MEET OUR 2014 AWARDS RECIPIENTS

During a ceremony on Oct. 24, the college will celebrate remarkable leaders who represent the values of the college and provide an example for our students. These award recipients provide innovative, ethical and visionary leadership in business every day.
Newmind Group on Inc.500
Posted on Wednesday, September 10, 2014

A Kalamazoo tech firm that employs a number of Broncos has made it onto the Inc. 500. Not only are they the only company in the West Michigan area to make the 2014 list, but they’re ranked at number 216. The list represents the most comprehensive look at the most important segment of the economy—America’s independent entrepreneurs.

Companies such as Microsoft, Zappos, Intuit, Jamba Juice, Zipcar, Clif Bar, Vizio, Oracle, and many other well-known names gained early exposure as members of the Inc. 500|5000. Featured businesses are ranked according to their percentage revenue growth during a 3-year period. According to Inc. Magazine’s figures, Newmind Group’s revenue has grown by 2065.4% since 2010 and their number of employees has grown from 5 to 16.

Newmind has undergone a number of changes through Inc.’s measurement period, from 2010 to 2013. In 2012, the company’s founder, Daniel Jefferies, to hand off the CEO position to Newmind colleague Matt Vollmar (BS ’98, Computer Science). Jefferies, who identified a passion for psychology in business, has since represented the company from a new role as the “chief happiness officer.” The company has also strengthened its team with new additions in sales, marketing and IT engineering.

Google’s introduction of the Chromebook also played a role in Newmind Group’s success, as the company was the first reseller in the world to sell these devices. This new product, paired with the tech boom in education, opened up many new relationships for Newmind Group in the education sector.

Other Broncos working at Newmind are:

- CEO: Matthew Vollmar (BS 98, Computer Science)
- Marketing Director: Daniel Proczko (Business)
- Accountant: Alissa St-Amour (BBA 13, Accountancy)
- Account Manager: James Duke (BBA 11, Sales and Business Marketing)
- Account Manager: Ben Morris (BBA 00, Computer Information Systems)
About INC 500

Founded in 1979 and acquired in 2005 by Mansueto Ventures, Inc. is the only major brand dedicated exclusively to owners and managers of growing private companies, with the aim to deliver real solutions for today’s innovative company builders. Total monthly audience reach for the brand has grown significantly from 2,000,000 in 2010 to over 6,000,000 today. For more information, visit www.inc.com.

About Newmind Group

Newmind Group is an award-winning IT Managed Services provider specializing in cloud computing solutions. Based in Kalamazoo, Michigan, Newmind Group began as a small, regional IT company in 2003. Since then, they have opened offices in Charleston, Minneapolis, and Silicon Valley, and have grown in scope and size to become a national provider of cloud computing solutions for businesses of all sizes - with over 1000 clients across North America, Europe, and Asia. Newmind’s mission is to help clients use technology to make work more profitable, productive, and enjoyable.

The Key to Success—Colleen Huff, B.B.A.’05

As senior sales director for MLive Media Group, Colleen Huff, B.B.A.’05, has worked for eight years to drive the success of new products, services and market expansions by directing sales organization. With a degree in business administration from Western Michigan University’s Haworth College of Business, with a focus on marketing and advertising in hand and an interest in the automotive field, Huff knew she wanted to work where she could make a difference in a company.

“I wanted to see and feel the impact a successful campaign could have on a business. I didn’t just want to be a marketing consultant, but a true business consultant,” she explains. Upon beginning her career, she found herself at MLive.com. “I learned a great deal about the advertising business and held positions at multiple levels within the company from account executive to management,” says Huff.

Her experience with MLive.com would soon open doors to the emerging platform of digital media. “In the fall of 2011, I was chosen from among a handful of executives to create a new media company. We created MLive Media Group. Over the last few years, my role has evolved. I am now a senior sales director leading a team of talented local and national directors, managers, senior sales consultants, inside and outside account executives and account managers. I lead a team that is as invested in the success of the client and their business as much as the client is. A team of true marketing and business consultants,” Huff explains.

MLive Media Group is now the largest media group in Michigan. With emphasis on collaboration and empowerment, it is a driving force in the digital media economy. “We exist to grow Michigan business. That’s it. It’s simple. We inform, connect and engage. Wherever you are, whenever you need it, we put the news in your hands,” says Huff.
Huff learned many of the key communication and collaboration skills necessary for success in her time at WMU. “Working independently and within a team is the core to a successful company. You will find this in any class at the Haworth College of Business,” she says. “My favorite college professor to this day is Dr. JoAnn Atkin. She truly believes in what she is teaching. You can hear and feel her passion to help students create, build and present successful campaigns. Her passion is contagious and shows through the students she teaches. Dr. Atkin and her ability to inspire students to challenge themselves to exceed expectations is one of the many reasons why MLive Media Group continues to hire Haworth College of Business graduates year after year,” Huff explains.

To new graduates, Huff offers some valuable advice: “Find your passion. Do what you believe in and align yourself with a company holding the same values. You can learn something from everyone; the key is taking the time to listen.”

IT FORUM TO ADDRESS CYBER SECURITY

Business, academic and government leaders will address information security and privacy topics in business, industry, healthcare, government and education during the 11th Western Michigan IT Forum on Nov. 7. The conference is hosted by the college of business and will be held at WMU’s Fetzer Center.

