect forehands and backhands, and put power behind each serve. To her, this is just a portion of her job as head coach. She also strives to develop her players’ character, to build integrity and to prepare them for the world beyond WMU—life after tennis.

“I want them to be competitors,” Kuhle says. “I have learned that the will to compete comes back to you when you need it—when you find out that you have breast cancer; when your boss tells you you’re fired. It comes back when bad things happen and you learn how to stand up on your own. A person who can’t fight won’t make it.”

With more than 400 wins and a quarter century of record-setting coaching behind her, Kuhle hasn’t the faintest idea what’s in store for her in the next 25 years, the next tennis season or even the next few days. She doesn’t worry about it, either.

“I don’t know if it’s coming,” Kuhle says. “I believe that you have to do the things you like to do and do them now. Don’t wait, because you never know what the next day will bring.”

So, for now, Kuhle looks forward to her next adventure. She’s off to Atlanta, where she’ll be on the lookout for that “diamond in the rough,” the one player who has what it takes to become WMU’s next tennis sensation. In all honesty, though, right now she’s more focused on the fact that she’ll be passing a few long summer days doing three of her most favorite things: watching tennis, catching up with old friends and feeling the warmth of the sun on her face.

Story by Tonya Rae Hernandez
Don’t hesitate to contact us when you have news to share in our classnotes or obituaries sections. For classnotes, make sure to include your name (first, middle, last, maiden), address, degree(s), year(s) graduated and phone number or e-mail address. We will publish your photo as space permits.

Write: Classnotes/Obituaries
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Fax: (269) 387-8770
E-mail: dev-alumnnote@wmich.edu

Classnotes

Alumni are listed under their preferred class years. Names preceded by a circle (•) denote membership in the WMU Alumni Association.

—1949 to 1979—

James R. Bruce, BS ’49, MA ’59, was inducted into the Michigan Recreation and Park Association’s Hall of Fame for his 40 years of service in the Flint (MI) Recreation and Park Board System.

• Virgil W. Westdale, BA ’49, BS ’62, has received his commercial pilot’s license after a 63-year delay by the Civil Aeronautics Administration because of his Japanese ancestry.

• Herbert W. Kent, BA ’52, received the Meritorious Service Medal from the WMU ROTC for his 42 years of service in the military. He retired from WMU as the associate director of student financial aid.

L. Max Lee, BS ’53, was inducted into the Leslie (MI) High School Athletic Hall of Fame, and Hesperia Community Schools named their football stadium “Max Lee Field,” in honor of his tenure as a teacher, coach and principal.

Virginia M. Handy, BA ’56, was recognized in Who’s Who in America, 2007. She is the founder of the Log Cabin Society of Michigan and the editor of its newsletter.

• Robert L. Jennings, MA ’60, was awarded the Friend of the Arts honors for 2006 by the Walworth County Arts Council in Whitewater, WI, for his contribution to the musical community. He is a retired music professor.

Jack A. Sellheimer, BS ’60, is a professor of biology at Colorado State University-Pueblo.

Gene Fogel, BA ’63, was inducted into the Michigan Journalism Hall of Fame. He is a radio news reporter at WJR-AM in Detroit.

• David S. Howes, BS ’63, has been appointed chair of the board of trustees at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario. He is president and chief executive officer of Lincoln Fabrics and Textiles.

• Gary E. Rummel, BBA ’63, was recognized as an honorary member of the Frankennuth (MI) Chamber of Commerce at its annual dinner.

• Gyl E. (Johnson) Hordorp, BS ’64, was inducted into the National Baton Twirling Hall of Fame at an honor ceremony at the University of Notre Dame.

Beverly A. MacNellis, BS ’64, is the director of the Greater Estero (FL) Cultural Arts Council and chair of the Arts in Estero 2007 celebration.

• Robert A. Kotz, BS ’65, is the executive director of Accountants Advance Marketing Network Associates, based in Chicago.

Douglas W. Lombard, BS ’65, is the author of a new book titled “Raising Rebels: Roberto and Me,” published by Publish America. He is a retired educator.

Hericcio E. Atencio-Bello, BBA ’66, MA ’70, is the founder and president of Fundación Venezuela Positiva, an international law practice in Caracas, Venezuela.

Kenneth F.D. Klump, BA ’66, MA ’76, was inducted into the Plowright (MI) High School Athletic Hall of Fame. He is a retired coach and athletic director.

