



# **College of Arts and Sciences**

## **2012 Alumni Achievement Awards**



WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY  
**College of Arts and Sciences**

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## Welcome

The College of Arts and Sciences has played a key and dynamic role in the growth and development of Western Michigan University. The College's 26 departments, schools and interdisciplinary programs provide the educational foundation and critical liberal arts core for every student who enrolls at WMU.

I am very proud of our Arts and Sciences alumni – they have been major contributors to our national reputation and recognition, and we currently have more than 48,000 alumni both nationwide and around the globe.

The Arts and Sciences Alumni Achievement Award program began in 1997 as a mechanism to reconnect our current students and faculty with our outstanding alumni, as well as our alumni with the College. These awards are given in recognition of the recipients' tremendous achievements in their fields, and for their service to their former departments.

We applaud those alumni listed within these pages and invite you to browse the outstanding accomplishments of this year's awardees. Congratulations to each Alumni Achievement Award recipient!

*Alexander J. Enyedi, Dean  
College of Arts and Sciences*



## World Languages & Literatures Jeanne Friedman

Jeanne Friedman is a Latin teacher at Portage Northern High School. She received her Bachelor's degree from Western Michigan University in 1992 and returned to earn a Master's degree in Educational Technology in 2004. She

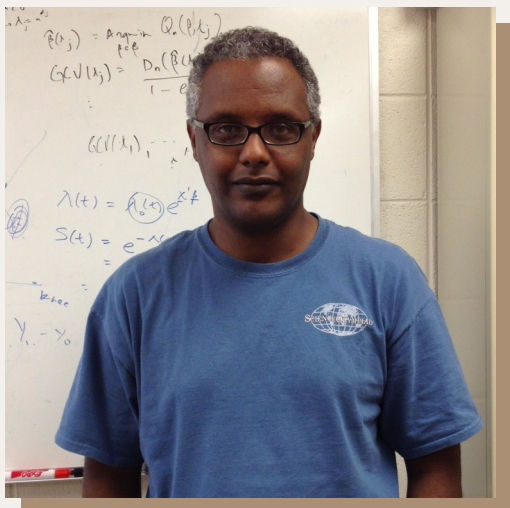
taught in South Bend (IN) and Flint (MI) before joining the faculty at Portage where she has developed a following of loyal students and alumni.

Friedman maintains 120-160 students in the Latin program. For the past twelve years, she has put her remarkable teaching ability to good use in Portage's International Baccalaureate Program. During that time more than 100 students have passed the rigorous testing required to receive either an IB certificate in Latin or the full IB diploma using Latin as one of their language requirements.

Friedman leads the Latin Club, which celebrates events such as the Saturnalia celebration, the Roman banquet, the Latin Olympics, and also performs various community service activities.

When asked what she especially enjoys about teaching Latin, Friedman writes: "I love to watch students who think 'Latin is dead' realize daily that it comes to life when we speak English, enjoy architecture, discuss politics, consider the military or pursue the study of Romance languages. Every day we reinforce that Latin is NOT dead, but rather, immortal." Paying tribute to WMU Professor Emeritus Robert Griffin, she adds that "without his guidance and encouragement, I would assuredly not be where I am today."

Friedman is a native of Portage and lives with her husband, Mark, who is a WMU alumnus and an engineer at Humphrey Products, and their two children.



## Statistics

### Asheber (Ash) Abebe

Asheber (Ash) Abebe obtained his Ph.D. in Statistics in the Department of Statistics at Western Michigan University in 2002. He had entered WMU's doctoral program after receiving a B.S. in Statistics from Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, 1995.

In only 10 years after receiving his doctorate,

Ash has become an acclaimed researcher in Statistics. He has authored or co-authored over 25 refereed publications in Statistics and has been PI or Co-PI on 5 NSF funded grants totaling over \$5 million. These grants include not only research grants in statistics but, also, grants (as listed below) for his notable outreach work in the expansion of mathematical sciences education in Sub-Saharan Africa and in the education of disadvantaged children.

