

Spartan

A close-up, profile view of Kevin M. Guskiewicz, looking upwards and to the right with a slight smile. He has grey hair and is wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a green patterned tie. A small Spartan logo pin is visible on his lapel.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY ALUMNI MAGAZINE

Winter 2024

KEVIN M. GUSKIEWICZ IS EXCITED FOR THE FUTURE

*Michigan State University's 22nd president reflects
on his new position and what it means to be a Spartan.*

The Arts All
Around Us

A New Era for
MSU Football

I AM A SPARTAN OF INSPIRATION.

RANDY SCOTT MSU ALUM

EDUCATOR AND RECORDING ARTIST



I wear two hats — as a professional musician and a music educator in metro Detroit schools. My goal is to bring joy and happiness to people, whether by passing on what I've learned to the next generation or by sharing the gift of song and music with audiences. MSU allowed me the freedom to be myself musically and to really hone my skills. I feel like I'm part of something bigger now because of my ability to connect with people musically.



SPARTANS WILL.
MSU.EDU/PARTOF

BE A SPARTAN OF IMPACT

Every spring, MSU alumni and friends come together for #GiveGreenDay to support fellow Spartans. These donations are a lifeline to our students—providing critical scholarships in times of need, enriching their educational experience and fostering Spartan pride.

They are counting on your support again on Tuesday, March 12, 2024.

Each gift makes a difference for our students, campus and Spartan community.

JOIN US
MARCH 12, 2024
#GIVEGREENDAY

LEARN MORE AT [GIVINGDAY.MSU.EDU](https://givingday.msu.edu)

BECAUSE
GREAT
THINGS
HAPPEN
WHEN
SPARTANS
GIVE.

Spartan

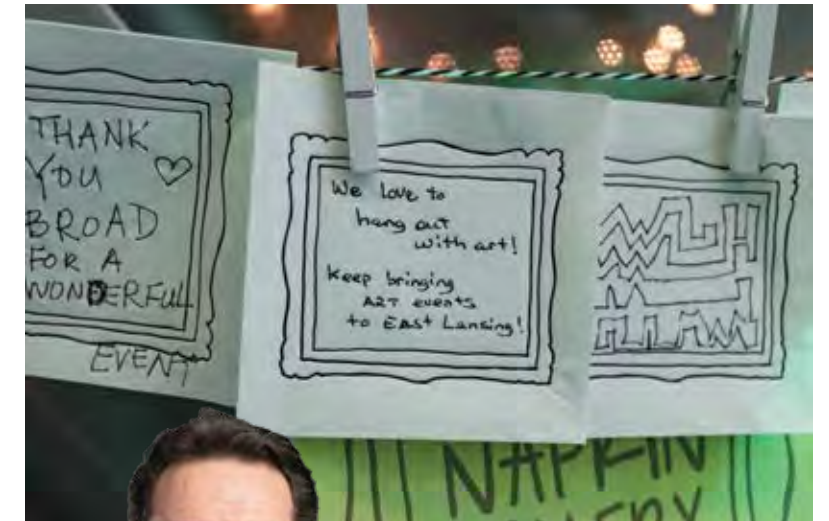
Winter 2024

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We sat down with MSU's new president, Kevin M. Guskiewicz, to discuss his future as a Spartan.



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An earnest, university-wide effort, Arts MSU places the arts at the center of Spartans' lives.

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ON THE COVER Kevin M. Guskiewicz was appointed as the university's newest president Dec. 8, 2023.
Photo by Nick Schrader



10 A New Era

Jonathan Smith named the Spartans' 26th head football coach.

Find something
new to love
about MSU!



New and archived stories, videos and audio
that'll jump off the screen and into your heart.

go.msu.edu/stories



MSU Alumni Office
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Foundations for Continued Success

Since I began my service as Michigan State's interim president, Spartan friends, I have urged all of us to look upward and see in ourselves and the university the unlimited possibilities for growth and greatness. Over the 16 months of my tenure, we have shared many circumstances that saw the sun shine on our work—and some that broke our hearts.