Richard J. Busch, BBA ’67, has retired after 30 years in local government in Bay City as assistant city manager and in Midland County as personnel director.

Bruce R. Spangler, BM ’67, was recently a featured realtor on the television show “Flip That House,” on The Learning Channel. He is a realtor at 50 STATES Realty in Scottsdale, AZ.

• George P. Stamas, BS ’67, is retiring after 40 years in education. He is the superintendent of Monticell Area Intermediate School District in Stanton, MI.

Lynn M. Young, BS ’67, is a member of the board of trustees for Dalton Township in Muskegon, MI.

Peter H. Alderman, BS ’68, is the co-author of a new children’s book titled “Soccer Counts,” published by Charlesbridge Publishing. He is a retired teacher.

John S. Homer, BA ’68, was named chair of the Business Administration Department at Olivet (MI) College. He is a professor of economics.

Thomas L. Luptowski, MA ’68, has retired after 35 years of teaching social science and mathematics at Northwood University in Bay City, MI.

Robert J. van der Wege, BS ’68, is a retired chair and associate professor of art from Sauk Valley Community College, in Illinois. He now lives in South Africa, where he is pioneering on behalf of the Bahá’í Faith.

Suhashni Datta-Sandhu, BA ’69, MA ’72, a professor of political science, is the recipient of WMU’s Distinguished Teaching Award.

• Gregory V. Bauer, BA ’70, is the author of a book titled “The Breathing Blanket/How Attitude and Listening Prevail.” He is a motivational speaker and listening consultant.

• Martha Jan Orloff, BA ’70, is the author of a new book titled “Soccer Counts,” published by Charlesbridge Publishing. He is a retired teacher.

WMU’s Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation Honor Academy, which recognizes the outstanding professional contributions, contributions and service of distinguished graduates.

Barbara Marineau, BA ’72, recently toured in the musical “Pippin.” She played the part of Berthe.

• Samuel W. Morrison, BS ’72, is the pastor of St. James Episcopal Church in Pentwater, MI.

Peter N. O’Connell, BBA ’72, currently serves on the Michigan Court of Appeals 4th District in Lansing, MI.

• Keith L. Rengert, BS ’72, is a county commissioner in Macomb County, MI.

John T. Sperla Jr., BA ’72, was recently named to the management committee at the law firm of Mika Meyers Beckett & Jones PLC in Grand Rapids, MI. He practices in the area of personal injury, general commercial, construction and criminal law litigation.

Peter J. Alfonso, MA ’73, is the vice provost for research at the University of Rhode Island in Kingston.

Thomas E. Buchanan, BA ’73, is the director of development and marketing at Tohono Chul Park in Tucson, AZ.

Brian M. Connolly, BBA ’73, is the chief executive officer at Oakwood Healthcare Inc. in Dearborn, MI.

Frederick M. Fortner, BBA ’73, has retired from his second-generation family business, The Home Bakery, in Davison, MI.

Daniel J. McShannock, BS ’73, is retiring after 15 years as the athletic director at Dow High School in Midland, MI. He has been a teacher and coach for 35 years.

Gary Waters, BBA ’73, has been elected to the board of directors of the Manterca, CA, Chamber of Commerce. He is principal of GaryWaters – Management Consulting.

• Daniel Kubiske, BA ’74, is chair of the International Journalism Committee of the Society of Professional Journalists. He is a freelance journalist and adjunct professor of Journalism at George Mason University in Fairfax, VA.

• Dale I. Tanis, BS ’74, MBA ’94, is serving as past president of the WMU Alumni Association Board of Directors. He is chief financial officer and senior vice president of finance at Irwin Seating Co. in Grand Rapids, MI.
Frank J. Verhoven, BBA ’74, is the business manager at Reeths-Puffer Schools in Muskegon, MI.

Edward M. Freeland, BA ’75, attorney and shareholder of Garan Lucow Miller PC, has been re-elected for a second three-year term to the firm’s executive committee. He practices in its Troy, MI, office.

Andrew Lopez, BFA ’75, is an art instructor at Jackson (MI) Community College.

Robert I. Moss Jr., BS ’75, MA ’80, was inducted into WMU’s Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation Honor Academy, which recognizes the outstanding professional accomplishments, contributions and service of distinguished graduates.