- US-Africa Advanced Study Institute and Workshop Series in Mathematical Sciences, Co-PI, NSF, DMS-1050259.
- Collaborative Research: Alabama Alliance for Students with Disabilities in STEM, Co-PI, NSF, HRD-0929268.
- NSF GK-12 Fellows in Science and Mathematics for East Alabama Schools, NSF, DGE-0538434.

Ash has received Auburn University's Graduate Faculty Mentorship Award (2008) and Outstanding Outreach Award (2012). He has supervised five Ph.D. students and several masters students.

Ash resides in metro Atlanta with his wife and two sons.



## Anthropology

### Marla Buckmaster

Marla M. Buckmaster earned a B.A. from Western Michigan University majoring in Art and Anthropology in 1965. Just weeks before she graduated the State Legislature approved the Anthropology major for WMU, making her the first WMU student to graduate with a major in Anthropology. She

continued her education at Michigan State University earning both an M.A. and a Ph.D. with a concentration in Great Lakes Archaeology.

She accepted a temporary one year position at Northern Michigan University as an instructor while she completed her dissertation, and continued on the faculty at NMU until her retirement as professor in 2007.

During her career she excavated on sites in Arkansas, Kentucky and Michigan, and is recognized for her innovations in archaeological survey methodology. She also excavated the only Scottsbluff site in Michigan, one of the most important sites in the state.

Dr. Buckmaster received an Outstanding Faculty Award in 1994 and was one of only 25 Peter White Scholars. In 2007 her former students organized a symposium in Great Lakes Archaeology at the annual meeting of the Society of American Archeology in honor of her retirement. These students also published a festschrift volume entitled A Superior Kind of Archaeology: Papers in Honor of Marla M. Buckmaster in 2009.

Although retired she is currently excavating a proto-historic site in Marquette County with the help of a group of volunteers.



## Biological Sciences

### Rhonda Snook

Rhonda R. Snook received her Bachelor of Science from the Department of Biological Sciences at Western Michigan University in 1989. She received a National Science Foundation (NSF) Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant during her Ph.D. at Arizona State University, awarded in Zoology

in 1995. Dr. Snook then moved to the University of Chicago on a postdoctoral National Institute of Health National Research Service Award Fellowship. She is currently a reader in evolutionary biology in the Department of Animal and Plant Sciences, University of Sheffield, UK.

Dr. Snook's research has been funded continuously since 1997, including the NSF's most prestigious award to junior faculty, the CAREER award, and from the National Environment Research Council in the UK and the European Union, totaling approximately \$4 million. She has authored more than 50 manuscripts, organized symposia at international meetings, presented research at national and international meetings, given seminars at national and international meetings, and has served as an editor on several major evolutionary journals since 2003. She has mentored dozens of undergraduates, masters and Ph.D. students. She is particularly interested in promoting women in science.

Dr. Snook's research interests include how interactions between males and females influence the evolution of the sexes, from the genome to gametes to effects on behavior, morphology and physiology, and how such changes may generate reproductive isolation between populations. Her work primarily uses techniques of experimental evolution to study evolution in real time. More recently, Dr. Snook has been awarded funding to understand the role of genome structure in mediating local adaptation to climate change.



## Spanish

### Rebekah Friesen

Rebekah Friesen is a seasoned human resources professional with extensive experience working with and for the Hispanic communities in the United States. Throughout her career, Rebekah has worked with diverse communities in the public health and community development sectors.

She currently serves as the Director of Staff Development at Latino Community Credit Union (LCCU) in North Carolina. LCCU is a community development credit union that serves the underserved, unbanked immigrant population throughout the state. Approximately 95% of staff and members are native Spanish speakers from Latin America and Spain. She is responsible for designing, planning and implementing sustainable development and engagement programs. She works closely with the executive team and staff to ensure the credit union reaches their goals of building wealth and providing economic opportunities to all of the communities where they live and serve.

Rebekah earned her Bachelor's degree in Spanish and Social Psychology from Western Michigan University in 2005. While at Western, she participated in two study abroad programs, one in Burgos, Spain (fall 2003) and the other in Querétaro, Mexico (spring 2004).