MSU's excellence in student engagement, undergraduate and graduate academic programs, faculty research, stakeholder outreach and sustainability continue to be validated by external rankings as we march toward the goals in our 2030 strategic plan. Those ambitions include raising our graduation rates and research profile, lowering our environmental footprint and building a university that feels safe, welcoming and supportive for all.

Today, our students are asked to think in terms of their life missions in addition to their majors. We are broadening access through financial assistance initiatives and supporting success by expanding our advising resources.

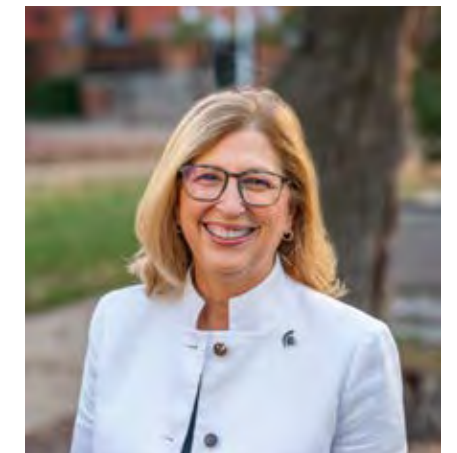
We created a university-wide Health and Wellbeing division to better care for students, faculty and staff. We directed additional financial resources to employee compensation and invested in our Office for Civil

Rights. We boosted our research output by \$49 million, rising to \$759 million in expenditures dedicated to discovery and innovation.

We saw shovels in the ground and cranes in the air as we shaped the campus skyline through the renovation and initiation of facilities that will support MSU's excellence for generations to come. Today, we continue work toward completion of a multicultural center and a new student recreational and wellness center, reconstruction of the Farm Lane Bridge and upgrades to our football facilities.

We will commence major upgrades to our research greenhouse, dairy facilities and the MSU Museum. We will continue planning for an engineering and digital innovation center, a new health education building and a new plant and environmental science building. A new medical research facility in Detroit and additional grant-funded public health research in Flint also are in the pipeline.

We celebrated institutional milestones with the 150th anniversaries of our first international enrollments and the establishment of the W.J. Beal Horticultural Garden; the centennials of WKAR and Spartan Stadium; the 60th anniversary of Abrams Planetarium; and the 50th year of the MSU Research Foundation.



And we are elevating the arts, which create new ways of knowing by shifting perspectives and helping us see complex issues from illuminating angles. MSU is celebrating its own 360-degree approach with Arts MSU, a platform to uplift the arts as an essential part of what it means to be a Spartan. I think you will enjoy reading more about it in this issue.

We have much to look back on with pride, and much to look forward to with anticipation. I am excited for the arrival of the 22nd president of MSU, Kevin M. Guskiewicz. An exceptional researcher, educator and leader, he gives me confidence in the ever upward trajectory of this great university.

I am grateful to the entire Spartan family—students, families, faculty, staff, leadership colleagues, alums, donors and friends—for their support of Tom, myself and this great university we share.

As ever, keep reaching upward and Go Green!

Teresa K. Woodruff, Ph.D.
INTERIM PRESIDENT
MSU FOUNDATION PROFESSOR

DERRICK L. TURNER



FIND YOUR PEOPLE

with MSU Alumni Clubs & Affinity Groups

Connect with a global network more than **520,000 strong** by finding an alumni club or affinity group. You'll build meaningful relationships, expand your professional network and give back to your community and future Spartans.

- **Alumni clubs** are Spartan communities that exist in most major metropolitan areas, where you can create lasting relationships and make a meaningful local impact.
- **Affinity groups** connect Spartans around the globe who share similar interests, aspirations, identities or experiences as a way to come together through a shared voice.

- There are over 100 regional clubs and 15 affinity groups around the globe. If a local option is not available near you, there are several ways to engage digitally.

