



WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT *Awards*



Dear Friends and Alumni,

Today, the WMU College of Arts and Sciences is proud to honor our 2019 Alumni Achievement Award winners, chosen by faculty from the units in which they earned their degrees. It is a genuine honor to count these individuals among our outstanding alumni. Their life's work is a reflection of our college's mission to ignite and sustain a passion for learning and discovery, and to contribute to the betterment of our communities, from local to global.

This year's honorees represent an impressive breadth and diversity of careers and accomplishments in the humanities, social sciences and sciences. Our honorees include teachers, researchers and others who contribute to learning and discovery across the globe. These alumni make us especially proud because of their unwavering commitment to engaged global citizenship. They have been involved in such diverse pursuits as increasing access to education, sanitation and clean water in underserved communities; founding a business to improve the energy efficiency and decrease the carbon contributions of homes and businesses; improving educational approaches for preschool children with disabilities; using biostatistics to study the link between HIV antiviral therapies and the risk of developing kidney or cardiovascular disease; advocating for improved birth experiences for mothers and infants; finding and developing new mineral resources; advocating for equity and inclusion; and serving as award-winning teachers at the K12 to university level. Additionally, our honorees give back to their local communities with their service to organizations including the Kalamazoo Air Zoo, the Gilmore Museum, the Bronson Park Earth Day Festival, the National Council of Mathematics Teachers and many others.

On behalf of Western Michigan University's College of Arts and Sciences, thank you for your remarkable achievements and contributions, and congratulations to every one of our 2019 College of Arts and Sciences Alumni Achievement and Pillar honorees!

Sincerely,

Dr. Carla M. Koretsky, Dean
College of Arts and Sciences

OCTOBER 11, 2019



Department of Biological Sciences

Dr. Colleen Mouw, BS '00

Assistant Professor of Oceanography, University of Rhode Island

Colleen Mouw earned her bachelor's degree in biology from WMU. She went on to earn a master's and doctoral degree in oceanography from the University of Rhode Island. Before becoming an assistant professor of oceanography for the University of Rhode Island, Mouw worked at Michigan Technological University in the Department of Geological and Mining Engineering and Sciences. In her line of current work, she researches a variety of spatial scales ranging from single lakes to the global ocean.

Mouw was a recipient of the National Science Foundation Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers in 2016. The award is intended to recognize some of the finest scientists and engineers who, while early in their research careers, show exceptional potential for leadership at the frontiers of scientific knowledge during the 21st century.

In 2017, Mouw was appointed to the NASA Earth Science Advisory Committee. She has authored and presented on numerous topics of oceanography.



Department of Chemistry

Robert DeRyke, BS '02

President and CEO, Terumo Cardiovascular Systems

Robert DeRyke is the president and CEO of Terumo Cardiovascular Systems, a company committed to bringing revolutionary advances to the frontlines of healthcare. Before his current position, DeRyke held vice president positions at Thermo Fisher Scientific; Hospira, Inc.; Baxter Healthcare Corporation; and Vesta.

DeRyke also serves on several prestigious boards including the MichBio Board, the Talis Clinical Board of Directors and the University of Michigan Biomedical Engineering External Advisory Board.

He earned his bachelor's degree in chemistry from WMU in 2002. He also completed his MBA from Michigan State University in 2004 and the Global CEO program from the Wharton School of Business in 2018.



School of Communication

Dr. Chris Groscurth, BA '02, MA '04

Director of Learning, Design and Development,
Stryker Corporation

Chris Groscurth holds a bachelor's and master's degree from WMU in organizational and intercultural communication. In 2008, he earned his doctoral degree in human communication processes from the University of Georgia.

Groscurth has spent the past 20 years researching and advising nonprofit, government and Fortune 500 clients on how to improve human performance, leadership and organizational effectiveness. His recent book, "Future-Ready Leadership: Strategies for the Fourth Industrial Revolution," provides a leadership blueprint for the future of work.