Carl E. Ruth, BS ’75, was elected to the Saginaw (MI) County Board of Commissioners.

Mary Jo Warner, BS ’75, MA ’77, is senior associate director of athletics at George Washington University in Washington, DC.

• Sylvia Pahl, BS ’76, MPA ’85, is a senior buyer for the city of Kalamazoo and was recently chosen the City of Kalamazoo Star Employee.

James P. Stanley, BM ’76, is a band teacher at Phoebus High School in Hampton, VA.

Nancy Vade-McCormick, BA ’76, a Delta College speech professor, received the 2006 Michigan Campus Compact Faculty Community Service Learning Award. The Michigan Campus Compact is a consortium of colleges committed to community service.

H.E. Nassar bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, BS ’75, is Qatar’s ambassador to the United States.

Rochelle (Lewis) Feniell, BA ’77, is teaching English in Taiwan for the Republic of China’s Ministry of Education.

Frank M. Gambino, BS ’77, EdD ’93, director of the food marketing program at WMU, has been re-elected to the board of directors of Spartan Stores in Grand Rapids, MI. He also was appointed to the advisory committee of the board of directors of Welsford Food Corp. in Elizabeth, NJ.

Marcia Karwas, BS ’77, MA ’88, was inducted into WMU’s Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation Honor Academy, which recognizes the outstanding professional accomplishments, contributions and service of distinguished graduates.

Mary Medrano, BA ’77, was accepted to exhibit her artwork at Florence Biennale in Italy in December 2007.

Yvonne M. Vissing, BA ’77, MA ’78, PhD ’81, is the author of a new book titled “How to Keep Your Child Successful, published by University Press of England. She is a professor of sociology at Salem (MA) State College, where she is coordinator of its Center for Child Studies.

Robert C. Bobb, BS ’78, is the president of the Washington, DC, Board of Education.

Michel Carmean, BA ’78, is the principal of New Lothrop (MI) High School.

Daniel R. May, BS ’78, is the hockey coach at Mattawan (MI) High School.

John B. Reggans, BBA ’78, is celebrating his 10th anniversary as president of Everett (WA) Chevrole. He is a member of the General Motors Minority Dealers Association.

Tim Todd, BS ’78, MA ’86, a marketing teacher at Montague (MI) High School, is the recipient of the Michigan Marketing Educators Association’s Dr. Louis R. Graziano Outstanding Marketing Educator Award.

• Michael R. Williams, BBA ’78, has retired from the U.S. Department of Treasury as a special agent and was awarded the Gallatin Award for his service to the U.S. government.

Frances deRoos Baron, BSE ’79, is the pastor of Beechwood Reformed Church in Holland, MI.

Kevin M. Burke, BA ’79, is the director of university communications at Ball State University in Muncie, IN.

Randall R. Button, BA ’79, a counselor at Marcelus (MI) Middle School, was named School Social Worker of the Year for southwest Michigan.

Charles H. Ervin, BS ’79, is the owner of Ervin’s Real Estate in Ypsilanti, MI.

Steven F. Milbeck, BBA ’79, is managing director and senior trust officer of the Paribank—Michigan, a unit of PrivateBancoCorp Inc., in its Bloomfield Hills, MI, office.

Fredrick J. Smith, BS ’79, received the Michigan Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association’s prestigious George Lovich State Award of Merit. He is the athletic director at Comstock (MI) High School.

—1980 to 1990—

Brian B. Barbour, BBA ’80, has been promoted to the rank of major, and he serves as executive officer in the Civil Air Patrol of the U.S. Air Force Auxiliary. He also is a team developer at Fidelity National Information Services in Chicago.

Ruth (Klevinsky) Biddy, BS ’80, was inducted into the Sigma Phi Omega Association for Gerontology in Higher Education. She is the director of the occupational therapy assistant program at Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield, IL.

Keith Parkinson, BS ’80, is a propulsion engineer at Delta Airlines in Atlanta.

• Nickolas A. Vitale, BBA ’80, has been elected to a three-year term on the American Diabetes Association’s national board of directors. He is the senior vice president of financial operations at Beaumont Hospital in Troy, MI.


Kevin J. Jones, BA ’82, is assistant dean of academic affairs and external relations at Ivy Tech Community College of Central Indiana.