- Events hosted in 2023 by alumni clubs and affinity groups included networking opportunities, game watches, service events, fundraisers, galas, game nights and more.

VIEW
CLUB
EVENTS



FIND
YOUR
CLUB



Fall 2023 magazine content is available online at go.msu.edu/spartan-fall-2023

THE ART OF LIFE

There's a little art in everything we do. Think about the last time you packed a load of luggage into the trunk of a car. There are many techniques, and no one way is necessarily correct, but it takes problem solving. And problem solving takes imagination.

At MSU, Spartans are incorporating the creative process into all areas of study—not as an escape—but because creativity helps us grow. It's known that artistic and creative pursuits improve our concentration, curtail stress and hone our critical thinking. They connect us to ourselves and the

world around us—often in unexpected ways.

Art gives us calm, confidence and connection. And when those senses are heightened, it becomes easier to make room for new ideas.

Whether you're looking for a way to explain a complex concept or just folding your laundry, it might be worthwhile to put some imagination behind it. At the very least, it'll make things more interesting.

With a new president, a new football coach and a fully formed mission to foreground art, creativity and exploration, it's an exciting time in East Lansing. It's a time of discovery. It's a time of hope. It's a time of new connections—with the university and each other.

Tim Cerullo, '08
EDITOR, SPARTAN MAGAZINE

FROM THE EDITOR

Spartan

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TO SUBMIT LETTERS

Email SpartanMagazine@msu.edu. Or send mail to: Editor, 535 Chestnut Rd., #300, East Lansing, MI. 48824. We reserve the right to select and edit letters for length and clarity.



#13

**NATIONALLY IN UNDERGRADUATE
ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION
BY THE PRINCETON REVIEW &
ENTREPRENEUR MAGAZINE**

To compile the 2023 ranking, *The Princeton Review* surveyed more than 300 schools offering entrepreneurial studies across data points related to scholarships and grants, successful alumni entrepreneurs, and faculty support. "The colleges on our list have truly superb entrepreneurship programs," said *The Princeton Review's* editor-in-chief Robert Franek. "Their faculty are genuinely engaged in entrepreneurship. Their courses are rich with in-class and out-of-class experiential components, and their students receive extraordinary financial and networking support from donors and alumni."

**Find out more about the positive impact
Spartans and friends have on the lives of
student entrepreneurs by scanning the QR
code or visiting, bit.ly/annual_report_fy23.**