Throughout his career, Groscurth has held leadership positions with the University of Michigan, Trinity Health, the Gallup Organization and Stryker. He currently serves as the global director for Stryker's learning, design and development team.



Department of Comparative Religion

Alfredo Hernandez, MA '12

Equity Officer, Michigan Department of Civil Rights

Alfredo Hernandez moved to the United States in 1990, after living in Panama, where he joined the U.S. Army and was stationed in Hawaii for six years.

He obtained his bachelor's degree in liberal studies with a minor in philosophy in 2009 from Grand Valley State University. His work, "Language, Culture, Perception and Knowledge," was published in the McNair Scholar Journal. He pursued his graduate studies at WMU where he earned a master's degree in comparative religion.

Hernandez has worked in the field of equity for many years, including five years as the program director for the Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance where he developed inclusive strategies for organizational change. In addition, he has taught philosophy and anthropology courses at Muskegon Community College. In 2016, he participated in the Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation project which was designed to bring together multiple sectors across the U.S. in racial healing and to address inequities. Hernandez became the first Equity Officer for the Michigan Department of Civil Rights in 2018. He also helped to develop the State's racial equity guidebook.



Department of Economics

Dr. Sonila Beliu, Ph.D. '05

Managing Director, JP Morgan Chase

Sonila Beliu is the head of auto risk modeling for Consumer Community Bank at JP Morgan Chase. Her position is responsible for all risk models used by Chase Auto Finance including customer life cycle risk models, and credit loss and revenue forecasting models.

Beliu participates in numerous recruiting and business resource group efforts, focusing her efforts on women's rights and STEM. She is the Brooklyn representative for Women on the Move in Risk and a member of the Quantitative Employee Development New York committee.

She began her career in financial services at Citigroup as a credit risk modeler for the credit card division where she led the development of several credit risk models needed through the life cycle of a credit card. Beliu spent eight years at Citigroup in varying risk modeling roles including head of the loss forecasting team for the retail bank.

Beliu earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Tirana, Albania and her doctorate in applied economics from WMU in 2015.



Department of English

Cara Lougheed, BA '96

High School English and History Teacher, Stoney Creek High School

Cara Lougheed earned her bachelor's degree in English: secondary education from WMU in 1996. She completed her master's degree in teaching and learning from Florida's Nova Southeastern University. She began her teaching career at Rochester High School in 1998 and was a founding member of Stoney Creek High School when it opened in the fall of 2001.

This past year, Lougheed was recognized as the 2019-20 Michigan Teacher of the Year. For nearly 20 years, she has taught thousands of students and mentored numerous future teachers.

Outside of the classroom, Lougheed has served as a social studies teacher leader, building activities director, district union representative and a National Education Association delegate. She has worked collaboratively with colleagues and administrators to write curriculum, design an attendance incentive program for students, and contribute to various projects aimed at increasing student connectedness and improving school culture.



Department of Geography

Dr. Michael P. Bishop, BS '82,

Professor of Physical Geography,
Texas A&M University

Michael Bishop graduated from WMU in 1982 with a bachelor's degree in geography. He went on to complete his master's and doctoral degrees in physical geography with an emphasis in geographic information science and technology from Indiana State University. He has held academic positions at Indiana State University, the University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire and the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Numerous honors and awards have been bestowed upon him including the Earl F. Cook Professorship in Geosciences at Texas A&M, the Excellence in Reviewing Award from the Journal of Geomorphology and the University Distinguished Research Award at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Bishop has published nearly 60 peer-reviewed articles, is co-editor of five books and nearly 30 book chapters and has given over 300 professional presentations on various Earth science and GIS related topics. He is currently an editorial board member for three international journals.

Currently, he is a professor of physical geography and the founding director of the Center for Geospatial Sciences, Applications and Technology at Texas A&M University. As director, Bishop helps to advance knowledge and foster innovative technology and information in GIS by promoting collaborations among Texas A&M faculty and students, government agencies and industry.



