

College of Arts and Sciences
2009 Alumni Achievement Awards

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Welcome

The College of Arts and Sciences has played a dynamic role in the growth and development of Western Michigan University. The College's 27 departments, schools, and interdisciplinary programs provide the educational foundation for every student who enrolls at WMU.

Our alumni have been major contributors to our national reputation and recognition, and we currently have more than 48,000 alumni nationwide.

The Alumni Achievement Awards program began in 1997 as a way of reconnecting our students and faculty with our alumni, as well as our alumni with the College. The awards are given in recognition of the recipients' achievements in their fields and for their service to their former departments.

Not every department makes a recommendation every year. While each of the departments in the College provides different opportunities for the Alumni Award recipients, most recipients spend a day or two on campus talking with students and faculty about their careers and experiences at WMU.

We applaud those alumni listed within these pages and invite you to browse the outstanding accomplishments of this year's winners.



Thomas Kent,
Dean, College of
Arts and Sciences



Anthropology

Brent Metz

Brent Metz received a B.A. in Anthropology and Spanish from WMU in 1986; an M.A. in Anthropology in 1989 from U-Michigan; and his Ph.D. in 1995 from SUNY-Albany. As an assistant professor of Anthropology at the University of Kansas, Metz's interests lie in the study of the relationship between Ch'orti' Maya political economy and ethos in Guatemala.

Metz has taught at WMU, Central Connecticut State, Grinnell, and Temple and served as the associate director of Latin American Studies at the University of Kansas. Among his publications are "Primeros Dios: Etnografía y cambio social entre los Mayas Ch'orti's del oriente de Guatemala," (2002); and "Ch'orti'-Maya Survival in Eastern Guatemala: Indigeneity in Transition (2006); The Ch'orti' Maya Area, Past and Present," (2009).

Chemistry

James Dabrowiak

James Dabrowiak earned a Ph.D. in Chemistry from WMU in 1970. As a professor of Chemistry at Syracuse University, Dabrowiak's focus is on synthesis and characterization of cobalt-amino acid complexes.

Dabrowiak completed his post-doctoral research at The Ohio State University and his research interests have focused on the interactions of metal with biologically important molecules. Most notable is his research on the action of platinum-based anticancer drugs.

His laboratory also pioneered the development of quantitative footprinting analysis for studying of sequence specificity of drugs interacting with DNA and RNA and Dabrowiak served as a consultant for Bristol Myers Squibb during the development of the platinum drugs.

In 1985 Dabrowiak received an American Cancer Society Scholar Award.





Communication

Judith S. Trent

Judith S. Trent graduated with a B.S. from WMU, and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. Her area of expertise is in political communication and Trent serves as a professor of Communication in the Department of Communication at University of Cincinnati.

Trent has authored, co-authored, or edited 23 books or book chapters, 39 academic journal articles and made more than 200 presentations at state, regional, national, and international communication conferences. She is best known for her co-authorship of "Political Campaign Communication: Principles and Practices."

Trent has served as association vice president and association university dean for Research and Advanced Studies at University of Cincinnati; as president of the Central States Communication Association and National Communication Association. She also has held positions as a media commentator during 1992 through 2004 presidential campaigns; political analyst for television affiliates in Cincinnati; researcher in New Hampshire during the presidential primary campaign; and was featured on CBS TV evening "National News."

In 2004, she received the National Communication Association's Distinguished Service Award and was inducted into Central States Communication Association's Hall of Fame in 2006. In 2009, she was selected as a Centennial Scholar by the Eastern States Communication Association.

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Comparative Religion

J. Rebecca Lyman

J. Rebecca Lyman received her B.A. (*summa cum laude*) in Religion and History from WMU in 1976; an M.A. in Medieval and Byzantine Studies from The Catholic University of America in 1979; and her Ph.D. in Theology from the University of Oxford in 1983. Lyman is the Samuel Garrett Professor of Church History (Emerita) at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific, Berkeley, Calif. and her interests are in religion and philosophy.

