Broncos deserve praise for giving

WMU exceeded its $275,000 United Way campaign goal by five percent this year and passed PNC to move up from sixth to fifth place among the county’s top-10 giving organizations. The University is now behind Borgess Health. WMU also figured in the “Top 10 Number of Leadership Givers” in Greater Kalamazoo, that is, the total number of employees contributing $1,000, or more to the campaign.

In addition, WMU exceeded its contributions to United Way in 2009 by more than $21,000. That amount of giving put the University among the top-10 organizations having the greatest increase. The increase put WMU in third place, ahead of Eaton Corp. and behind the Bronson Healthcare Group by less than $900.

Moreover, Joseph G. Reish, dean of University Libraries, was named an Extraordinary Leader for his work as campus chair of the 2010-11 WMU United Way Campaign.

Next employee mixer scheduled

All faculty and staff are invited to a casual Fridays with Friends mixer from 4 to 6 p.m. April 8 in the atrium of the Gilmore Theater Complex. Complimentary light hors d’oeuvres and cash bar will be available.

Retirement-related program slated

Human Resources is offering a retirement-related program called “Asset Allocation and Market Update” Thursday, March 31, in the Bernhard Center. Reservations are required. The program will be presented at 9 a.m. and again at 4 p.m. Visit www.wmich.edu/wmu/news/2011/02/059.shtml for details.

New service learning staffer hired

Shawn Tenney has been named University coordinator for service learning, replacing Kathy Purnell. A native of Kalamazoo, Tenney has deep roots in the community and a passion for service learning.

She earned a master’s degree in social work from WMU and also earned a bachelor’s degree in human development and social relations from Kalamazoo College. There, she was deeply involved in the Mary Jane Underwood Stryker Center for Service Learning, both as a student leader and program evaluator after she graduated.

Tenney, who also has experience as a community organizer and social researcher in Kalamazoo, says she is looking forward to working to expand the availability of high-quality service learning opportunities for WMU students and to deepen their involvement in learning through civic engagement and service to community.

The Office of Service Learning is based in the Lewis Walker Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnic Relations in Welsbom Hall. For more information, visit www.wmich.edu/servicelearning, call (269) 387-2139 or find WMU Service Learning on Facebook.

Medical school receives $100 million gift

A $100 million cash gift, the largest ever made to a Michigan college or university, will be used to give birth to a private medical school at a public institution—Western Michigan University.

Announced March 22 by WMU President John M. Dunn, the anonymous gift is among the 10 largest cash gifts ever made to an American public university and the 15th largest in the history of American higher education. The gift will serve as the foundation funding for a school of medicine that WMU is developing in partnership with Kalamazoo’s two major hospitals, Borgess Health and Bronson Healthcare.

“Yesterday, I spoke with our donors to express the extreme gratitude of this University and this community,” Dunn said at a morning news conference. “This is a historic gift and a historic moment. With their gift, these generous donors are endorsing the vision we’ve developed with our partners. It’s a vision that will transform this community by leveraging its legacy and unique resources.”

In making the announcement, Dunn mentioned key strengths upon which the new medical school will build: the community’s long commitment to higher education, its 125-year history in the life sciences and its 35-year track record of providing third- and fourth-year medical education through two world-class teaching hospitals.

“Education, public/private partnerships and donor commitment are working in Kalamazoo in a way that makes this community an economic development model not just for the state but for the nation,” Dunn said. “I’m so pleased to be a part of a community with the kind of energy and vision that have become Kalamazoo’s hallmarks.”

Top 10 public university cash gifts

1. Oklahoma State $130 million, Time Warner, 2005
3. University of Nebraska $122 million, General Motors, 2006
6. Indiana University at Bloomington $110 million, Lilly Endowment, 2000
7. WMU (tie) $100 million, anonymous donor, 2011
8. Oklahoma State (tie) $100 million, Time Warner, 2011
9. University of Virginia (tie) $100 million, Frank Batten, Sr., 2007
10. University of Utah $100 million, anonymous donor, 2015

Among those participating in the news conference held to announce the historic medical school gift were, from left: Paul Spaulde, CEO of Borgess Health; Frank Sardone, CEO of Bronson Healthcare; and John M. Dunn, WMU president. (Photo by Mike Lanka)
Around campus and beyond

Tsunami-relief dinner is tonight

Enjoy Japanese cuisine and culture while supporting Pacific relief efforts by attending Sushi for Tsunami Relief from 7 to 9 p.m. tonight in the Schedlak residence hall ballroom. Admission is $5 minimum donation, and includes food and entertainment. All proceeds will go to the American Red Cross to help people in Japan and the Pacific affected by this month’s earthquake and tsunami.