Department of Geological and Environmental Sciences

Dr. Thomas Robyn, BA '72

Retired Consultant and Administrator

Thomas Robyn graduated from WMU in 1972 with a bachelor's degree in geology. He earned his doctorate from the University of Oregon's Center for Volcanology in 1977, based on his study of calc-alkaline volcanic rocks not associated with subduction in northeastern Oregon.

After graduation, he joined Anaconda Minerals Company where he explored for uranium deposits in the Western United States, Africa, South America and Australia. He became a consultant in 1986, designing and managing exploration projects on several continents for precious metals, base metals and ferro-alloys for a wide range of client companies. He has also held positions as chief operations officer at a gold mine in Ecuador, president of junior exploration companies and board member of an intermediate mining company.

Robyn's career includes discovery of gold deposits in Quebec and base metal deposits in Mexico and Peru, as well as guiding a junior exploration company to become a mid-sized mining company, transitioning to senior vice president as the company grew beyond exploration to production.



Global and International Studies

Kathleen Fish, BA '11

Attorney, Ellis Porter PLC

Kathleen Fish completed her bachelor's degree from WMU in 2011, majoring in global and international studies and Spanish, and minoring in gender and women's studies. During her time on campus, she held positions as treasurer and president of Womyn's Equality, where she organized community service events and productions of The Vagina Monologues.

She attended WMU's Thomas M. Cooley Law School, graduating as Juris Doctor in 2015. Fish was sworn into practice law in Michigan in May 2015 and Ohio in May 2016. After working at a plaintiff's personal injury firm in Metro Detroit, she accepted a position at Brown Immigration LLC in Cleveland, Ohio in July 2016. As a senior associate, Fish focused much of her practice in deportation defense and family-based immigration. She commonly traveled throughout Ohio and the United States to represent her clients before Immigration Courts and the Immigration agency, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Fish has presented numerous Know Your Rights seminars to the immigrant community to ensure that non-U.S. citizens fully understand their rights. She is now an attorney at Ellis Porter PLC, in Detroit, Michigan, where she handles immigration court cases.



Institute of the Environment and Sustainability

Mark A. Lee, BA '95, BS '95

Founder and CEO, BetterWorld Builders, LLC

Mark Lee earned two bachelor's degrees from WMU in engineering and environmental studies in 1995. For over a decade, he worked in environmental compliance, energy conservation and waste reduction at Post Cereals. In 2009, he founded Better World Builders where he combines his engineering knowledge, construction expertise and commitment to the environment to help people reduce their energy and carbon consumption in their homes and businesses. Lee makes it a practice to hire disadvantaged and at-risk youth, and every new employee he mentors adds value to the Kalamazoo community.

Lee's passion and concern for the environment is apparent through his business and academic pursuits, community engagement and positive social action. While at WMU he led the registered student organization, Students for a Sustainable Earth, to bring a student busing system to campus.

As a WMU alumnus, Lee partnered with the Institute of the Environment and Sustainability to host a well-attended home energy audit workshop. He is a regular supporter of the IES environmental career fair and is one of the lead organizers and sponsors of the annual Bronson Park Earth Day festival.



Mallinson Institute for Science Education

Dr. John Knapp II, Ph.D. '72

Author and Retired Professor

John Knapp began his career as a Peace Corps volunteer in Liberia in 1963. He soon began a long career in teaching, first as a high school teacher, then accepting a faculty position at SUNY Oswego, as a professor in science education. When the program was dissolved, he accepted an appointment in the English department. He rose to the rank of full professor, before retiring in 1999.

Knapp was a member of an authorship team for an elementary science textbook series that was published from 1972-80. During that same period, he served as the science editor for the journal, "School Science and Mathematics." Knapp began writing about science for the public in 1975 by authoring the weekly newspaper column, "After Supper Science." The column ran for three years in two regional newspapers.

