

# Alumni Academy

## School of Communication 2011 Alumni Academy Inductees

Joseph Edward Colucci  
B.S. '79



Joseph Colucci started his own business, Joe Colucci and Associates Inc. in 2011. His company delivers world-class “business development and sales training” which helps build strong functional sales staffs and organizations. Joe’s extensive experience with operating and directing sales, marketing and management teams stems from his work with manufacturers, franchises, financial services and distributors throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Europe.

Joe Colucci started his career in the advertising industry at Kenyon and Eckhardt in 1980. His responsibility was to assist Chrysler Corporation in the building of newspaper, radio and TV advertising for the Dealer Groups throughout the United States. In 1983, he joined Chrysler Corporation as a District Sales Manager. In the next decade Joe was promoted to five different sales markets. In 1993, he became a Regional Sales Manager and then in 2000 he was promoted to the National Sales Manager position at Chrysler Corporation.

In 2004, Joe took his talents to Ford Motor Company as their National Sales Director. In 2007, he and a few other investors purchased a division of Ford Motor Company where he served as Vice President of Business Development for this privately held company. Under his leadership, the company designed and implemented national brands, one of which was Motor Trend. This effort involved him in creating the 21st Century Selling Process. Joe credits the core communication education from WMU as key to his status as a nationally recognized speaker for his industry.

Dr. Nancy Greer-Williams is the Assistant Director for Research and Practice Improvement at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Family Medicine at UAMS. Nancy earned her doctorate in Higher Education Administration from WMU in 2004. In 2011, she received an MPH in Public Health and a PCHC in Health Education & Promotion from Benedictine University.

Nancy’s career experience spans education, research and public health. In 2004, she became program director for the Howard University HUSEM program in Washington DC. The goal of this National Science Foundation program was to encourage minority STEM majors to pursue graduate degrees. In 2006, she became dean and assistant professor in the Department of Human and Social Sciences at Arkansas Baptist College. In 2008, Nancy transitioned from higher education administration into a career focused on public health issues. Through a collaboration between UAMS and University of Wisconsin-Madison, she completed a post-doctoral fellowship with a concentration on health disparities. During her fellowship Nancy studied the complex relationship of obesity and metabolic syndrome and its effect on breast cancer mortality in African-American women. Her mentored research activities included developing educational interventions for minority residents of the Arkansas Delta region and investigating cancer health disparities in communities.

Her current research program involves the primary sub-populations of Southwest Arkansas, investigating the cultural factors that impact health behavior. The goal is to develop a community health disparity model that can be adapted for each sub-population. Integrating her past experience and present public health career, Nancy also continues to mentor and develop students in public health through the INBRE Scholars program.

Nancy Greer-Williams  
B.S. '97, M.A. '01



### Mary Jane Mapes

B.S. '69, M.A. '70



Mary Jane Mapes founded Mary Jane Mapes & Associates, a communication consulting firm in 1986, and for twenty-five years Mary Jane has been helping organizations develop their people. In 2002, Mary Jane changed the name of her organization to The Aligned Leader Institute to better reflect the work of her organization: leadership development and executive coaching.

Mary Jane is in demand for her skills as a professional speaker, seminar leader, and executive coach both nationally

and internationally. In addition, Mary Jane is the author of numerous CDs, learning albums and two books, *The Art of Fielding Questions with Finesse*, and her newest book titled, *You CAN Teach a Pig to Sing – Create a Great Relationship...with Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere*.

She has been the recipient of several major awards in her career. In 1993, Mary Jane received the Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) designation granted by the National Speakers Association and the Global Speakers Federation for excellence in speaking. Today she is one of only 215 women in the world to have earned this designation. In 1996, she received the prestigious Charles Leadership Award granted by the Michigan Chapter of the National Speakers Association for outstanding leadership. She is one of only three people to have ever received this award.

She has served as past president of the National Speakers Association, Michigan Chapter; past president of her local chapter of American Society for Training and Development (ASTD); and is the current President of the Professional and Executive Association of Kalamazoo (PEAK), an organization of female entrepreneurs and female business executives. Mary Jane also is an active member of the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM), and the ASTD. She is actively engaged in service to her church and a number of local service organizations.

### T.R. Reid

B.A. '84



T.R. Reid is a strategic communications consultant based near Austin, Texas. He works with companies large and small in a variety of industries, including aviation, electric generation and propulsion, and brownfield redevelopment.

T.R. began his career as a communications professional in Kalamazoo at The Upjohn Company (now part of Pfizer Inc.). Then he moved on to public-relations manager for the Whirlpool Corporation in Benton Harbor. He then advanced to Dell Corporation in Austin, Texas.

In his 13 years with Dell, T.R. rose to vice president of Global Communications—responsible for corporate, employee and business-unit communications—as the company grew from \$8 billion to \$60 billion in revenue. Based in Singapore for three years, he built and directed the company's communications function in Asia-Pacific and Japan, playing a principal role in significantly broadening and enhancing

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## Gregory Taylor B.A. '87



Greg Taylor is co-owner of Phoenix Properties, LLC, a successful 30-year-old commercial real estate firm based in Kalamazoo. Phoenix Properties has expertise in the ownership, development, financing, management and leasing of commercial/investment real estate and currently owns or manages a portfolio of properties worth in excess of \$200 million.

Mr. Taylor started his career as an intern for Phoenix Properties while an undergraduate at WMU. After graduation Greg spent four years as an Associate Broker with Kalamazoo based Kersten-Morris Real Estate & Leasing Co. specializing in the development, leasing and sale of commercial properties throughout southwest Michigan. In 1991, Greg joined National City Corporation as its Manager of Real Estate Transactions.