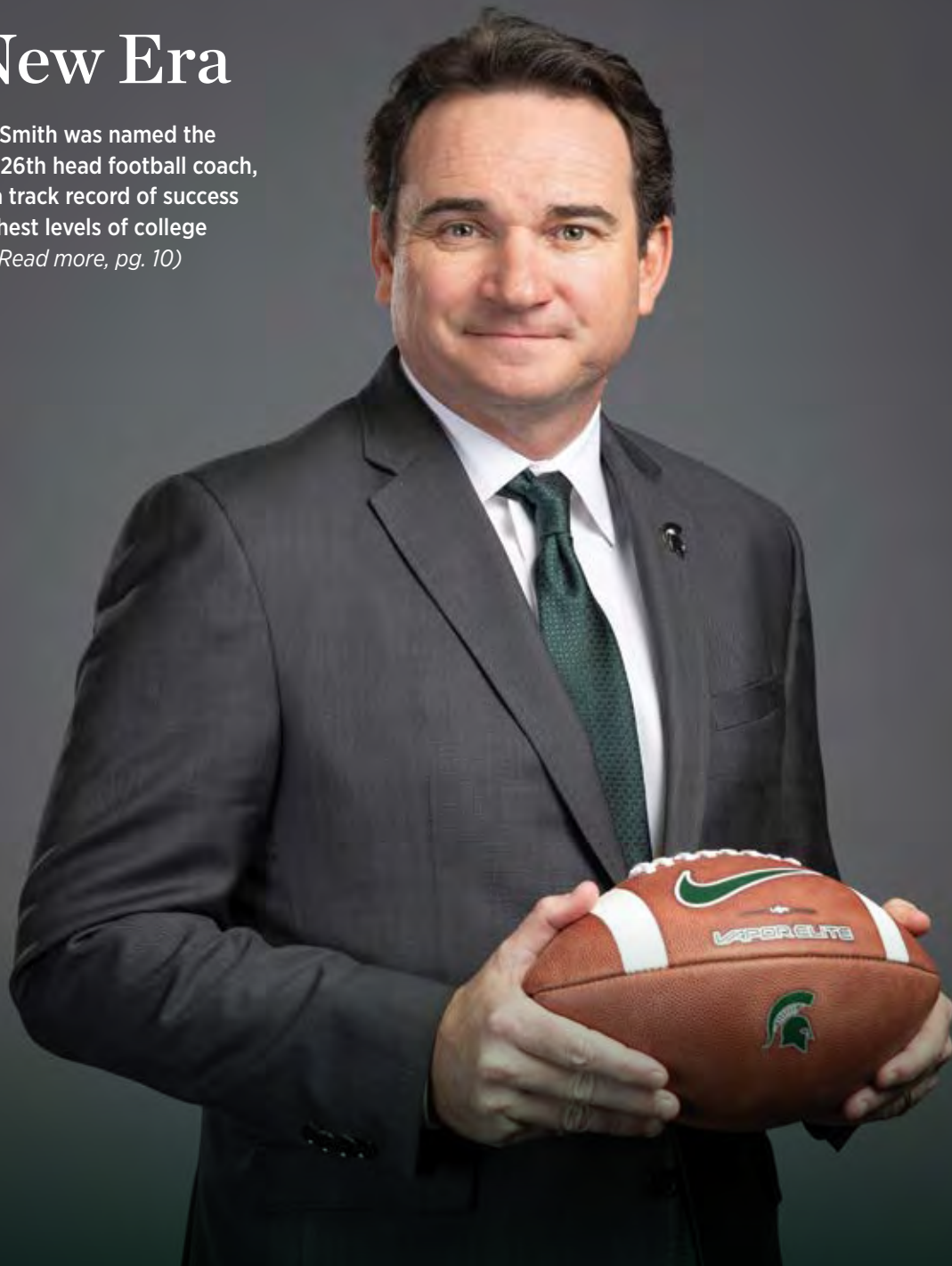
bit.ly/annual_report_fy23

Beneath^{the} Pines

News & Views from Campus

A New Era

Jonathan Smith was named the Spartans' 26th head football coach, bringing a track record of success at the highest levels of college football. *(Read more, pg. 10)*



MATT MITCHELL

Jonathan Smith Named MSU's 26th Head Football Coach

The Jonathan Smith era is officially underway in East Lansing.

Smith, 44, was named the 2022 Pac-12 Co-Coach of the Year and built Oregon State into one of the top teams in the conference after taking over in 2018.

Under his guidance, Oregon State was ranked as high as 11th in the College Football Playoff rankings this past season. The team went 25-13 in three seasons under Smith, including a No. 17 ranking in 2022 and a win in the Las Vegas Bowl. He also has experience coaching in the College Football Playoff as an offensive coordinator at Washington in 2016.

Smith brings his tried-and-true team-building philosophy to MSU.

"We are going to be process oriented," he said. "We stick to a process January all the way through December, you stick to a

process Sunday to Saturday. You stick to a process at the start of practice, at the end of practice. I felt Michigan State fit that."

The 2024 season kicks off on Aug. 31 when the Spartans host Florida Atlantic.

"With the Tom Izzo Football Building nearing completion, demonstrating our commitment to providing championship resources, and with the support of our passionate and loyal fan base, this is an exciting time to begin a new era of Spartan Football," said Michigan State Vice President and Director of Intercollegiate Athletics Alan Haller.