Originally from Troy, Michigan, Rebekah currently lives and works in Durham, North Carolina, a city that prides itself on a rich, diverse and welcoming community. Other interests include volunteer work with Leukemia and Lymphoma Society Team-in-Training, Spanish Red Cross, DIF *Caminando Juntos* (assistant in government run orphanage) and assisting start-up organizations in organizational development. She also organizes running groups and is a fitness instructor in kickboxing and other fitness classes.



## Public Affairs and Administration

### Daniel J. Hurley

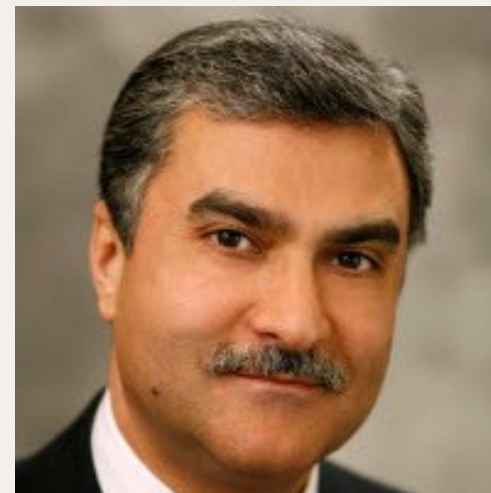
Daniel Hurley is the Director of State Relations and Policy Analysis for the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU). The Washington, D.C.-based association is the leadership organization of

400 public college and university presidents, chancellors and system heads from throughout the United States.

Hurley provides analysis and commentary on a broad range of institutional practices and policy issues impacting higher education. His expertise includes issues related to college readiness, access and affordability, student success, higher education finance and the “public good” of public postsecondary education. His perspectives have been cited in such outlets as the *Boston Globe*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post* and C-SPAN.

Prior to joining the AASCU, Hurley served as the Director of University Relations and Administrative Services for the Presidents Council–State Universities of Michigan, from 2003 to 2007. From 1998 to 2003, he served as the Administrative Assistant to the President at Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Michigan.

Hurley received a Ph.D. in public administration from Western Michigan University, a master’s degree in career and technical education from Ferris State University (MI) and a bachelor’s degree in public relations from Grand Valley State University (MI). He has served as an adjunct professor for all three of his alma maters, as well as George Mason University (VA), teaching in the fields of communications, educational leadership, and public policy. He is married to Jana Hurley, a student affairs and business affairs administrator at George Mason University. They have one son, Jameson, age 6.



## Chemistry

### Hashem Akhavan-Tafti

Akhavan-Tafti holds a B.S. degree in Chemistry from Kalamazoo College, a M.S. degree in Organic Chemistry from Western Michigan University in 1988 with Dr. Donald Berndt, and a Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry from Wayne State University in 1989.

Dr. Akhavan-Tafti is vice president of research for Beckman Coulter’s Immunoassay and Molecular Diagnostics group in Southfield, MI, where he manages a team of scientists developing innovative detection technologies for clinical and life-science laboratories. He began his career in 1989 at Lumigen (later acquired by Beckman Coulter).

Dr. Akhavan-Tafti holds more than 70 U.S. patents and 100 international patents related to chemiluminescent substrates for medical diagnostic assays. His inventions have had a profound impact on the field of chemiluminescence, and are used worldwide in automated systems for the detection of alkaline phosphatase conjugates and in ultrasensitive assays in life-science research and human identity testing.

More than a billion tests are conducted annually using substrates. His team has refined methods for chemiluminescent enhancement, developed applications for DNA and protein detection, and developed methods for nucleic acid purification. A few examples of the advances developed under his direction include: Lumigen PPD, Lumi-Phos 530, Lumigen APS-5 enzyme substrates used worldwide in clinical diagnostic assays, an innovative no-wash immunoassay technology (SPARCL) that offers significant time saving in high-throughput screening, and a novel nucleic acid isolation chemistry (SNAP) that will be featured on a fully automated molecular diagnostics system expected to accelerate the migration of molecular diagnostic testing to hospital laboratories.