OUTspoken schedules fundraiser

The undergraduate organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students and their allies, OUTspoken, will present its sixth annual Drag Show at 7 p.m. Friday, March 25, in the Bernhard Center’s East Ballroom. The show costs $5 and will feature performers from numerous student organizations, special halftime performances by Hip Hop Connection and No Strings Attached, and a judged competition.

Annual food conference slated

Talks by a Feeding America executive and the chair of the Walt Disney Co. will highlight the WMU Food Marketing Conference, Monday and Tuesday, March 28-29, at the Radisson Plaza Hotel in Kalamazoo. The conference annually draws more than 400 food industry executives from around the nation to town.

Event focuses on life science careers

This year’s 2011 Life Sciences Opportunities Day is set for 10 a.m. Wednesday, March 30, in 209 Bernhard Center. For more information and a list of participating employers, visit www.wmich.edu/career and click Events Calendar.

NFL official, former WMU prof to give Keystone talk

National Football League official and WMU professor emeritus Ron Winter will return to WMU Friday, March 25, to talk about the business of officiating football.

Winter will speak as

Ground-breaking study results in book

Marlene Breu, emerita in family and consumer sciences, has co-written a book with Ronald Marchese from the University of Minnesota Duluth. Breu retired at the rank of professor in 2008 after 12-1/2 years on the faculty.

The new book is the result of a ground-breaking study of textile and non-textile artifacts in Istanbul churches that the authors conducted over the span of eight years. It is titled “Splendor & Pageantry: Textile Treasures from the Armenian Orthodox Churches of Istanbul.”

The book contains more than 170 plates of textile items in the church collections and presents historical artifacts that have never before been published. It also contains substantial dialogue about the context within the social, cultural, political and economic parameters that the objects were produced.

Breu’s book is an excellent reference for art historians, textile historians, Armenian scholars, religious historians and others interested in minority populations within the Ottoman Empire. It is available at amazon.com and Barnes & Noble.

Professor awarded $400,000 grant

Karim Essani, biological sciences, has been awarded a three-year $400,000 grant to develop a new, cutting-edge treatment for colorectal cancer using viruses to attack cancer cells without harming normal cells.

The grant was awarded by the National Cancer Institute within the National Institutes of Health and will fund the Experimental Oncolytic Virotherapy Project.

The new virotherapy holds great promise for being more effective in treating colon cancer. And because it doesn’t harm healthy cells, it may not produce the nausea and other undesirable side effects common with chemotherapy and other conventional cancer treatments.

Viruses are very specific in the cells they attack. They often differentiate between species of animals and even the type of cells within that species. So theoretically, a virus could be developed to attack specific cancer cells and leave other cells untouched.

“This is not a new idea, but it has generated new interest in the last 10 years. What we’re doing is really in the beginning, experimental stage,” Essani says. “Unfortunately, it has been very difficult to find such targets in cancer. The reason for this is because it’s very difficult to differentiate between a normal cell and a cancer cell at the molecular level.”

For their project, Essani and his team of three students will initially transplant human colorectal cancer cells onto mice. Then they will see if mutants they have genetically designed from a particular virus can kill the human cancer cells.

The viral cancer therapy would work something like penicillin, which targets bacterial cells, but does not harm normal human cells.

An oncolytic virus, in a similar manner, only infects and destroys cancer cells.
Annual communitywide talk focuses on perseverance, optimism, overcoming adversity

The first physically challenged athlete to receive full certification by the United States Professional Tennis Association as a tennis professional will be the featured speaker during Kalamazoo County’s 13th annual Respecting Differences talk. Tuesday and Wednesday, March 29 and 30.