MORE ON
WEB | Learn more:
go.msu.edu/smith



“With the Tom Izzo Football Building nearing completion, demonstrating our commitment to providing championship resources, and with the support of our passionate and loyal fan base, this is an exciting time to begin a new era of Spartan Football.”

Alan Haller
Michigan State Vice President
and Director of Intercollegiate
Athletics



MATT MITCHELL

ENGINEERING DESIGN DAY SHOWCASES SPARTAN INNOVATION

Continuing a tradition that began in 1994, the MSU College of Engineering hosted its annual Design Day to celebrate innovation driven by Spartan engineering students.

Design Day is the premier academic event for the fall and spring semesters. It gives students the opportunity to share their latest technological advances and research with the MSU community and corporate partners.

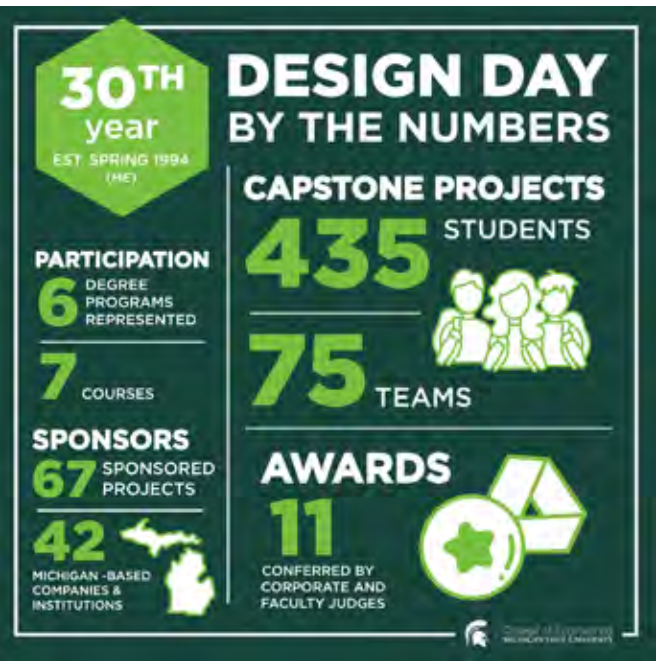
This year's fall semester event included 694 students representing 132 teams and seven courses in the fields of computer science and mechanical, civil, electrical and environmental engineering. Spartan engineers are not only evaluated academically for these projects, but also professionally by potential employers.

Among that group were 435 graduating seniors on 75 teams that presented their final projects, including 67 sponsored by corporate and community partners.

The college's Engineering Building also hosted a competition for 140 high school students.



MSU COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING



MSU Globally Ranked in Sustainability

In the 2024 Quacquarelli Symonds Sustainability Ranking, Michigan State placed in the top 3% in the world—or No. 41—among participating schools. The university is also in the top 3% in the nation, ranked at No. 6.



GLOBALLY, MSU RANKS IN THE TOP 25 IN FOUR QS KEY INDICATORS:

- No. 8 in knowledge exchange
- No. 20 in equality
- No. 20 in social impact
- No. 25 in environmental research

MORE ON
WEB | Learn more:
go.msu.edu/top-25-rank



MSU ENTERS ESPORTS ARENA WITH OFFICIAL VARSITY TEAM

Led by Director Christopher Bilski and head coaches Grayson Harding, James Jordan and William Perez, MSU is poised to make a splash in the collegiate esports scene.

New for the 2023-24 academic year, each institution in the Big Ten Conference has joined the Big Esports Conference (BEC) for weekly collegiate matches. Michigan State is also a member of the National Association of Collegiate Esports (NACE), the largest member association of college and university sponsored esports programs comprised of more than 240 member schools.

“Our program is not just about competition,” Bilski said. “We are building a holistic approach that also emphasizes community and careers for students. We hope to use esports as a way students can use their four years at MSU to prepare for the next 40 years of life.”