## Communication

### Carleen Crawford

Carleen Mlynarek Crawford is Vice President of Marketing and Communications for Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services, the largest free-standing provider of comprehensive mental and behavioral health services in Michigan.

In addition to leading the development of strategy and planning for marketing and communications for the entire organization, she is responsible for day-to-day management of corporate branding, marketing, internal communication, public and media relations and crisis communications.

Crawford has a 25-year career in public relations and corporate communications. She has held management positions in broadcast media, health care and higher education. In 2003 she launched her own consulting firm, Crawford Communications, providing public relations, marketing and communications counsel to a diverse client base consisting of insurance, manufacturing, professionals, nonprofit agencies and municipalities and health care.

Crawford has also been active in her community. Most recently, she served as President of the Board of Directors of GROW (Grand Rapids Opportunities for Women) and has been a board member of several nonprofit groups including the Meijer Charity Classic, the Marketing/Outreach Committee for the Grand Rapids City and Public Schools community initiative Expanded Learning Opportunities/The LOOP. She is a past Allocations Executive Committee Chair and Board Member of Heart of West Michigan United Way.

Crawford earned her B.A. in Communication Arts and Sciences (1970) and her M.A. in Organizational Communication (1999).



## Psychology

### Henry D. Schlinger

Hank Schlinger is a graduate of Western Michigan University's behavior analysis doctoral program where he studied with Jack Michael. He then completed a post-doctoral fellowship in behavioral pharmacology with Alan Poling before accepting a position at Western New England University where he became a full professor of psychology. He left that position to pursue a career in music. He eventually began working part-time, then full

-time, at California State University, Los Angeles, where he is now an Associate Professor and Director of the Behavior Analysis Program.

Dr. Schlinger is internationally recognized for his scholarship both in the experimental analysis of behavior and on the extrapolation of behavior analysis concepts to a broad array of topics, including language, cognition and consciousness. Schlinger has co-authored two behavioral-analytic introductory psychology books and a book providing a thoroughly behavior-analytic approach to child development. He has published a substantial number of high quality empirical and conceptual articles dealing with verbal behavior the experimental analysis of behavior and behavioral pharmacology, as well as numerous columns and letters in popular media outlets. Dr. Schlinger is the past editor of *The Analysis of Verbal Behavior* and current editor of *The Behavior Analyst*, the flagship publication of the Association for Behavior Analysis, International.

Sample publications include:

Schlinger, H. D. (1995). *A behavior-analytic view of child development* (textbook)  
Of planets and cognitions: The use of deductive inference in the natural sciences and psychology. *The Skeptical Inquirer*  
The myth of intelligence. *The Psychological Record*  
Consciousness is nothing but a word. *Skeptic*  
Some clarifications on the role of inner speech in consciousness. *Consciousness and Cognition*



## Department of Political Science & Environmental Studies Program

### Erich Pica

Friends of the Earth President Erich Pica is a nationally recognized expert on energy subsidies who has worked to reform U.S. tax

and budget policy in ways that reduce pollution and spark a transition to clean energy.

Before becoming Friends of the Earth's president in 2009, Erich served as the organization's director of domestic programs. He designed and launched many of Friends of the Earth's campaigns including efforts to bring emerging technologies such as nanotechnology and synthetic biology under greater public and regulatory control and to reform how the federal government manages and invests in transportation.

*Washingtonian* calls Pica one of Washington, D.C.'s "40 Power Brokers Under 40." He was named by *Washington Life Magazine* as one of Washington's "Green City Leaders." He has testified before Congress and appeared extensively in the media, including on NBC Nightly News, the News Hour, and Bill Moyers Journal. Pica has been interviewed by National Public Radio and PRI's Marketplace and has been quoted in publications including *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *The Economist*, *Financial Times*, *Los Angeles Times* and *The New Yorker*.