This year’s talk, “Challenges Are Inevitable. Defeat is Optional,” will be presented by Roger Crawford, a physically challenged athlete who became an NCAA Division I tennis champion and the subject of the Emmy Award-winning movie, “In a New Light.”

The program will be presented at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 29, and repeated at 9:30 a.m. Wednesday, March 30, in Kalamazoo Public School’s Chenery Auditorium, 714 S. Westnedge Ave.

WMU employees should bring their university ID card for admission. They are used by the public safety, maintenance and custodial units.

Nooyer Chevrolet. Also on display were plug-in vehicles owned by John Patten, manufacturing engineering, and WMU.

The University’s growing fleet of energy-efficient vehicles includes two that are all electric and about 50 that are flex-fuel capable. They are used by the public safety, maintenance and custodial units.


Spring semiannual staff award winners selected

Eight staff members have been selected to receive Make a Difference awards for spring 2010-11.

The awards will be presented during a reception at 2 p.m. Monday, April 11, in 157-159 Bernhard Center to:

• Sara Anderson, Human Resources.
• John Boss, Facilities Management-maintenance services.
• Kai Chapman, Development-advance services.
• Teffi Paulet, Institutional Research.
• Timothy Strunk, student affairs-information systems.
• Connie Volenski, economics.
• Kevin West, music.
• Tiffany White, university budgets.

The University community is invited to attend the reception, during which each award recipient will receive a before-tax prize of $300 and a commemorative certificate.

Visit www.wmich.edu/hr/make-a-difference for more information.

Obituaries

Donald E. Bowen died March 10 in Kalamazoo. He was 86.

Bowen joined the faculty in 1953 and retired in 1985 after 32 years of service to the University. He served as head basketball coach from 1958 to 1966. Prior to that, he taught sports and physical education classes while also serving as an assistant coach for football, basketball and baseball.

Bowen earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees from WMU and was a standout member of the football, basketball and baseball teams.

He went on to play professional basketball for four years.

Rollin G. Douma died March 12 in Kalamazoo. He was 70.

Douma of Kalamazoo came to WMU in 1970 and retired in 2006 as associate vice president for academic affairs and associate professor emeritus of English after 36 years of service to the University.

Spring at the traditional 120-volt rate, the other can plug in for a 240-volt quick charge.

Anyone who goes to the ChargePoint America website at www.chargepointamerica.com and obtains a special swipe card may use the chargers for free.

WMU had several vehicles on hand at the unveiling event. The Volt was borrowed from Todd Bannnon of Kalamazoo, who pre-ordered the car last October and picked it up March 19 from De-
Medical school receives $100 million gift

For the past three years, WMU, Borgess and Bronson have been working together to develop the new WMU School of Medicine. Dunn was joined at the March 22 news conference by the CEOs of the two hospitals, Paul Spaulde of Borgess and Frank Sardone of Bronson, and by the founding dean of the school of medicine, Dr. Hal B. Jenson, whose appointment was announced Jan. 25.

Since the beginning of discussions about establishing a medical school, the University and its community partners have said the school would be privately funded.

“We’ve known for some time that this is the right time and place to launch a medical school for the 21st century, and this gift signals that this community and region.” Dunn said that while the donors have indicated they wish to make the gift anonymously at this point, it is possible that they will agree to be identified at some point in the future.

“Of course we will honor their wishes, but we hope some day to be able to acknowledge them by name and thank them again for their generosity,” he said. “There is the kind of support we will need on many fronts as we continue to move forward and grow as a research university. Such donor support is more important than ever in these challenging economic times.”

Private fundraising for the WMU School of Medicine, Dunn noted, is part of an overall capital campaign for the University that will be formally announced later this year. “This gift was made specifically for the medical school initiative. But it serves as an example of the type of historic work we will continue to do at Western Michigan University with the help of our donors,” Dunn said. “There are more opportunities and a need for donors who want to be part of this initiative or who want to help make history by supporting work in other disciplines. This gift marks a milestone, but we are not finished.”

The WMU School of Medicine will open in fall 2013 or 2014. Visit www.wmich.edu/medicine for more information.