Lyman is the author of numerous articles and books, including "Christology and Cosmology: Models of Divine Activity in Origen, Eusebius, and Athanasius," "Early Christian Traditions," and "The New Church's Teaching Series," (1999). Dr. Lyman is an ordained Episcopalian priest.





Economics

Alketa Hysenbegasi

Alketa Hysenbegasi obtained a B.S. in applied mathematics from the University of Tirana, Albania; her diploma in Postgraduate studies in applied economics from Institute for Advance studies in Vienna, Austria; an M.S. in Applied Mathematics for Finance from Baruch College of CUNY; an M.S. degree in Economics and a Ph.D. in Applied Economics from WMU 2001.

She currently serves as managing director for quantitative risk management at the Bank of New York Mellon. During her career, she has served as Citigroup Bank senior analyst developing statistical models to support marketing and risk management; and vice president and association project manager for the bank as well. Her work also includes the development of models used to track major economic indicators to be used in developing real-time trading strategies for fixed income securities

Hysenbegasi also has taught for the Department of Economics at Baruch College, CUNY, as an adjunct, assistant professor, and lecturer.

English

Karl R. Sandelin

Karl R. Sandelin, a native of Helsinki, Finland received his Bachelor's degree in English with minors in German and Group Science from WMU in 1950. He went on to complete a Master's in Teaching of Languages in 1953 from WMU. Sandelin retired from Kalsec in 1988 where he was involved with international commerce.

In 1958 he became vice president for production at Kalsec, a local company that produces spice, herb, hop, and vegetable extracts for use in food, beverage and pharmaceutical applications. In 1970 he assumed responsibility for International Operations, overseeing a facility in Ethiopia. He also directed Kalsec's worldwide raw material acquisition and the export of Kalsec products.

His awards and involvement include Michigan Exporter of the Year Award in 1987; Kalamazoo Public Schools board member from 1966-1970, governor of Rotary District 6360, elected representative to the Rotary International's Councils on Legislation, Senior Warden of St. Luke's Episcopal Church, and founder and President of Kalamazoo's "Walking Together," a non-profit community initiative aiming at reducing illnesses that are preventable through increased physical activity.





Foreign Languages and Spanish

Roberto Zuniga

Robert Zuniga received his B.A. from WMU in 1989; studied at University of Guadalajara, fall 1989; and graduated tied for top of his class from the Kalamazoo Valley Community College Police Academy.

He currently serves as a lieutenant and public safety officer for the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety where he utilizes his skills in Spanish/translation. During his career, Zuniga has served as a public safety officer, undercover narcotics investigator, hostage negotiator, background investigator, and recruiter.

He serves as a crisis intervention team officer, liaison with Hispanic American Council of Kalamazoo, and interpreter for KDPS, and has been honored with the Life Saving Award, Chief's Award of Excellence, and the Award of Merit. He was promoted to sergeant in 1999 and to lieutenant in 2005.

Geography

Steven R. Deisler

Steven R. Deisler earned his B.S. in Geography and Urban Planning from WMU in 1979. He currently serves as vice president of Downtown Kalamazoo Incorporated; including the organization's real estate holdings, implementation of the Downtown Vision Plan, and economic development projects.

He also coordinates business development functions and the downtown parking system. His field of urban planning, urban design, and economic development field project manager earned him the urban planning certification from the American Institute of Certified Planners in 1995. In 2003, Deisler became a Leadership Kalamazoo graduate.

Deisler is a member of the American Planning Association, International Council of Shopping Centers, International Economic Development Council, and has been affiliated with International Downtown Association since 1999. He was employed with the City of Kalamazoo for 19 years in the Economic Development and Planning Department.





Geosciences

Eliot Atekwana

Eliot Atekwana obtained his B.S. in Geology from University of Maryland in 1984; an M.S. in 1987 from Howard University; and a Ph.D. from WMU in 1996. Atekwana's work includes the application of stable isotopes of carbon in understanding carbon flow, groundwater contamination and stream water-groundwater interaction down gradient of the Cox Street unlined landfill in Kalamazoo, Mich.

