Living Purposefully

Alumnus Joe Johnson inspires individuals to develop a mindset of living and acting with a purpose.
Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2  A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN
3  1903 TO 2003 CLASS NOTES
4-5  2015 ALUMNI AWARD WINNERS
6-7  1903-2003 ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS
8-11  2004-PRESENT CLASS NOTES
12-13  2004-PRESENT ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS
14-21  KEEP IN TOUCH
22-23
Dear CEHD Friends,

Welcome to the 2016 Alumni Edition of Professional Reflections, the official magazine of the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) at Western Michigan University (WMU). This is the second time we have published the alumni edition since we launched the magazine in fall 2013. Like the inaugural alumni edition, you will have the opportunity to read the stories of a sample of our successful alumni working in diverse education and human development fields.

CEHD has a long-standing tradition of success that dates back to the establishment of WMU’s predecessor, Western State Normal School, in 1903. In this magazine, we celebrate a variety of alumni who have made significant strides since graduating from our college. This edition showcases these stories as a reflection of our timeline. The first half of the magazine spotlights alumni who graduated within the first century of the college’s history (1903-2003), while the second half focuses on stories from our more recent alumni (2004-present).

Professional Reflections is only possible because you create a story to tell. Thank you for sharing your accomplishments and for continuing to support your alma mater. Your experiences inspire our CEHD community and motivate students who wish to follow in your footsteps. CEHD is proud of our graduates and we look forward to launching new alumni engagement opportunities in the near future.

I hope that you will have an enjoyable reading experience and leave with a long-lasting impression of the accomplishments of our alumni once you have a chance to review the magazine.

Best Wishes,

Ming Li, Ed.D.
Dean
Matthew Arend  
BS ’98, recreation. Matthew Arend has been the athletic director at Albion College in Albion, Michigan since summer 2011. Prior to his current position, Arend worked as Director of Ticket Operations for Oregon State University. Arend’s efforts helped to develop and initiate multi-million dollar fundraising to provide the university with new indoor and outdoor athletic facilities as well as hit record ticket sales and expand television and radio coverage.

Derek Wheaton  
MA ’88, educational leadership. Derek Wheaton is the founder of Derek Wheaton Consulting, LLC based in Kalamazoo, Michigan and has served the education community in some capacity for over 32 years. Wheaton uses his knowledge and expertise to help guide local instructional staff and educational leaders to improve skills and strategies. Prior to his current role, Wheaton served as a teacher for 14 years and as a principal for 18 years, both in Southwest Michigan.

Suzanna Rocco Dillon  
MA ’96, special physical education. Currently an assistant professor at Wayne State University, Suzanna Rocco Dillon has been recognized for her professional efforts both on and off campus. She has received many awards and honors and obtained over $1,000,000 in grant funding. Dedicated to the provision of programs that support healthy, active lifestyles for all individuals, Rocco Dillon’s passion has inspired her community, colleagues, and students to share her mission.

Kelli Esteves  
MA ’03, special education; EdD ’07, special education. Kelli Esteves is currently an assistant professor of education and program coordinator at Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana. She is also involved in two study abroad opportunities, leading student groups to England and Ireland every summer. Prior to her current role, Esteves worked as a special education teacher and reading specialist in Rockford Public Schools, in Rockford, Michigan. Esteves is also an author and has many publications.
Donald Green
PhD ’00, educational leadership. Dr. Donald Green was named Georgia Highlands College’s fourth president in September 2014. Georgia Highlands College is a two-year associate degree-granting unit of the university system in Georgia. Prior to this role, Green served as Vice Chancellor and Vice President of Ferris State University, has held teaching positions at Grand Rapids Community College and Davenport University, and operates a consulting firm, D. Green and Associates.

Louise Schuster
BS ’68, teaching; MA ’69, teaching; MA ’12, literacy studies. Louise Schuster, then a dual alumna from WMU, decided to continue to take courses between the years of 1969 through 1980. However, she never pursued getting her second master’s degree. It wasn’t until 2012 that Schuster, at age 91, had her transcript evaluated by current literacy studies coordinator, Dr. Lauren Freedman, who determined that she indeed had earned her second master’s degree in literacy studies.