• Kathleen A. Kuh, BS ’82, is the claims center manager of LandAmerica Financial Group Inc., which operates several title insurance and underwriting groups that serve title, closing and escrow services for residential and commercial transactions in Livonia, MI.

Donald K. Nielsen, MA ’83, MA ’83, is the employee assistance program coordinator at Hillsdale (MI) Community Health Center.

John C. Ryllicki, BA ’83, MBA ’91, has been named poet-in-residence for 2007 at Olivet (MI) College for its Intensive Learning Term. He is the author of three books of poetry, including his latest, “We Bed Down Into Water,” from Northwestern University Press, which will be released in the fall of 2007.

Christopher P. Baker, BS ’85, has joined the Grand Rapids, MI, law firm of Varum, Riddinger, Schmidt & Howlett LLP in its real estate practice group. His practice focuses on alcohol and beverage control, banking, real estate and business law.

• Jeffrey M. Taft, BBA ’85, was elected president of the Association for Operations Management’s southwest Michigan chapter. He is a senior programmer analyst at American Seating in Grand Rapids, MI.
—1991 to 1999—

Steven A. East, BS ’90, president of CMS Group in Galesburg, MI, has been inducted into WMU’s College of Engineering and Applied Sciences’ Alumni Excellence Academy.

Greg A. Luftdike, MBA ’90, a certified public accountant, has joined the firm of Wilson, Toeller and Associates, with offices in Sedalia and Marshall, MO.

John B. Tacia, BA ’90, has been promoted to agency services manager for Michigan at Stewart Title Guaranty Co. in its Detroit office.

Ted R. Densmore, BS ’91, was selected as Educator of the Year by the Jackson Area Manufacturers Association. He is the manufacturing technology teacher at Western Middle School in Parma, MI.

Ellen S. Schnackel, BS ’92, was inducted into WMU’s Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation Honor Academy, which recognizes the outstanding professional accomplishments, contributions and service of distinguished graduates.

James R. Soules, BS ’92, received first place in the International Association of Emergency Managers 2006 Media Awards Contest for his video, “Community Safety in Allen County, The Community Warning System,” produced for the Allen County (OH) Emergency Management Agency.

David Day, BS ’93, a human resources business partner with the Kellogg Co. in Battle Creek, MI, has been named WMU’s 2005-06 Recruiter of the Year by Career and Student Employment Services for demonstrating best practice recruiting strategies.

Amey Denyer-Grey, BA ’93, is a catering sales representative for the University of Michigan State University.

Jeremy L. Frank, BA ’93, has been promoted to assistant controller at Frankenmuth (MI) Mutual Insurance Co.

Chris N. Loiselle, BBA ’93, MBA ’94, has been appointed to the board of directors of Commercial Bank in Greenville, MI. He is chief financial officer and chief operating officer of the Stafford Communications Group.

William J. McCarthy Jr., BS ’93, has joined Willis Group Holdings Ltd., a global insurance broker and reinsurer, as an underwriting manager in its Seattle office.

Dwana Thompson, BS ’93, is the affirmative action and risk management director for the city of Norton Shores, MI.

VanDyke ’95

Katherine A. Lewis-Barnwell, MA ’95, is the owner of Creative Child Care in Greenville, MI.

Nikki L. Rothwell, BS ’93, has joined Willis Group Holdings Ltd., a global insurance broker and reinsurer, as an underwriting manager in its Seattle office.

Eric D. Tario, BS ’95, is a systems analyst for New World Systems Inc. in Troy, MI.

Amy L. (Birkhold) VanDyke, BS ’95, is an associate at the law firm of Mika Meyers Beckitt & Jones PLC in Grand Rapids, MI. She practices business law and estate planning.

Margaret M. Bach, MSW ’96, is chief executive officer of the Board of Child and Family Services in Saginaw, MI.

Becky Soo-Kyung Jeon, BBA ’96, is a member of the Asian American Japanes American Business Association in Sacramento, CA.

Tina A. Kerr, MA ’96, is the superintendent of Bangor (MI) Township Schools.

Antoinette M. Jelinek, MBA ’97, is the chief information officer for Hennepin County in Minneapolis.

Kenneth R. McPhail, BBA ’97, is the owner of Hideout Brewing Co. in Grand Rapids, MI.
It really is rocket science, says business alumnus of his new role

As the head of the Space Department at Johns Hopkins University's Applied Physics Lab Space Department, Robert Strain's focus is on helping NASA explore the solar system.