Pica comes from a family of farmers and educators in southwest Michigan. He discovered his passion for the environment while attending Western Michigan University. After graduating he moved with his wife-to-be Amy to the Washington, D.C. area. He is a trombonist and has played with the Montgomery County Symphony Orchestra, is an avid golf hacker and enjoys working in his small, organic vegetable garden.



## Comparative Religion Christine Blakeney

Christine Blakeney earned her degree in Comparative Religion from Western Michigan University in 1971 graduating Cum Laude. She was also awarded the Cornelius Lowe Award for Excellence in Religion and Philosophy. She writes that she is eternally grateful to have been a Religion Major. She

says, "learning to read deeply, to write well and to love a subject creates a sense of yourself as a learner; as a person who can learn whatever you need to. The experience of creative flow and energy that comes from doing well in a challenging class stays with you forever. Work in the Humanities opens your mind and your heart."

After leaving WMU, Dr. Blakeney briefly studied to be a teacher but soon turned to medicine. In 1981 she earned her Doctorate of Osteopathic Medicine from Michigan State University. She served in rural general practice for many years while also serving as an assistant clinical professor of osteopathic medicine at MSU.

Eventually she grew tired offering care in a system that allowed only limited time with each patient and she joined the innovative Center for Optimal Health in 2009 where her primary specialty is Family Practice and her secondary specialty is Preventive Medicine, Anti-Aging & Regenerative Medicine. In all of this, her experience at WMU played a role.

She writes, "I know my work as a physician is colored every day by my undergraduate education at Western Michigan University – my interest in people and their stories enriches patient care. Patients need to be heard in order for healing to begin – in fact, hearing a patient's story is healing in itself. The open-mindedness that comes to a religion major after studying so many ways that humans relate to their deepest experiences erases any tendency to judge others."



## Economics

### Carlos Vargas-Silva

Carlos Vargas-Silva earned his Ph.D. in Applied Economics from Western Michigan University in 2006. His dissertation on migrant remittances was awarded first place in the Inter-American Development Bank's dissertation awards. Prior to his arrival at

WMU, Dr. Vargas-Silva earned his M.A. and B.A. degrees in Economics from the University of Puerto Rico. Upon graduation from WMU, he was awarded the George Washington Henderson Post-Doctoral Fellowship from the Department of Economics at the University of Vermont. Upon completion of that fellowship, he joined the faculty at Sam Houston State University as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics and International Business.

Dr. Vargas-Silva currently is Senior Researcher at the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society at the University of Oxford. His research publications include work on remittances and migration and has been published in numerous journals, including the *Journal of Macroeconomics*, *Review of Development Economics*, *Empirical Economics*, and *Journal of Development Studies*. Additionally, he is editor of *Handbook on Research Methods in Migration* (2012) and coedited *Migration and Economic Growth* (2012). His work as a professional economist spans the spectrum from academic research to applied policy research.



## Physics

### Robert Poel

Robert H. Poel is an Emeritus Professor of Physics from Western Michigan University but is still active in the field of science education and science teacher preparation.

Recently, he served as co-chair of the Michigan Department of Education's High School Science Education Project and

worked specifically with the physics work group that wrote the physics expectations. He is the co-Principle Investigator (co-PI) on a project that recently published a middle school physical science textbook titled, *InterActions in Physical Science*, that is based upon National Science Education Standards and the latest research findings in how students develop a deep understanding of basic physical science concepts and the nature of scientific inquiry. His previous teaching experience includes work at the middle school, high school, undergraduate and graduate level with recent emphasis in curriculum development, in-service teacher professional development and teacher preparation. Professional memberships involving various committee positions and offices include Michigan Science Teachers Association, National Science Teachers Association and the American Association of Physics Teachers. Currently, he is a member of the International Physics Education Committee of the American Association of Physics Teachers (AAPT). At WMU he was a member of the Mallinson Institute for Science Education (MISE) and Director of the Center for Science Education that provided a wide-range of professional development opportunities for K-12 science teachers via summer short courses, workshops and extended programs with school districts. These efforts were supported by numerous funded grants to the university from the National Science Foundation, the Michigan Department of Education and regional and local school districts totaling over \$4 million.