Marci Schmiege
BS ’96, secondary education. In July 2015, Marci Schmiege was selected to serve as the manager of health promotion and wellness for five Florida hospitals in Volusia and Flagler counties. Schmeige has over 20 years of experience which includes training recruits for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), serving as director of Semper Fit with the U.S. Marine Corps, and over 15 years as a personal trainer in Chicago, serving notable politicians, celebrities, and athletes.

Cynthia Green
BS ’80, special education; MA ’93 special education. Cynthia Green has been an educator in the Kalamazoo area for over 30 years and currently serves as the assistant superintendent to the Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS). She has a background that includes teaching adult education, special education and general education but her true passion is to reach those students who have the greatest challenges and build on their strengths. It is her job to ensure the best educational services possible.
Golden Apple Alumni

Husband and wife are CEHD Golden Apple award winners and dual CEHD alumni

Dr. Rigoberto J. Rincones-Gómez (MA ’00, educational leadership; PhD ’02, evaluation, measurement, and research) is currently the Associate Vice Provost of Institutional Research, Planning, Effectiveness, and Analytics at Broward College in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Dr. Rincones brings over two decades of national and international leadership experience championing student success, faculty excellence, scholarly activity, and institutional prominence. He has worked with foundations including the Gates Foundation, Lumina Foundation for Education, and The Kellogg Foundation. He is presently focusing on the intersection of student success, strategic planning and execution, and the identification of institutional levers to facilitate data-driven decision making.

Dr. Rincones’ background also includes a significant leadership role at the national level serving as Achieving the Dream’s (ATD) first National Director of Data Coaching. ATD is the largest non-governmental reform network for student success in higher education history, focused on students of color and low-income students. In that capacity, he supported the organization through growth cycles and expansion to serve over 200 institutions across the country with a team of 80+ coaches.

Dr. Rincones has been awarded several honors and educational scholarships both in Latin America and the United States and is nationally and internationally recognized. His most recent award, the 2015 CEHD Golden Apple Award, was presented to him by CEHD on October 22, 2015. He has published more than 50 refereed journal articles, designed and facilitated more than 100 workshops in 10+ countries, and co-authored several books, the most recent, Collaborative Evaluations: Step-by-Step.

Dr. Rincones received an Outstanding Dissertation Award and a WMU Provost’s Special Recognition for his doctoral work. He earned his bachelor’s degree in Mechanical Engineering, and his specialist and master’s degrees in Project Management in Engineering with Summa Cum Laude Honors. He received a WMU President’s Special Recognition for his second master’s degree in Educational Leadership with a concentration in Evaluation, Measurement, and Research Design.

Dr. Rincones’ wife, Dr. Liliana Rodriguez-Campos (MA ’00, educational leadership; PhD ’02, evaluation, measurement, and research) received the CEHD Golden Apple Award in 2010. She is nationally and internationally recognized for her collaborative approach to evaluation and has been awarded with several honors and educational scholarships, much like her husband. Dr. Rodriguez currently serves as the board of directors’ chair at the Evaluation Capacity Development Group, and as the program chair of the Collaboration, Participatory, and Empowerment Evaluation Topical Interest Group at the American Evaluation Association. She is a professor and the director of the graduate certificate in Evaluation at the University of South Florida in Tampa, Florida.

“Dr. Rincones encourages people to believe in themselves and to value the uniqueness of their own backgrounds.”

- Dr. Liliana Rodriguez-Campos

“CEHD ALUMNI”
The leaders of tomorrow are among Dr. Beer’s students."

- Dr. Alan Hovestadt

Dr. Lawrence Beer (EdD ’86, counseling psychology), a licensed psychologist and licensed professional counselor, is the founder and President of Child & Family Psychological Services (CFPS), one of the largest private mental health practices in Southwest Michigan.

Dr. Beer started CFPS in 1989 with a staff of three licensed mental health professionals; the current clinical staff now totals 42 in two locations: Kalamazoo and Portage, Michigan. The majority of therapists at CFPS are WMU graduates.

On October 22, 2015, Dr. Beer received the 2015 CEHD Keystone Meritorious Award.
HEALING THE WORLD

“Ken Schmidt has a heart for helping individuals.”