Speaker Series Events

October 2014

- Thursday, Oct. 23: Distinguished Speaker Series with Alessandro P. DiNello, president and CEO, Flagstar Bank, presenting “How Western Shaped My Life” | Info
- Friday, Oct. 31: Mercantile Bank of Michigan Breakfast Speaker Series with Dr. Robert Harrison, associate professor of marketing, Western Michigan University, presenting “Black Friday Shopping: Managing and Understanding the Consumption Spectacle” | Info

November 2014
Thursday, Nov. 13: Distinguished Speaker Series with Brian Thomas, president and CEO, OtterBox, presenting "Growing up Otter: Education, Opportunity and Giving Back" | Info

Friday, Nov. 14: Entrepreneurship Forum with Norm Braksick, Food Resource Bank

Friday, Nov 21: Mercantile Bank of Michigan Breakfast Speaker Series with Bob Miller, associate vice president for community outreach, Western Michigan University, presenting an update on the Business Technology and Research Park

December 2014

Friday, Dec. 5: Entrepreneurship Forum with Matt and Rene Greff, co-founders, Arbor Brewing Company

Fifty years of working at WMU evokes brown, 'golden' memories

by Jeanne Baron
September 29, 2014 | WMU News

- KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Two Western Michigan University employees recently celebrated their 50th anniversary at the University.

- The two are Doralee N. DeRyke, director of budget, operations and service support in the Haworth College of Business, and Dr. Laurel A. Grotzinger, reference services librarian and professor of University Libraries.

- Both officially began their service in August 1964 under WMU President James W. Miller. In honor of their milestone, the two were feted by their employing units as well as invited to pose for commemorative pictures on campus in the WMU-themed Bernhard Center.

DeRyke

About Doralee N. DeRyke

- DeRyke has spent her entire WMU career in the Haworth College of Business.

- She started as a secretary in the Department of Management, and seven years later was promoted to administrative assistant to the dean. When the college moved from the East Campus to newly built Schneider Hall on the West Campus in 1991, she was elevated to director of budget, services and operations.

- "I've worked for every dean in the college of business, starting with Dr. Schneider. I've seen a lot of changes, but the most exciting one was when we got a dedicated building for the college and moved from East Campus to Schneider Hall," DeRyke says.
"I remember East Campus well, though. The college was housed in North Hall and West Hall when I started, and spread into East Hall when the Campus School and University High [two of WMU's teacher-training schools] closed. And several of us would eat lunch in the cafeteria that used to be in Walwood Hall."

Among her other early memories is traversing East Campus' steep Prospect Hill during the blizzard of 1967.

"I had to walk down the hill to Davis Street to meet my husband because my car was snowed in behind North Hall," she says. "We didn't have good weather forecasts back then, so I didn't have my boots, which is why you'll always see a pair in my car from Oct. 1 until May 1."

DeRyke earned bachelor's and master's degrees in business administration from WMU. For several years, she was a member of the Association for Business Communication and made presentations at numerous national and regional meetings. In addition, she was inducted into Beta Alpha Psi, the national accounting fraternity, in 1978 and received the Haworth College of Business' inaugural Superior Staff Award in 2011.

"I'm most proud of being able to complete my two degrees while working full time. Of course, that was with lots of encouragement from [former Haworth] Dean Darrell Jones," DeRyke says.

"The college has a friendly, family atmosphere, which makes it an enjoyable place to work. There have been some friendships that have continued over many years. And it's always heartwarming when former student employees show up for orientation with their children!"

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Grotzinger

About Dr. Laurel A. Grotzinger

Grotzinger has held several high-profile administrative positions at WMU and has racked up some impressive firsts in the process.

She started her career teaching in the School of Library and Information Science, rising from assistant to full professor in just four years. At the same time, she established a strong scholarly record in the area of library history, focusing especially on the emerging role of women in the discipline at the end of the 19th century. Somewhat ruefully, she notes that "today's scholars cite me as a 'pioneer' in advocating women as librarian pioneers a century ago."

Prior to WMU closing the library school in 1985, Grotzinger had served as the school's assistant director, acting director and director. She was instrumental in developing the accredited Master of Science in Librarianship as well as such associated programs as three sixth-year degrees, and specializations or degrees in school library media, information science, map librarianship and library administration.

Grotzinger was active on campus as a faculty member, serving as chair of the Graduate Studies Council for 13 years as well as on many other councils and committees involved with developing WMU's reputation in graduate education and research. She also served as vice president and president of the Faculty Senate in the mid-1970s.

"The 1970s were a period of challenge, as the faculty union was approved and the concept of shared governance was redefined to respond to two different faculty organizations," Grotzinger recalls, noting that her Senate presidency was a year of debate and discussion.
"I characterize my role as being as unstable as Alice going down the rabbit hole," she says, "but in the end, 'shared governance' had reemerged with an empowered faculty."

Her career took another pioneering turn after the University's chief academic officer beseeched her to apply for deanship of the Graduate College. She ultimately applied, was selected and, in 1979, became the first woman to be appointed as an academic dean at WMU.

Grotzinger served as Graduate College dean until 1992. Under her 13-year tenure, WMU significantly expanded its doctoral degree programs as well as strengthened and institutionalized its development as a major research university.

Notably, that growth occurred while Grotzinger concurrently filled three additional roles. She was WMU's chief research officer for seven years as well as administrative head of the graduate science education unit and the Center for the Study of Ethics in Society for three years.

"I've served under six of the University's eight presidents. But I tell people I started at WMU when I was in kindergarten," Grotzinger says with a laugh. "The University has obviously been my life in many ways and has always presented opportunities to grow and to learn.

"The people here are amazing, and every decade has produced its stars among the staff and its good people who make things happen," she continues. "Every set of freshmen and transfer students, every student seeking graduate study and research, every faculty and staff member provides a new opportunity to, as one of our past slogans emphasized, 'make a difference.' I never want to walk away from that environment and that community."