## Philosophy Dylan Schmorrow

Captain Schmorrow is currently serving in the Office of the Secretary of Defense as the Deputy Director for Human Performance, Training and BioSystems with purview over the defense technology areas of human performance, medical, man-machine systems, training, civil engineering, environmental quality and

chemical and biological defense. Responsibilities include providing technical leadership, management oversight, policy guidance and coordination for over \$4 billion in research and engineering programs in the Department of Defense (DoD).

He collaborates with the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Homeland Security and other federal agencies to directly include government, academic and industry researchers in advancing efforts in these technical areas. He also leads DoD's international efforts to promote and conduct cooperative scientific research and exchange of technical information through the NATO Research and Technology Organization and is the U.S. National Representative of The Technical Cooperation Program's Human Resources and Performance Group.

Dr. Schmorrow received a commission in the U.S. Navy upon graduating from WMU in 1993 with his Ph.D. in Psychology and M.A. in Philosophy. He then completed naval flight training in April 1994 and has served in a wide variety of scientific leadership positions with both the Navy and DoD. He has authored over fifty scientific publications, lectured internationally and edited a dozen professional journals and books. He is a recipient of the Navy's Top Scientists and Engineers Award, as well as the Society of U.S. Naval Flight Surgeons' Sonny Carter Memorial and the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society's Leland S. Kollmorgen Spirit of Innovation Award for his contributions to operational neuroscience that led to the founding of the field of Augmented Cognition.



## English Tisha Pankop

Tisha Pankop is in her 18<sup>th</sup> year of teaching at Loy Norrix High School in Kalamazoo. She holds a B.A. and an M.A. from the Western Michigan University Department of English. Under her supervision, the Loy Norrix student newspaper "Knight Life", has won many prestigious awards from the Michigan Interscholastic Press Association, including the top rating for Michigan

high school newspapers, The Spartan Award in 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2011. Among her many honors are Golden Pen award winner, top journalism teacher in Michigan for the 2005-2006 school year, MEA Human Rights 2008 Elizabeth Siddall Award, Excellence In Education, Significant Educator Award (five times), and National Board Certification in 2006.

Her students have engaged in multiple local, national and international partnerships and projects that have enhanced cross-cultural understanding and community tolerance. From 2000-2005, Ms. Pankop's students worked collaboratively with WMU School of Communication faculty member Sue Ellen Christian to publish a special edition of the newspaper, addressing the topic of teaching tolerance in Kalamazoo County. One special edition was inserted in the local newspaper and had a circulation of 70,000 readers. Likewise, in the 2006-2007 school year, her Loy Norrix high school student newspaper published a special edition through a pen pal experience with students from St. Kizitio School in Kampala, Uganda. After exchanging letters, the Loy Norrix reporters printed the special edition newspaper focusing on schooling, culture and human-interest articles.

"Tisha Pankop is an excellent representative of our department and all our graduates who go onto outstanding teaching careers in English language arts," states Dr. Jonathan Bush, Chair of the WMU Department of English. "We are excited to honor her excellence in teaching, commitment to her profession and dedication to social justice in Kalamazoo and beyond."



## Gender and Women's Studies

### Rebecca C. Hardie

A native of Kalamazoo and the daughter of two former Western Michigan University faculty, Rebecca C. Hardie has dedicated over 18 years to public service in the State of California. She currently serves as Superior Court Judge for the County of Contra Costa, appointed in 2010 by

former Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Prior to assuming her current position, Judge Hardie worked in the public sector as a Probation Officer, Deputy District Attorney, Assistant United States Attorney and Deputy Chief of Major Crimes. In the private sector, she was hired in 2004 as in-house counsel for the litigation group of Pacific Gas and Electric Company. She was promoted to serve as the company's Director and Counsel at Pacific Gas and Electric and personally handled several high-profile matters for Pacific Gas and Electric during her tenure.