Knapp earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Wheaton College, a master's degree in general science from Michigan State University and a doctorate in science education from WMU.



Department of Mathematics

Kevin Dykema, MA '99

Mathematics Teacher, Mattawan Consolidated School District

For the past 24 years, Kevin Dykema has been teaching 8th grade mathematics and currently teaches at Mattawan Middle School. In 2017 he was a state finalist for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

He was awarded the Michigan Council of Teachers of Mathematics Regional Director's Award in 2007 for outstanding contributions and leadership in mathematics education, as well as the Service Award in 2014. He has served as a regional director for MCTM and was the annual conference chair for the organization from 2011-16. Dykema co-founded a conference focused on mathematics for students with disabilities, and has been co-chair since 2015.

Dykema served a three-year term on the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Board of Directors from 2016-19. He also served on the finance committee as chair from 2018-19 and on the executive committee for the board from 2017-19.

Dykema holds a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Calvin College and a master's degree in mathematics education from WMU. Upon completing his master's, he taught a variety of mathematics courses for the mathematics department at WMU for several years.



Department of Physics

Dr. David P. Hoogerheide, BS '04

Research Physicist, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Center for Neutron Research

David Hoogerheide earned two bachelor's degrees in physics and chemistry in 2004, completing WMU's Lee Honors College program with Summa Cum Laude. Hoogerheide was named presidential scholar twice while at WMU, first in chemistry and then in physics. He then attended Harvard University to earn his master's and doctoral degrees in physics. As a graduate student, he received multiple awards for excellence in teaching.

He worked as a post-doctoral researcher at Harvard until 2013, when he went to work for his current employer, the National Institute of Standards and Technology. Most of Hoogerheide's research has combined elements of physics, chemistry and biology. His techniques for controlling nanopores with pressure and voltage were patented in 2015.

Hoogerheide has authored over 20 peer-reviewed articles and a book chapter, and serves as a referee for seven different scientific journals.



Department of Political Science

Dr. Katia Levintova, Ph.D. '04

Professor of Political Science and Global Studies, University of Wisconsin – Green Bay

Ekatrina (Katia) Levintova is a professor of political science and global studies at the University of Wisconsin – Green Bay. She received her Ph.D. from WMU's political science department in 2004. A native of Russia, she earned a B.A. at Moscow State University and an M.A. at Appalachian State University prior to coming to WMU.

Levintova is a two-time recipient of the UWGB Student Nominated Teaching Award and recently received the 2019 Founders Award for Excellence in Teaching, UWGB's highest honor. She is lauded for her engaging teaching style and innovations, high teaching evaluations and her valuable mentorship of students. She blends innovative and student-focused work, such as simulations and experiential learning, with classroom discussion and lecture.

Levintova is a former Wisconsin Teaching Fellow and co-editor of *Gender in the Political Science Classroom*. She has published more than 20 journal articles and book chapters on post-communist transitions and the scholarship of teaching and learning. She is also a recipient of multiple research grants dating back to her time in graduate school, including a grant from the U.S. State Department.



Department of Psychology

Dr. Caio Miguel, Ph.D. '04

Professor of Psychology and Director of the Verbal Behavior Research Laboratory, California State University, Sacramento

Caio Miguel obtained a bachelor's degree in psychology in 1997 and a master's degree in psychology: behavior analysis in 2001 from Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo in his home country of Brazil. In 2004, Miguel completed his doctoral degree in psychology: applied behavior analysis from WMU.

After obtaining his Ph.D., Miguel served as a clinical consultant for the autism program at St. Amant Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, and subsequently as a clinical supervisor at The New England Center for Children, where he also consulted for many school districts on the education of preschool-aged children with disabilities.

He is currently a professor of psychology and director of the Verbal Behavior Research Laboratory at California State University, Sacramento. He also holds adjunct appointments at Endicott College, MA, and the University of São Paulo, Brazil.