Since 2006, Atekwana has served as associate professor at the Boone Pickens School of Geology, Oklahoma State University. He previously taught in the WMU Department of Geosciences from 1997-1998; then as an assistant professor at Central Michigan University, Indiana University, Purdue University, and the University of Missouri-Rolla (now Missouri University of Science and Technology).

He is a member of the American Geophysical Union, Geological Society of America, and the National Association of Black Geologists and Geophysicists. He has received five National Science Foundation grants and was awarded the 2008 Sterling Burks Award for Outstanding Environmental Research at OSU. He has been recognized by the Symposium on the Application of Geophysics to Environmental and Engineering Problems; the Governor of Indiana (Environmental Award); as a faculty member at Indiana University, and Purdue University Indianapolis Center for Earth and Environmental Science.

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History

Richard M. Hughey, Sr.

Richard M. Hughey, Sr. received a B.A. in History from WMU in 1952, and his J.D. in 1957 from the University of Michigan. He is the retired president and partner of the law firm of Deming, Hughey, Chapman, Richardson, and Bosch, PC.

Hughey also served as a member of the Kalamazoo County Bar Association (secretary, 1959-1960 and President 1974-1975). His expertise in the field of law includes estate planning and probate, corporate, real estate, and foundation law.

Hughey is an engaged alumnus of Western Michigan University. He is a member of the WMU Foundation Board of Trustees and has served on the Haworth College of Business Advisory Council and the WMU Campaign for Excellence organizing committee. He was a member of the Alumni Association Board of Directors from 1974 to 1977, and he is a member of the President's Circle and a life member of the WMU Alumni Association.





Mallinson Institute for Science Education

Sam Yoveff

Sam Yoveff earned his B.A. in Science from WMU in 1965; his Ph.D. in Science Education in 1972, and was a member of the first group of graduate students enrolled in the Science Education program at WMU.

Yoveff retired as director of curriculum at the Community Unit School District #100, Belvidere, Ill. He previously served as a physical science instructor at Highland Park Community College, Highland Park, Mich.; head of Science Department at Belvidere High School; K-12 Science Coordinator; and Science/Math Media Services Director.

Yoveff has served on the boards of several professional associations, including the Illinois Earth Science Association and the Illinois Science Teachers Association; the Belvidere Park District Association, and the Boone County Arts Council.

Since retirement, he has been a consultant with the Prentice Hall Division of Pearson Education. In addition, he has worked at the Discovery Center Science Museum in Rockford, Ill. He recently assisted in the planning and design of a new exhibit "Get the Message" which deals with an explanation of satellite communications.

Mathematics

Brian L. Garman

Mendon, Michigan native Brian Garman completed his undergraduate studies at Cornell University in 1967. Brian returned to Michigan to teach at Three Rivers High School, and began his graduate work at Western in 1971. This culminated in his Ph.D. in Mathematics in 1976 under the direction of Professor Art White in the area of graph theory. After postgraduate appointments at the University of Kentucky and Wesleyan College of Georgia, Garman accepted a position in 1980 at the University of Tampa in Tampa, Florida, where he currently serves as Associate Professor of Mathematics.

Throughout his career, Garman has displayed a passion and a talent for applying his knowledge of graph theory and computers to the solution of practical problems. Most notably, Garman developed an algorithm to manage scheduling for the U.S. Tennis Association's Boys 18-16 National Championships, held each year in Kalamazoo. That solution evolved into the Garman System, which is a computer system for scheduling matches now used for all USTA matches, as stipulated in their official rules.

Brian has served as Assistant Referee for the NCAA tennis championships since 1980, and as Assistant Director of the Boys' tournament in Kalamazoo. On May 20th of this year, Garman was inducted into the ITA Men's Collegiate Tennis Hall of Fame as a Contributor in recognition of his achievements. Players recognized by the ITA include Arthur Ashe, Jimmy Connors, John McEnroe, and Stan Smith.



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Philosophy

Kristin DeKam

Kristin DeKam earned her B.A. in 1991 from Michigan State in social work and psychology and then spent three years teaching at universities in the People's Republic of China. After China, she studied English and philosophy for three years at Western, earning her M.A. in Philosophy in 1999.