Judge Hardie's passion for social justice began at a young age, as she felt frustrated by the lack of athletic opportunities for girls of her era. While in college, Hardie gravitated toward Women's Studies, a program that her mother, former professor and chair of General Studies, Dr. Nita Hardie, helped create. Her father, Thomas Hardie, was on the music faculty.

Graduating with honors from WMU in 1983, Judge Hardie earned a minor in Women's Studies and a B.S. in Criminal Justice. She received her J.D. in 1991, also with honors, from the University of California, Hastings College of Law. Among the accolades Judge Hardie has won over the years are a Meritorious Scholar Award at WMU, the David Snodgrass Award for best oral argument in moot court at Hastings and the U.S. Department of Justice Director's Award for Superior Performance as an Assistant United States Attorney for her prosecution of a major firearms trafficker. Judge Hardie lives in the San Francisco Bay Area with her spouse Sharon Bunzel and their two children, twins Jack and Mackenzie Bunzel-Hardie.



## Mathematics

### Larry L. Hatfield

Larry L. Hatfield received his M.A. in Mathematics from WMU in 1966, and his Ph.D. in Mathematics Education from the University of Minnesota in 1969.

Dr. Hatfield's distinguished career as an educator spans over five decades. He is a Josiah T. Meigs Distinguished Teaching Emeritus Professor of Mathematics Education at the University of Georgia, where he also served for many years as Head of the Department of Mathematics Education, recognized by peer-review as the leading U.S. doctoral program in the field. He served as Program Director and Deputy Division Director at the National Science Foundation and has been a visiting faculty member to Teachers College, Columbia University, Curtin University, Western Australia and the International Schools of the Hague, Netherlands.

He has published 24 articles, 30 books or chapters and 16 monographs and technical reports. He has also delivered over 125 papers and presentations and directed 32 externally funded projects exceeding \$10 million.

Dr. Hatfield is currently at the University of Wyoming, where in 2009 he became the initial Wyoming Excellence in Higher Education Endowed Chair for Mathematics Education. His wide range of research interests include quantitative reasoning and mathematical modeling, developmental factors related to mathematics learning, technology tools in teaching and learning mathematics; and integrated approaches to curriculum, teaching and learning.



## Mallinson Institute for Science Education **Drew Isola**

Drew Isola received his master's degree in Science Education from the Mallinson Institute for Science Education in 1992. In 1999 he was awarded a doctoral degree in Science Education from the Mallinson Institute. Dr. Isola has taught physics at the middle and high

school grades since 1992, except for a two year period when he served as a full-time Teacher-in Residence at WMU as part of the WMU Physics Teacher Education Coalition known as PhysTEC. While continuing to work as a teacher of physics, Dr. Isola was chosen to serve on the national PhysTEC Project Management Team and the American Association of Physics Teachers Committee on Teacher Preparation. He has also consulted on the National Task Force on Teacher Education in Physics report regarding the current state of physics teacher education nationwide. Dr. Isola is an active participant in the Michigan Math & Science Centers Network that provides Michigan teachers with professional development workshops in math and science.

Currently Dr. Isola is collaborating with the Michigan Math & Science Centers Network and the National Math and Science Initiative on the implementation of a new Advanced Placement Training and Incentive Program to improve and increase AP math, science and English courses statewide. Dr. Isola has clearly demonstrated his commitment to students of science and the statewide improvement of science curriculum and teaching. He has been recognized at a national level for his expertise in physics education and physics teacher education. He is highly respected by students and colleagues, and highly respected by his friends here at MISE.

It is with considerable pleasure and pride that the faculty of The Mallinson Institute for Science Education names Dr. Drew Isola as its 2012 Distinguished Alumni Award recipient.



## Geography **Ilmars Mezs**

Ilmars Mezs completed his B.A. degree at the University of Latvia, in 1990, his M.A. in Geography at Western Michigan University in 1994, and his Ph.D. in Latvian History at the University of Latvia in 1995.