Miguel's research has focused on the study of language and cognition from a behavior analytic standpoint. In a 2014 peer-reviewed publication, Miguel was named one of the top researchers with contributions in both basic and applied science in the field of behavior analysis. He received the 2013-14 award for outstanding scholarly work by the College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies at California State University, Sacramento, and the 2014 Outstanding Mentor Award by the Student Committee of the Association for Behavior Analysis International.



School of Public Affairs and Administration

Geoffrey E. Kaituko, MPA '06

Special Secretary and Advisor, Social Sector, the Executive Office of the Deputy President, Republic of Kenya

Geoffrey Kaituko earned a Master of Public Administration degree from WMU in 2006. His other academic degrees include a B.A. in law in 2012 from the University of South Africa and a B.A. in government and Arabic in 1999 from the University of Nairobi.

Upon completion of his bachelor's degree, he returned to his home county of Turkana and started to mobilize the primarily illiterate, low-income pastoralists to form "village banks" as a way to gain access to credit in otherwise underserved villages. In these poverty-stricken areas, his community mobilization achieved many social development objectives including reducing child mortality, increasing school attendance and completion, and alleviating social discord.

His service at the National Drought Management Authority focused on building community resilience and introduction of alternative livelihood strategies that increased access to education, health care, clean water and sanitation, nutrition and technology.

Kaituko is currently the special secretary and advisor, social sector, the Executive Office of the Deputy President, Republic of Kenya.



Department of Spanish

**Dr. Rose Marie Brougham,
BA '93, BA '96, MA '99**

Associate Professor of Spanish, University of
Wisconsin – La Crosse

Rose Marie Brougham holds bachelor's degrees in French and Spanish and a master's in Spanish literature all from WMU. During her studies, she studied abroad in Rennes, France and at the Universidad de Chile, in Santiago de Chile. She went on to complete a doctoral degree in Spanish American literature at the University of Colorado at Boulder in 2006.

She has held faculty positions at Union College, the University of Akron and, since 2013, the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse, where she just received tenure and associate professor rank. Brougham is a recognized expert on modern Spanish American literature, with publications and many conference presentations on Latin American women poets.

She has worked to internationalize her campus and learning opportunities for students. Last year, the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse recognized her many contributions when she received her college's Faculty Recognition of Excellence Award for Service.



Department of Statistics

**Dr. Rebecca Scherzer,
BS '95, MS '97, Ph.D. '06**

Director of Biostatistics, Kidney Health
Research Collaborative at the University of
California, San Francisco

Rebecca Scherzer earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics from the University of Michigan in 1994, and subsequently earned degrees from WMU in biomedical sciences (B.S., '95), biostatistics (M.S., '97) and statistics (Ph.D., '06). After several years in the pharmaceutical industry, Scherzer returned to academia, where she now serves as director of biostatistics for the Kidney Health Research Collaborative at the University of California, San Francisco.

Scherzer serves as a statistical editor for the Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology and member of the editorial board for the Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. She previously was vice chair of Statistics Without Borders and has served on two National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute working groups.

Scherzer was the principal research statistician on Fat Redistribution and Metabolic Change in HIV Infection, a study which demonstrated that HIV infection and certain antiretroviral therapies were associated with increased risk of kidney and cardiovascular disease.

Together with her KHRC colleagues, Scherzer received the 2018 Pathways to Discovery Program Mentor Award.



Department of World Languages and Literatures

Dr. Seven Mattes, BA '07

Assistant Professor, Center for Integrative Studies,
Michigan State University

Seven Mattes is an assistant professor for the Center for Integrative Studies at Michigan State University. Her work uses multispecies ethnographic methods to better understand how we can build resiliency for animals in disaster contexts. Her most recent project centered on the animals rescued from the Fukushima evacuation zone following the Tōhoku Disaster of 2011. Before becoming an assistant professor at Michigan State University, she was an instructor of anthropology at Alma College and a teaching assistant of anthropology at MSU.