Robert Strain, a 1980 graduate of WMU's business administration program, was named the Space Department's managing executive in 2006. He now leads the Laurel, Md., laboratory's second-largest department, with nearly 600 specialists focused on two business areas—civilian and national security space. The lab, known as APL, has designed and built more than 60 spacecraft and 200 spacecraft instruments, and the Space Department routinely meets critical national challenges.

"From the Sun to Pluto" is how he likes to describe the ever-expanding scope of the Space Department's efforts that support NASA and the nation in the exploration of the solar system.

"It's rewarding that the work we do here at the lab has a benefit to our nation's exploration initiative and our national security," Strain says.

Heavily involved on the business side of the aerospace industry since graduating from WMU, Strain achieved his latest career milestone through a different path than most of his colleagues, who have engineering or science backgrounds. He has held executive positions at Orbital Sciences, where he led its Satellite and Electronic Sensors divisions, and at Fairchild Space and Defense Co. as chief financial officer and in other operational roles. He moved to APL in 2004.

"Rob has been a key part of the ongoing transformation of the APL Space Department," says APL Director Richard T. Roca. "His leadership will be critical during the coming years as we continue our transformation to meet future space challenges."

Strain now manages the department that in January 2006 launched the first mission to Pluto and the Kuiper Belt. The New Horizons mission is designed to help understand the edge of our solar system by making the first reconnaissance of Pluto, and venturing deeper into the distant, mysterious Kuiper Belt—a relic of solar system formation. New Horizons will arrive at Pluto in 2015.

APL launched two nearly identical space-based observatories in October 2006 to provide the very first, 3-D "stereo" images of the sun to study the nature of coronal mass ejections as part of NASA's STEREO (Solar Terrestrial Relations Observatory) mission. The powerful solar eruptions are a source of magnetic disruptions on Earth and a component of space weather, which can greatly affect satellite operations, communications, power systems and the lives of astronauts in space.

And APL also supports NASA's initiative to study the feasibility of sustaining life on the moon and beyond.

"It's different from the 1960s when we just wanted to land there. Now we are looking for sustainable raw materials," Strain says. "Exploration is part of human nature. That's what humans do. We explore. We do it to learn and protect our species."

Strain attended WMU on a golf scholarship and was a member of the University's men's golf team. A scratch golfer, the Flushing, Mich., native says he still enjoys the game. He is married to Karen Marshall, a 1978 WMU graduate in accounting. The couple have three grown children.

Story by Deanne Molinari
• Francena Purchase-Owens, BS '97, BA '04, has written two published articles, “Reform Schools not Welfare,” and “Third-Shift Schools.” She is a board member at Touchstone Innovare, a mental health agency in Grand Rapids, MI, and secretary-elect for two community organizations.

Stephen Snuffer, BS ’97, is the owner of Snapp Fitness in Spring Lake, MI.

• Maria E. Suszynski, BS ’97, is the executive director of Wellspring Theater in Kalamazoo.

Jonathan T. Williams, MPA ‘97, is an instructor of political science at Kellogg Community College in Battle Creek, MI.

Douglas M. Bursch, BA ’96, is the executive director of finance and personnel for the Fenton (MI) School District.

• Chester B. Wing, BS ’96, MPA ’00, is the assistant village administrator for the village of Cary, IL.

Dominic M. Yoder, BA ’98, is the women’s volleyball coach at Northern Michigan University in Marquette, MI.

John B. Eiler Jr., BSE ’99, is the manager of Coater Concepts Inc. in Albion, MI.

Demian Flores, BS ’99, is a process engineer for Boeing in the state of Washington.

Scott Palczewski, EdD ’99, is the assistant superintendent for human resources at Kentwood (MI) Public Schools.


Trillisa M. Perrine, BS ’99, is a research fellow and instructor at the University of Michigan.

Mark J. Benton, BS ’99, is a physical education instructor at North Farmington (MI) High School. He received the 2005 Division II Boys’ Tennis Coach of the Year Award.

Erica J. Stoddard, BA ’99, is a senior account executive for Ariboll, a public relations firm headquartered in Southfield, MI.

Richard J.W. Tirk, MM ’99, is an associate professor of music at Bethel College in North Newton, KS.