- Dr. Alan Hovestadt
CECP Professor
Dr. Kenneth Schmidt (MA ’03, counseling psychology) is currently in his 19th year serving as the pastor of St. Thomas More Catholic Student Parish in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Beyond his full time role serving as pastor, Schmidt has demonstrated himself to be a true scholar with nearly 40 publications. Several of Schmidt’s publications deal with mental health and social justice issues, including two new books in press for 2015, one dealing with the connection between forgiveness and mental health and the other with trauma recovery.

Since graduating from WMU, Schmidt, along with counseling psychology alumna Sharon Froom, co-developed a group counseling program for adult survivors of childhood trauma. Schmidt initially became aware of the need for trauma intervention when completing his master’s internship at the nationally renowned Timberlawn Psychiatric Hospital in Dallas, Texas.

During his internship at Timberlawn Psychiatric Hospital, Schmidt met psychiatrist Dr. Collin Ross, who introduced him to hospital-based trauma work within the context of individual counseling and psychotherapy. With the support and encouragement of Ross, Schmidt and Froom adapted and manualized the Trauma Model into a comprehensive group psycho-educational treatment strategy as an alternative to expensive individual therapy, thus making his model more accessible, affordable, clinically effective, and teachable.

Since 2003 this group intervention model has been shared around the world offering training in trauma recovery to hundreds of mental health providers and place lay helpers in international sites such as Kenya, Rwanda and Ireland.

Once this program became nationally recognized, Schmidt and Froom formed a not-for-profit organization called Trauma Recovery Associates (TRA) which has extended their work to many underserved groups and communities. TRA has received several grants to offer the trauma recovery program to different client groups, including those who are bilingual, have recently been released from the Kalamazoo County jail, or women who have been sold into slavery.

Over the past seven years, Schmidt has traveled to Rwanda for extended trips, up to two weeks at a time, often staying in mountainous rural areas with a minimum of amenities.

In a country such as Rwanda, where 100 percent of the population has been traumatized by genocide, it is Schmidt’s mission to help begin the healing process by hosting a series of workshops. Usually these programs focus on childhood trauma, but they adapted their work to touch the adults who have been personally affected by genocide.

Schmidt was recognized for his accomplishments as the 2015 recipient of the Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology Outstanding Alumni Award.
Lifting Up Literacy
Three time CEHD alumna works to strengthen literacy for Kalamazoo families

Slyvia Washington (BS ’92, elementary education; MA ’97, reading; MA ’02, family and consumer sciences) is a three time graduate of WMU. Her current role is with Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS), where she works as the Reading Teacher Leader and the Specialist of Parent Education for the Lift Up Through Literacy Program.

Washington’s career began after earning her bachelor’s degree in 1992, when she took her first job as a Kindergarten teacher in Covert Public Schools. During her first year of teaching, the principal at her school nominated her for the First Year Teacher of the Year Award.

In 1995, after three years working in Covert, Washington took a position as a first grade teacher in Kalamazoo Public Schools. She has been teaching there, as a Kindergarten, First and Second Grade teacher, for the last 20 years.

It was during the early years with KPS that Washington went on to pursue her master’s degree in Reading. Washington then began work as a reading recovery teacher for three years, and eventually trained and became the reading recovery teacher leader.

As she began to work closely with individual students, Washington became intrigued by not only the students, but their families as well. It was at this time that Washington decided to go back to school yet again and earn a second master’s degree in Family and Consumer Sciences.

“I love to learn, and I want children and their parents to love literacy as much as I do,” Washington states.

In the summer of 2015, Washington was hired as the Parent Education Specialist for the Lift Up Through Literacy Program for KPS, a position where she is able to apply all three of her WMU degrees. With this community based program, Washington and staff work with children ages zero to five and their parents to help them better prepare for school. Students and their family members can take part in fun hands-on literacy opportunities as well as free books, meals, child care, field trips, and an end-of-session incentive.

The program works closely with organizations throughout the Kalamazoo area such as churches and Boys and Girls Club to host classes and perform outreach over the course of eight weeks.

Washington still maintains many ties to her alma mater as she also teaches Literacy Studies courses for the Department of Special Education and Literacy Studies at WMU. She also serves as a mentor teacher for new teachers in KPS.

“What an awesome opportunity that Western Michigan University has given me, to earn degrees in this field, and allow me a chance to give back to my community and the field of education!” Washington exclaims.
Continue to push through any adversity to achieve the goals you have set.