In 1998, Greg returned to Phoenix Properties as its Director of Leasing and Acquisitions and soon became a partner in the firm. Today Greg has exclusive responsibility for all commercial properties within the Phoenix portfolio. He remains involved in acquisition, disposition, development and consulting activities for Phoenix Properties. These projects have included multiple commercial projects such as several luxury student housing developments that serve the students of WMU. Phoenix Properties' current projects include development of a 200,000 square foot, mixed-use, space in downtown Kalamazoo known as "The Exchange." This project will be an 8-story high-rise building and will include retail, office, and living spaces.

Greg has served on several local boards and is active with the Friends of WMU Political Action Committee, other volunteer boards at Western Michigan University, and multiple volunteer boards in the Kalamazoo area. He is also active in the Kalamazoo Rotary Club as well as many other local organizations.

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perceptions of Dell in the fast-growing region. Directly and through his teams, T.R. helped define, develop and protect corporate reputations—through media and analyst relations, executive and internal communications, and marketing support—during successful, in-house roles at these leading global companies. He is highly trusted and respected by executives, colleagues and journalists.

As a citizen committed to the wellbeing of his community, T.R. served as president of the Georgetown Library Foundation. During his tenure he led an advocacy campaign that resulted in voter approval of bonds to build a new, \$9.8 million library.

T.R. was also the recipient of the College of Arts and Sciences Alumni Achievement Award for the School of Communication in 2011.



## Alumni Highlights & News

Amber Krycka, B.A. '10, was hired as an anchor and reporter by KNOP News 2-NBC in North Platte, Nebraska.

Nick Miller, B.A. '08, joined the NFL's Minnesota Vikings as Facilities

Assistant. While at WMU, Nick interned at the *Bronco Review*, where he says his career path began.

Denise Fleckenstein, B.A. '76; M.A. '82, presented at the United Way Worldwide Major Gift and Planned

Giving Institute. Denise currently serves as the Director of Gift Planning at the United Way for Southeastern Michigan.

Coreen Geary, B.A. '93; M.A. '95 was promoted to Communications Specialist II with Bronson Healthcare Group.

Amy O'Connor, M.A. '98, was elected to the position of Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Communication at North Dakota State University.

Raquel Hellenga, B.A. '11; M.A. '12, was hired as Communications Specialist at Southwest Michigan First.



# Alumni Highlights & News

Christopher Tremblay, B.A. '94; M.A. '99, was promoted to Assistant Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. Christopher will provide strategic leadership and management to the offices of Admissions and Orientation and Financial Aid and Scholarships in order to meet and maintain the university's undergraduate enrollment goals.

Stephanie Slingerland, M.A. '07, has been promoted to Senior Manager, Corporate Communications at Kellogg Company.

Dr. Angela Mensah, M.A. '06, recently contributed to a book titled "Still Searching

for Our Mothers' Gardens," which explores how women of color navigate the tenure track at predominately white institutions of higher learning.

Dr. Norman Mintle, M.A. '76, was selected as dean of the School of Communication at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va.

Kirstin Olmstead, B.A. '03, is working as the Marketing and Communications Specialist in the University of Michigan International Institute. The Institute hosted a New Media/Social Change symposium featuring several leading scholars in November.

Breanne Walker, B.A. '08, a Department of the Army Civilian Contractor in Public Affairs, visited the SoC in November to speak to classes about the opportunities available as civilian workers in the Army.

Cassie Foss, B.A. '09, was honored by The South Carolina Press Association for her feature writing and beat reporting in The Island Packet. Cassie is now reporting for the Wilmington, N.C. Star News.

Jim Mulcrone, B.A. '76; M.A. '82, was promoted to Director of Research Services at Maritz Research, a marketing research company that employs consultants worldwide.

Candace Beeke, B.A. '99, is currently working as the Editor of the Houston Business Journal.

Michael Glassco, M.A. '06, received his Ph.D. in Mass Communications from the University of Iowa.

## Nwulu Joins Advancing Public Service Media Initiatives in West Africa

This July, Dr. Paul Nwulu, M.A. '94, became the new program officer for the Advancing Public Service Media initiatives in West Africa sponsored by the Ford Foundation.

The Advancing Public Service Media initiative will support grantees to better engage with media to attain scale and impact. In particular, it will support anti-corruption and transparency work in the Promoting Transparent, Effective, and Accountable Government initiative and sexuality and reproductive health education/information dissemination in the Foundation's Youth Sexuality, Reproductive Health, and Rights initiative. In addition, the portfolio will stimulate and fund the creation of high-quality content that supports and deepens the impact of the two initiatives. Select access and related media policy issues (including funding of public service content/media) will also be championed through these grant efforts..

Dr. Nwulu is also a former faculty member of the School of Communication. As an Associate Professor he taught courses in media production and media theory, and conducted research on uses of and impact of new media technologies. In 2011, he was inducted into the Alumni Academy.



*Dr. Nwulu at last year's Alumni Academy induction ceremony*

**Morris Davenport**, B.A. '79, senior vice president and general manager of ESPN Radio, was one of three recipients of WMU's **Distinguished Alumni Award** in 2011.

## "A Good Man"

Bob Hercules' (B.A. '79) film, "A Good Man," premiered in Chicago in September of 2011 at the Gene Siskel Film Center. The film then aired on PBS' American Masters in November.

A Good Man chronicles acclaimed African-American choreographer Bill T. Jones and his company for two years as they create a new dance/theater work about the legacy of Abraham Lincoln. Co-produced by Kartemquin Films, Media Process Group and American Masters, the film is a fascinating look at the creative process of one of America's great artists.

Slant Magazine said of the film, "A remarkable testament to the creative process. . . a film about artistic vision and how it's communicated."

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