Mattes has authored numerous publications focusing on animal studies and human-animal relationships. She has received various awards for her work and research, including travel awards from MSU's Department of Anthropology. Her work has landed her on several invited lectures throughout the nation, speaking on topics such as environmental and applied anthropology, and anthrozoology.

Mattes earned bachelor's degrees in anthropology and environmental studies, with minors in comparative religion, and Japanese language and studies from Western Michigan University. She graduated in 2007 through the Lee Honors College with Magna Cum Laude. Mattes went on to earn a master's degree and doctoral degree from MSU with a focus in cultural anthropology.



Department of History

Richard Cahow, BA '70, MA '77

Social Studies Teacher and Department Chair,
Kalamazoo Central High School

Richard Cahow holds a bachelor's and master's degree in history from WMU. He taught in the Kalamazoo Public Schools for 40 years at North-east Junior High School and Kalamazoo Central High School, where he served as social studies department chairperson for eleven years. He was one of the pioneers of the Advanced Placement program in KPS, growing A.P. history into a program serving more than eighty students each year.

Cahow is a 13-time recipient of the Significant Educator Award from the Kalamazoo County Excellence in Education Program, and in 2011 the Historical Society of Michigan named him an Outstanding Educator. The Kalamazoo Air Zoo, where he has served as a docent for more than three decades, honored Cahow as their 2012 Adult Volunteer of the Year.

Cahow re-established the education department at the Gilmore Car Museum in 2010, and has served as a board member of the Educational Community Credit Union/Arbor Financial Credit Union since 2001. He received the James E. Fetteroff Distinguished Service Award from Arbor Financial Credit Union in 2018.





Institute for
**Intercultural and
Anthropological Studies**

Dr. Melissa Cheyney, MA '97

Associate Professor of Clinical Medical
Anthropology, Oregon State University

Melissa Cheyney is an associate professor of clinical medical anthropology at Oregon State University with additional appointments in public health and in women, gender and sexuality studies. Cheyney has been invited to serve as an expert with numerous interdisciplinary research institutes including the ACOG ReVitalize Task Force, the Home Birth Summit Research and Data Task Force, the Oregon Health Evidence Review Commission, the International Quality Maternal and Newborn Care Research Alliance, and the National Academies of Medicine Committee on Birth Setting. She is the vice chair of OSU's Human Subjects Research Institutional Review Board and the graduate program director for OSU's applied anthropology program.

Cheyney is a licensed midwife and chair of the Midwives Alliance Division of Research of North America. She is an award-winning teacher, and has authored more than 50 peer-reviewed articles and an ethnography that variously examines the cultural beliefs and clinical outcomes associated with midwife-led birth.

Cheyney earned a B.A. in biology from Calvin College in 1994, an M.A. in anthropology from WMU in 1997 and a Ph.D. in biological anthropology from Oregon State University in 2005.



Department of
Philosophy

Dr. JC Lau, MA '07

Producer, Harebrained Schemes

JC Lau is a producer at Harebrained Schemes in Seattle, WA, where she has developed multiple award-winning video games. Lau previously worked at both Microsoft and Bungie, where she contributed to one of the world's biggest video game titles, *Destiny 2*.

Lau is a highly sought speaker and a tireless advocate for diversity, inclusion, equity and representation in the global gaming industry. She has spoken at numerous professional conferences and conventions including the Game Developers Conference, PAX West, Emerald City Comicon, Feminist Camp and GeekGirlCon, a nonprofit organization that celebrates and empowers women in STEM fields, comics, gaming and media. Her work has been featured on numerous podcasts and in academic and professional publications.

Lau holds an M.A. in philosophy from WMU, an M.A. in law from the Monash University Law School, where she was honored for her advocacy on behalf of children's rights, and a Ph.D. in political philosophy from the Australian National University.