- Scott Allison (BS ’00, Athletic Training, Exercise Science)

Recreation alumnus works to keep Kalamazoo beautiful and lively

Sean Fletcher (BS ’94, recreation) currently serves as the Director of Parks & Recreation for the city of Kalamazoo, Michigan where he oversees 36 parks, three golf courses, and a wide range of community and athletic events.

Fletcher works with his employees to ensure that the community is provided with clean and beautiful parks as well as many recreation events throughout the year.

Prior to his position with the City of Kalamazoo, Fletcher worked as the recreation and facility operations supervisor for the Charter Township of Canton, Michigan.

Scott Allison (BS ’00, athletic training, exercise science), is the head athletic trainer for the Kalamazoo Wings, a mid-level professional ice hockey team in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Prior to his current role, Allison worked in the rehabilitation department at Bronson Lakeview Hospital in Paw Paw, Michigan, and as a contracted athletic trainer for Holland Hospital where he served over 600 athletes at West Ottawa High School.

Allison has worked as the Wings head athletic trainer for four seasons and will reach his 500th professional hockey game this season.
Diana Hernández  
MA ’05, family life education. Diana Hernández is the director of Western Michigan University’s Division of Multicultural Affairs. Prior to this promotion in 2008, Hernández held many various positions in the Division of Multicultural Affairs. Over the years, she has been a Big Brothers Big Sisters mentor, served on many boards, including past president of the Hispanic American Council Inc., Kalamazoo, and committees for the Kalamazoo Public Schools, Girl Scouts and more.

Scott Gajos  
BS ’09, physical education. Scott Gajos and fellow WMU alumni Tim Hiller co-founded Next Level Performance upon graduation. Next Level Performance delivers sport specific training that focuses on leadership and character development. The goal is to help athletes develop the tools they need to not only become a better athlete and leader, but a better person. Gajos played football for WMU while a student and currently coaches high school football.

Ben Williams  
BA ’11, family studies. Ben Williams is currently the Legislative Liaison (Lobbyist) for the Michigan Department of Education, within the Office of Public and Governmental Affairs. Williams was appointed to the position by State of Michigan Superintendent, Michael Flanagan. In his role, Williams directs legislative activities for the superintendent and the state Board of Education. He lobbies in Lansing and Washington D.C. regarding education and appropriation issues.

Shannon Eston  
BS ’05, fashion merchandising. Shannon Eston is currently a recruiting manager for Von Maur where she travels to college campuses throughout the U.S. to recruit students for Von Maur’s executive training and internship programs. During campus visits, she attends career fairs, leads information sessions and conducts classroom presentations. Her job also includes developing and implementing training programs for interns and executive trainees at the store location and corporate office.
2004–2015

Continuing the Tradition of Success

Vunsin Doublestein
MA ’06, higher education and student affairs. Vunsin Doublestein is currently the Program Director of Mentoring for Success Program in WMU’s Division of Multicultural Affairs. The program is a state grant-funded program which is designed to promote program participants’ success at WMU through increased acceptance rates into participants’ intended majors and increased college graduation rates. Doublestein is responsible for overseeing the daily functions of the program.

Ashley Ziegler Levitt
BS ’08, fashion merchandising. Ashley Ziegler Levitt is an independent sales representative for UGG Australia, responsible for presenting and managing the children’s line to retailers. Ziegler Levitt began her career with UGG as a merchandiser. After two years she was promoted to a sales position in St. Louis, Missouri. The following year, she was promoted to her current role which is located in Charlotte, North Carolina. Ziegler Levitt studied abroad in London while a student at WMU.

Craig Mueller
BS ’12, exercise science. Craig Mueller is currently a Midwest Sales Representative for Nutiva, a company serving pure superfoods that provide vital nutrition while accelerating the organic food movement. Mueller serves as a catalyst, informing and inspiring thoughtful solutions to planetary challenges. Prior to his current role, Mueller worked as the Midwest Territory Manager for Enjoy Life Natural Brands, LCC, performing store level merchandising.

Brandi Pritchett-Johnson
MA ’07, counseling psychology; PhD ’11 counseling psychology. Dr. Brandi Pritchett-Johnson is the Founder and serves as the CEO/President of Future 4 Teens. Since 2008, Future 4 Teens has developed strong relationships and quality educational and therapeutic programs for youth throughout Southwest Michigan and more recently Gainesville, Florida. She is also a clinical assistant professor in the Counseling and Wellness Center at the University of Florida and a licensed psychologist.
Pursue your purpose not your dreams.