Jeffrey A. Vallier, MM ’99, is the director of coral music at Jefferson High School in Lafayette, IN.

• Aaron P. Brace, BS ’03, an information management functional manager in the U.S. Air Force, was the 136th Communications Flight Airman of the Year for 2006. He is stationed at Naval Air Station Fort Worth Joint Reserve Base in Texas.

• Ronald D. Doan III, BS ’03, is a project administrator for the Kellogg Field Senior Squadron of the Battle Creek-based Civil Air Patrol.

Aaron S. Beals, BBA ’04, is vice president of the West Bloomfield (MI) chapter of the Local Business Network. He is representing 866-Ring-Ring LLC, a firm that specializes in the use of vanity toll free numbers for advertising and branding.

Amanda J. Brackel, BFA ’04, is the art director at Latcha & Associates, an advertising agency in Farmington Hills, MI.

Beals ’04

• Derin M. Gemmel, BBA ’04, is senior manager of the mortgage and closing division of K. Honvianian First Homes LLC in Fort Myers, FL.

• Abby K. Griffin, BS ’04, is the director of marketing for the Association for Psychological Science in Washington, DC.

Kristin Hemlock, BS ’04, is a second grade teacher at Imagine Schools, a charter school in Mesa, AZ.

Michael T. Tizcor, BM ’04, is assistant director of athletic bands at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.

Robert W. Kratz, BM ’04, is a music instructor at the Community Music School, a program of the Music Center of South Central Michigan. He is a principal percussionist for the Battle Creek (MI) Symphony.

Nathan Leale, BM ’04, is the middle and high school band director at Chesaning (MI) Union Schools.

Malanie M. Remyne, BA ’04, is a math and chemistry teacher at Portage (MI) Central High School and the girl’s tennis coach.

Timothy R. Burns, BA ’05, is a police officer for Spring Lake/Ferrysburg (MI) Police Department.

Patrick R. Carl, BBA ’05, is an operations technician at Greenleaf Trust in Kalamazoo.

Bryan J. DeVries, BS ’05, was promoted to the rank of second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force.

Kristin Dorr, BS ’05, is a special education teacher at Central Elementary School in Owosso, MI.

Keri (Anderson) Dzubian, BS ’05, is a special education teacher at Chapel Hi-Carrboro City Schools, NC.

• Tammy Lafirnerre, BS ’05, is a kindergarten teacher at West Elementary School in Cheboygan, MI.

Michael W. Preston, BS ’05, is a test engineer at Parker Hannifin in Kalamazoo.

Scott E. Robinson II, BBA ’05, is the Webmaster for the Chicago Bears, in Lake Forest, IL.

Stephanie L. Schweummtt, BS ’05, is a kindergarten teacher at Gorrie Elementary School in Tampa, FL.

Kathryn L. Srebinski, BA ’05, is a communications specialist at World’s Finest Chocolate in Chicago.

Deborah S. Weid, MPA ’05, is the economic development projects manager for the Jackson (MI) Community Development Department.

Christopher J. Salmmon, BFA ’03, is a railroad engineer at Greenleaf Village in Dearpark, MI. He repairs and operates antique trains.

Theresa C. Whiting, BS ’03, is a flight instructor at Brooks Airport in Marshall, MI. She is a second lieutenant and flight instructor for the Kellogg Field Senior Squadron of the Battle Creek-based Civil Air Patrol.

Tami L. Wolverton, BA ’00, is an administrative assistant in Baker College’s administrative offices in Cadillac, MI.

Michael S. Snewkowski, BSE ’01, is a project manager for Rockford Construction and is currently working on the J.W. Marriott Hotel in Grand Rapids, MI.

Shawn S. Hopper, BBA ’01, has joined the Miller Canfield law firm as an associate in the financial institutions and transactions practice group in its Detroit office.

R. Clifford Jones, PhD ’01, has written a new book titled “James K. Humphrey and the Sabbath-Day Adventists,” published by University Press of Mississippi. He is an associate professor at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, MI.

Paul M. Moss, BA ’01, has joined Jason M. Klein & Associates of Ameriprise Financial in Portage, MI, as a client-service coordinator.

Martina R. Stevens, BS ’01, is the elephant manager at the Houston Zoo.

Felicia L. Daniel, BS ’02, was Ebony magazine’s 2005 Bachelorette of the Year. She is a project manager for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in Detroit.