From 1995 – 1998, Dr. Mezs served as the Educational and Cultural Officer at the US Embassy in Riga, in Latvia. From 1998 – 2008 he was the Migration Program and Training Officer of the International Organization of Migration (IOM) office in Kiev, Ukraine, and Riga, Latvia. In 2008, he became the Head of the IOM office in Riga, Latvia. This is an important post in the ever widening concern over immigration and cross border movement of migrants from Russia and North Africa to European Union countries. In that capacity he is responsible for drafting projects and research reports on the movement, reception and conditions of migrants. He liaises and secures funds for new projects and develops cooperative relationships with European Union and UN member countries. He is also the project officer for the Soderkoping Process that entails migration policies in seven European Union countries, the Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. Other existing projects include voluntary return of illegal migration, anti-trafficking activities, technical cooperation among countries and intergovernmental cooperation regarding the reception and treatment of all migrants.

A specialist in population geography, Dr. Mezs is active in professional migration organizations, professional societies in Latvia and serves as a guest speaker and commentator regularly in the national and international media in Europe. He has served on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities that supports programs for providing children, women and men who represent minority populations in both developing and developed countries. He regularly presents papers at learned societies and academic organizations on topics of demography, migration, cultural geography and language.



## Geosciences

### Thomas Drean

Thomas Drean graduated from Western Michigan University in 1974 with a B.S. degree in Geology. In addition to his degree from Western, Thomas also holds a M.S. degree in Geochemistry from Pennsylvania State University and is a graduate of the Executive Development Program from the S.C. Johnson School of Management at Cornell University.

He is currently serving on the Cabinet of the State of Wyoming and is the State Geologist and Director of the Wyoming State Geological Survey. He serves on the Wyoming Oil & Gas Conservation Commission, the Enhanced Oil Recovery Commission, the Wyoming Board of Professional Geologists, the Groundwater Commission and the Consensus Revenue Estimating Group for the State of Wyoming. Thomas also holds the position of Chairman of the Board of the Laura Jane Musser Fund which is a U.S. based philanthropic fund that reviews proposals and donates money to selected non-profit organizations and initiatives.

Prior to becoming the Wyoming State Geologist and Director of the Wyoming State Geologic Survey, Thomas worked in the oil and gas industry for 31 years. Twenty-six of those years were with ConocoPhillips where he held a variety of technical and managerial positions around the world.

Thomas credits Western Michigan University with providing him with a great foundation in geology and instilling a lifelong interest in learning. An additional benefit is the fact that Western is also where he met his wife and best friend for the past 38 years.



## History

### Joan Bauer

Joan Bauer is currently State Representative for the 68<sup>th</sup> House district of Michigan which includes Lansing, the area in which she has spent most of her life. Her father grew up in Kalamazoo and her grandmother, who passed away at 107 years of age, also lived there.

Representative Bauer began her university studies at Western Michigan University in 1968 and graduated in 1971 with a major in history. Western clearly prepared her for later life. In addition to her degree, she participated in student government, was president of her dorm—Draper Hall—and worked with many other campus groups. Attending WMU at a time of much social change she recalled “anti-war marches, peace rallies and civil rights demonstrations on campus. These events and my classes,” she notes, “changed me forever and helped mold my political philosophy and values.”

Representative Bauer had a varied career before running for public office. She taught government in high school and in adult education classes, worked as the Director of Women's Programs at the YMCA and served as Director of the Lansing Community College Foundation. She was also Director of Volunteer Services at Ingham Regional Medical Center.

Obviously a person with an inclination toward public service, she ran for public office in Lansing. From 1995 to 2006 she was repeatedly elected to the Lansing City Council where she served, by turns, as President and Vice-President of the council and chaired numerous committees. In 2006 she was elected to the state legislature. She is a member of the House Appropriations Committee, where she has advocated for public universities. She also serves as Vice Chair of the Higher Education Appropriations Sub-Committee, Vice Chair of the Department of Education Appropriations Sub-Committee, and is a member of the Community Health Appropriations Sub-Committee. Joan is also Vice Chair of the Capitol Committee, Co-Chair of the Bi-Partisan Women's Legislative Caucus and Vice Chair of the Democratic Caucus.