- Joe Johnson
Joe Johnson (MA ’09, counselor education) understands the importance of education and mentoring individuals in as many ways as possible. Johnson learned the value of education from his parents at a young age. However, growing up in inner-city Milwaukee, Johnson quickly shifted his focus to sports. It was then that Johnson developed a “who cares” attitude towards his education. It was not long until Division I schools decided to pass on Johnson due to his low grades and he had no choice but to attend community college before enrolling in a four-year university.

It was not until Johnson was accepted into Western Michigan University’s counselor education master’s program that he learned the power of competition in the classroom. With his newfound outlook on learning, Johnson excelled academically and began to see clearly his true passion and purpose was to help individuals develop a mindset which encourages them to live and act purposefully.

While at WMU, Johnson involved himself in local K-12 school settings, mentoring and tutoring local youth through workshops and summer programs. As a graduate assistant at the Lewis Walker Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnic Relations, Johnson had opportunities to help establish new programs in the Kalamazoo community which included diversity initiatives such as race relations and the Kalamazoo Promise.

Johnson later continued his extensive work in higher education, serving as a Recruitment and Program Coordinator for the College of Education and as an Assistant Director in the Office of Academic Support at the University of Florida.

In 2012, Johnson started his company, “Joe Johnson Group,” which has quickly become one of the fastest growing speaking, training, and consulting companies in the nation. Now known around the nation as “Joe Johnson Speaks” and the “Mindset Shifter,” Johnson continues his work with K-12, higher education, and corporate clients across America and is often in Kalamazoo partnering with Future 4 Teens, which was founded by his wife, Dr. Brandi Pritchett-Johnson (MA ’07, counseling psychology; PhD ’11 counseling psychology).

Johnson currently takes his mind shifting and action oriented talks to the K-12 population, college campuses (including WMU), athletic teams, corporations, conferences, and communities across the nation. His empowering speeches are meant to uplift individuals and inspire them to become versatile, adaptable, and purposeful people with transferable habits and skills used to serve others and to create their ideal lifestyles.

As the author of “Pursue Your Purpose Not Your Dreams,” which focuses on purpose and identity, and “The College Kids,” which is one of the first bilingual books in the country about college for elementary and middle school aged students, Joe Johnson is excited to spread his captivating message to the world.

“The experiences and opportunities given to me provide me with the platform to consistently help others develop personally, academically, and professionally while continuing to keep up the fight for social justice,” Johnson states.

Joe Johnson is currently pursuing his doctoral degree in counselor education and supervision from the University of Florida, and will graduate in May 2016.
Upon graduation, Kristin Johnson (BS ’09, dietetics & exercise science) completed her dietetic internship at Spectrum Health, Butterworth Hospital in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Immediately following her internship, Johnson began working in the corporate world as a Healthy Living Advisor and Supermarket Dietitian for Meijer, Inc. where she helped create and develop educational programs targeted to consumer demographics. During this time in her career, Johnson worked with many corporations to create healthier and, as a result, higher performing work places through education and action.

Realizing that her passion was in the natural world of food and health, Johnson became a dietitian for Mrs. Green’s Natural Market in Chicago, Illinois. She dove right into the retail world of Superfoods, learning everything she could about wheat-grass, healthy skin care, and homeopathic remedies.

While working for Mrs. Green’s Natural Market, Johnson pioneered a specialized dietitian program that became instrumental in developing the nutrition content for their new stores. Her role included educating shoppers and community groups about healthy eating and lifestyles through in-store shopping trips, customer consultations, cooking classes, and speaking engagements.

In her current role, Johnson travels the United States educating people on the core principles and three pillars to health: rest and recovery, quality nutrition, and daily movement which ultimately lead to increased performance, decreased sick days, lost work time, lowered health care costs, and revitalized company culture.

Johnson is co-author of “Target to Table: Healthy and Delicious Meals One Superfood at a Time.” Understanding people’s struggles when it comes to food and cooking, Johnson created this book to show people how to take small steps at the store and in the kitchen to develop healthy, lifelong eating habits.