Gregory C. Kruger, BS ’02, is the group sales representative for the Lansing (MI) Lugnuts, minor league baseball team.

Carrie McGath, MFA ’02, has written a new book of poetry, “Small Murders,” published by WMU’s New Issues Press. She is a librarian at Vicksburg (MI) District Library.

Heidi T. (Kobler) Sharp, BA ’02, is an associate at the law office of Rex A. Burgess PLC in Clinton Township, MI, practicing in general civil law with an emphasis in employment law.

Stephanie J. (Elliott) Stahl, BBA ’02, has opened a children’s boutique, Babee Savvy, in Portage, MI.

Scott Swinehart, MA ’02, is the athletic director and assistant principal at Ionia (MI) High School.

Amy (Hunsberger) Wenzel, BA ’02, is the owner of a creative portrait photography business in Grand Rapids, MI.

Donna (Russau) Johnson, MA ’03, is a special education teacher at Metro Health in Wayland, MI.

• Donna (Russau) Johnson, MA ’03, is a special education teacher at Durham (NC) Public Schools. She is also a community service worker in the mental health field.

Dennis Keck, BS ’03, is a 6th grade teacher at Gaylord (MI) Community Schools.

Joanne (Miketic) Preston, BS ’03, is a preschool teacher at Appletree Christian Learning Center in Portage, MI.

Michelle L. Prinz, MPA ’03, was named Director of the Year by the Association of YMCA Professionals of Michigan. She is executive director of the Parkwood YMCA in East Lansing, MI.

Jamie Jo Roberts, BS ’03, is a library technician at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, in its conservation department.

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WMU mourns death of Edwin Meader

Edwin E. Meader, a Kalamazoo philanthropist and major University benefactor, died Feb. 1. He was 97.

Born in Benton Harbor, Mich., Edwin Meader came to the Kalamazoo area in 1925. He attended WMU and the University of Michigan, from which he graduated in 1933.

Meader, a former adjunct professor of geography at WMU, is survived by his wife, Mary, who also is a longtime supporter of the University. In 2005, the couple gave $4 million and 1,800 aerial photographs of Africa and South America, taken by Mary Meader, to WMU to establish the W. E. Upjohn Center for the Study of Geographical Change, named for Mary Meader's grandfather and founder of the former Upjohn Co. in Kalamazoo.

The W. H. Upjohn Rotunda, the entrance to WMU's main library, was named for Mary Meader's father. The library's Meader Rare Books Room was named in honor of the Meaders' continued support for University Libraries.
Alumna, teacher-training tradition had start in same year

One of WMU's oldest alumni, Margaret A. Buttery of Kalamazoo, died Jan. 9. She was 102.

Buttery was born in 1904, the same year WMU began offering its first full semester of teacher education. University officials helped mark her 100th birthday during the College of Education's centennial celebration in fall 2004. She received a special University citation noting the year of her birth and its importance to the institution and praising her personal and professional life as one that “exemplified the goals and qualities that have long been the institution's hallmarks.”

Buttery, formerly Margaret Brockway, earned her teaching certificate in 1927. She taught in several Michigan cities before marrying and moving to Battle Creek. After raising a family, she returned to full-time teaching in 1960 in Kalamazoo elementary schools and retired in 1968. A granddaughter, Natasha North, is an April graduate of WMU and is headed for a teaching career.

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**FACULTY**

Robert H. Barstow, professor emeritus of social work, Feb. 9, 2007, in Portage, MI

Henry H. Beam, professor of management, Dec. 21, 2006, in Kalamazoo

William A. Carlson, professor emeritus in counselor education and counseling psychology, Feb. 14, 2007, in Baltimore, MD

Ralph C. Chandler, professor of public affairs and political science, March 17, 2007, in Kalamazoo

Charles A. Davis, professor emeritus of electrical engineering, Feb. 7, 2007, in Kalamazoo

Harry S. Hefner, professor emeritus of art, Nov. 15, 2006, in Kalamazoo
Get ready...
Get set...
Register!

Oct. 20, 2007

www.wmich.edu/race
“Maidenhair Tree,” a sculpture by James Richmond, benefactor of the Richmond Center for Visual Arts, is on display on the second floor of the new campus center named for him and his wife, Lois. The colorful and whimsical work was inspired by his love of nature, the process of casting bronze and an eye for found objects.