She taught philosophy at Western as a full-time adjunct and left the position to teach in the humanities department at Kalamazoo Valley Community College. DeKam now is a tenured professor at KVCC and teaches philosophy, contemporary art, and world mythology. Until recently, she acted as the interim chair of humanities and mentored part-time faculty.

In 2007, while on sabbatical, she researched the use of myth in the work of artist Kiki Smith, academician Estella Lauter, and poet Eleanor Wilner.

Presently, she is studying Julia Kristeva's semiotics in the context of evaluating the ability of individuals to make meaning, individuals who suffered severe trauma before learning how to speak.

Psychology

Leslie Braksick

Leslie Braksick obtained an M.A. in Industrial and Organizational Psychology in 1987 from WMU and a Ph.D. in Behavior Analysis in 1990 from WMU making her the youngest person in WMU history to earn a doctoral degree. Braksick is an entrepreneur, CEO coach, consultant, author, speaker, and board member on several boards including CLG, Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, Imani Christian Academy, and the board of Princeton Theological Seminary. She is co-founder of The Continuous Learning Group, Inc (1993), a global management consultancy that uses behavioral solutions to address a company's greatest needs and challenges. Continuous Learning Group was listed as one of the top 100 fastest-growing companies in Pittsburgh and rated among the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's* Top 50 Best Places to Work in 2007.

In 2006 Braksick received the Athena Award from the Allegheny Conference in recognition of her excellence in professional and community leadership. In 2002 she was recognized as one of the top 50 women business leaders in Pennsylvania and was named a Carlow College Woman of Spirit— an award given to women who exemplify leadership excellence in their professional and personal lives. She was also named a Pittsburgh Pacesetter in Business in 2002.





Statistics

Barbara McKinney

Barbara McKinney earned her M.S. in Biostatistics from WMU in 1979. Her studies focused primarily on statistics and mathematics.

After graduation, McKinney was offered the position of assistant director of Modular Math at WMU, where she taught courses, supervised graduate students teaching the courses, and assisted with the development of the new course, Math 109.

After serving as assistant to the chair of the department, McKinney began working on the implementation of WMU's online student information system, Banner. McKinney has served as the Registrar at Western Michigan University since fall 2004.

McKinney also has worked with several textbook publishing companies reviewing and critiquing new textbooks in math and statistics, and also writing supplementary materials like study guides.

She has been involved in MACRAO (Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers), and other professional committees both on and off campus.

College of Arts and Sciences Facts:

- we are the largest of six academic colleges at Western Michigan University, with 341 tenured or tenure-track faculty
- we offer more than 130 majors, minors, and programs and enroll more than 1,200 graduate students
- we generate 55% of WMU's total number of student credit hours; \$85 million in tuition for the university
- two of our faculty have been awarded Fulbright Awards for 2010
- a Physics faculty member recently was awarded a grant for \$3 million for research at Stanford University.
- our Director of Advising and a Foreign Languages faculty member received the 2009 Lee Honors College Distinguished Service Award
- seven of WMU's 15 2009 Medallion Scholars will major in a CAS program
- 19 of 20 WMU Presidential Scholars are CAS students
- a CAS graduate has become the first female African president in her home country of Uganda.
- we grant an average of 55 Ph.D. degrees each year—enough degrees alone to qualify WMU as a Carnegie Research University
- our faculty accounted for \$53,491,311 in sponsored research during the previous five years, an average of \$10.6 million each year
- we are home to a Confucius Institute, providing new Chinese language and cultural studies options
- we have joined with University of Malta to launch a collaborative degree program—a dual Master of Arts in Criminology, Law and Public Policy
- our faculty have received the most prestigious awards in higher education, including a McArthur Grant, Guggenheim Fellowships, a Humboldt Foundation Fellowship, the Alexander Gode Medal, NSF Achievement Grants, Fulbright Fellowships, NEA Fellowships, and appointments to national academies
- two of our faculty were named Emerging Faculty Scholars by Western Michigan University for 2009

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