Johnson has been published in the Journal of Nutrition and Food Engineering, National Produce Business and Healthy and Fit Magazine. She has also regularly appeared on television shows such as Indy Style, Eight West, and ABC 7 Chicago.
My greatest passion lies in designing better ways to serve people."

- Nancy Stefanick (MA ’06, human resource development)

Sarah Dobes (BS ’06, elementary education) is Pinellas County Florida’s 2016 Outstanding Educator of the Year. Dobes was one of the first teachers to open East Lake Middle School Academy of Engineering in 2014 and since has become a member of the accreditation team, improvement plan writing team, and her department’s chair.

Dobes has taught in the district for ten years now and currently teaches English and has created school-wide lessons in vocabulary, plagiarism and students' learning scales.

Nancy Stefanick (MA ’06, human resource development) is a Human Resources Manager for Stryker Instruments. She joined Stryker in 2007 as the Training Specialist for the Stryker Medical division, bringing five years of training and development experience from the retail and pharmaceutical industries.

Stefanick is a Gallup certified Strengths Performance Coach and has a passion for leadership development through an exploration of strengths and talents.

On October 22, 2015, Stefanick received the 2015 CEHD Keystone Early Career Award.
Trust and let go. Instead of trying to lead the world, let the world lead you.

- Joshua Merchant
Joshua Merchant

Educational leadership alumnus continues to excel in higher education roles

Dr. Joshua Merchant (PhD ’14, educational leadership) has more than 18 years of development, alumni engagement, advancement operations, and marketing/communications experience in higher education.

Merchant was appointed on April 7, 2014 as the Vice President of University Development and Alumni Engagement and Executive Director of the Foundation at the University of North Florida. He most recently worked for Albion College, from 2008 – 2014, where he served as Vice President for Institutional Advancement with responsibility for alumni engagement, external marketing and communications, advancement services and capital and annual fundraising.

While at Albion College, Merchant significantly increased fundraising activity building toward a $100+ million capital campaign, redefined alumni engagement in practice and theory, added a marketing division to the advancement team, and successfully launched a new branding campaign for the college. During the 2011-12 academic year, Merchant also served as Interim Vice President for Enrollment Management, overseeing admissions and enrollment marketing where he increased net tuition revenue by 14%.

Prior to Albion College, Merchant was Assistant Vice President of Advancement at Interlochen Center for the Arts in northern Michigan. Earlier in his career, he served as Senior Director of Development at Central Michigan University’s College of Business Administration where he was part of an $80 million capital campaign and at Michigan State University working in special and major gifts for both the College of Veterinary Medicine and College of Agriculture and Natural Resources where he was part of a $1.5 billion capital campaign.

He has presented at several national conferences, including the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), and Ruffalo Noel Levitz, on various advancement related topics. Merchant has also participated as consultant for the Great Lakes College Association Global Liberal Arts Alliance Program at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morrocco and as mentor for American University, Bulgaria.

An active member of CASE, Merchant was appointed as a member of the international CASE Commission on Alumni Engagement. He serves on numerous boards including the Great Lakes College Association Philadelphia Center, Museum of Contemporary Art - Jacksonville, OneJax, NE Florida YMCA Board of Directors, and the Jacksonville Chamber Business Advisory Council.

Merchant’s undergraduate degree comes from Albion College in Albion, Michigan, where he was a member of the Albion College Alumni Association Board of Directors for five years, and served as president from 2006 to 2008. Prior to earning his PhD in educational leadership at WMU, Merchant obtained his master’s degree in extension education from Michigan State University. Merchant will accept the American Association of University Administrators Outstanding Doctoral Research Dissertation Award in June 2016.
Timothy Balice
Exercise science alumnus named NCAA Division II head women’s volleyball coach at Urbana University

Urbana University Director of Athletics, Larry Cox announced his first hire with naming of head women’s volleyball coach Timothy Balice (BS ’10, exercise science) on May 19th, 2015. Balice joins the Blue Knights after a year and a half as an assistant at the University of Dayton, as well as a two-year stint as head coach at Kalamazoo Valley Community College.

In his time at Dayton, Balice was involved in all aspects of a perennial top-50 NCAA Division I program and aided the Flyers to a 30-6 finish in 2014 and a 2nd round appearance in the NCAA Division I Tournament, losing to eventual National Champion, Penn State University. During the 2014 campaign, the Flyers were able to win both regular season and conference tournament titles while finishing with an Rating Percentage Index of 56 while receiving votes in the American Volleyball Coaches Association Top-25 Poll.

While at the helm of Kalamazoo Valley, Balice led the team to a 3rd place finish in its conference and an overall record of 36-28, including a 20-8 mark in Michigan Community College Athletic Association (MCCAA) play. He led the Cougars to back-to-back conference tournament appearances and twice qualified for the NJCAA Regional Tournament.

Under Balice’s guidance the Cougar netters ranked in the top-50 in the country in kills per set, total attacks, digs, digs per set, and all blocking statistics. Following his second season, the Cougars finished 2013 ranked 10th nationally in digs per set and 29th in total digs. The Cougars also had one All American, one Regional Player of the Year, one Conference Freshman of the Year and eight All-MCCAA selections.

Balice is recognized as an accomplished club coach throughout the Midwest. He served as an assistant and head coach of several Dead Frog-Far Out (DFFO) Volleyball Club teams while in Kalamazoo, Michigan. During his four years at DFFO, Balice worked with over 50 prep athletes who have moved on to four-year institutions.

During his time at the University Dayton, Balice continued his involvement with club volleyball spending time with Elevation Volleyball Club of Mason, Ohio as well as Dayton Juniors located in Dayton, Ohio. Balice’s 15 National Team at Elevation was ranked 6th in the country by PrepVolleyball.com, earning an open bid to the USA Volleyball Junior Olympic National Tournament in New Orleans, Louisiana. The 47-8 team also took first place in the USA Volleyball Ohio Valley Region Girl’s Junior Championship in 2015.

During his time as a student-athlete at WMU, Balice played on the men’s club volleyball team as a middle hitter (2005-2007) as well as the WMU club baseball team as a catcher and right fielder. Additionally, Balice coached the club women’s volleyball team at WMU 2010-14. Balice is currently pursuing a master’s degree in public health from Michigan State University.
Let your passion pave your professional way. 

- Emily Kastner (BS ’05, secondary education)

Alumna hired at University of Notre Dame Eck Institute for Global Health

Heidi Beidinger-Burnett (PhD ’12, educational leadership) is a new assistant professor for the Eck Institute for Global Health at the University of Notre Dame. Beidinger recently joined Notre Dame after working as a consultant in K-12 education for nearly ten years. Prior to her tenure in K-12, Beidinger served in various leadership roles at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for 13 years. She developed expertise in STD/HIV, correctional healthcare, and surveillance and monitoring programs focusing specifically on improving screening and treatment programs at Cook County Jail, Hospital, Juvenile Detention Center, and community health centers in Chicago. Her current community-based health research includes assessment of access to care for persons with HIV/AIDS and assessment of a chronic diabetes management program. Beidinger has also begun a collaborative partnership with a community-based health care organization in Vellore, India that will assess HIV/AIDS and Maternal and Child Health services.

Alumna co-founded local reading and writing nonprofit organization

Emily Kastner (BS ’05, secondary education), is the Co-founder and Director of Education of Read and Write Kalamazoo (RAWK). RAWK brings together professionals in education, writing, and publishing; current undergraduate and graduate students; and volunteers from the community to offer students the opportunity to develop academically and creatively. The organization uses workshops, reading events, seminars, and one-on-one tutoring sessions to enhance the growth of their students.

Prior to developing Reading and Writing Kalamazoo, Kastner worked as a science and english high school teacher in both Battle Creek, Michigan and San Francisco, California. Kastner co-founded the organization with Anne Hensley, Executive Director, who received her associates degree in education from Kalamazoo Valley Community College.
Tell us about your alumni story by mailing the below information to 1903 W. Michigan Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5229.

Name: ________________________________

Major: ________________________________

Degree: ________________________________

Address: ________________________________

Year Graduated: ________________________________

Phone Number: ________________________________

What professional or personal news would you like us to include in CEHD future publications?

________________________________________

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Use wmich.edu/education/giving to donate online. If you prefer to download a printable form and mail it in, visit MyWMU.com/MyGift and mail your completed form to the address below:

Gift Processing, WMU Foundation,
1903 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5403
Phone: (269) 387-8700 Fax: (269) 387-8770