Thanks to a partnership with Dell Technologies and its iconic gaming brand, Alienware, MSU debuted two dedicated esports spaces in early 2024, providing the varsity teams and vibrant esports community with competition centers worthy of championships. Both locations are open to all students, featuring console and PC gaming spaces as well as broadcast areas.

MORE ON WEB | Learn more: go.msu.edu/esports-team

3

The number of game titles in which MSU’s varsity team competes: Super Smash Bros. Ultimate, Rocket League and Valorant.

25

Total students on the varsity esports roster for the 2023-24 season.

Smash Bros. Team Makes National Final

The Spartan’s first Super Smash Bros. Ultimate varsity team qualified for the NACE Starleague Grand Finals at Boise State University. MSU finished runner-up in the championship match after dropping a best-of-three series to No. 1 seed Stony Brook University.

MSU’s roster at the grand final included Daniel “Hawk” Weatherspoon, Rodrigo “Arkdee” Arce, Julian “Crash 101” Alonso, Adam “Suspect” Ismaili-Alaoui, Ryan “Rydra” Marcus and Dyson “Dice” Mingo.



MSU VARSITY ESPORTS / NICK SCHRADER



Spartans Together

In the wake of the violence the MSU community experienced on Feb. 13, 2023 that killed three students—Arielle Anderson, Brian Fraser and Alexandria Verner—and injured five, the strength of the MSU community and its intrinsic motivation to support and uplift one another demonstrated the togetherness of our Spartan community.

The act of violence does not define MSU. Rather, that time will be remembered for the community response and commitment to caring for each other and MSU’s collective safety and well-being.

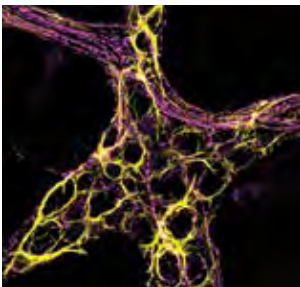
As the university community acknowledges the one-year mark, Spartans are being supported and cared for, together.

Since February 2023, mental health support resources have been organized through University Health and Wellbeing, the Department of Psychiatry and other community providers. This collaborative effort provided more than 21,000 mental health support touchpoints

for students and employees. More than 5,000 Spartans engaged in art-centric activities as a way to heal, including free Wharton Center performance tickets, gatherings at the Broad Art Museum and community walks at the Beal Botanical Garden. Additionally, there were more than 100 visits from emotional support animals and the Department of Forestry offered guided nature walks. MSU continues to provide expanded mental health services to the Spartan community through its on-campus resources and mental health partners like Uwill, MSU Health Care Psychiatry and ThrivingCampus.

As the community reflects on this moment, the university has established a new website to remember those impacted and the moments that brought us together in support of our fellow Spartans. You can learn more about MSU’s one-year observance and look back on the moments of strength and resilience at spartanstogether.msu.edu.

IAIN BOGLE



Getting to the Root of Visceral Pain

Researchers at MSU may have discovered why visceral pain is so common in people who have experienced inflammation in their guts, including patients with irritable bowel syndrome.

Working with mouse models, MSU physiologists showed that nervous system cells known as glia can sensitize nearby neurons, causing them to send pain signals more easily than they did prior to inflammation.

“The glia drop the threshold for activating a neuron,” said MSU Research Foundation Professor Brian Gulbransen, whose team’s new report was published in the journal Science Signaling. “So, something that wasn’t painful is now painful. It’s like when you put on a shirt after getting a sunburn.”

This discovery could help researchers develop therapies to lessen or eliminate visceral pain by counteracting the glia’s sensitizing efforts.

The investigation was spearheaded by Wilmarie Morales-Soto who earned her doctorate in 2023 working on this project in Gulbransen’s lab. She’s now a postdoctoral research fellow at the Mayo Clinic.

The research team also included research associate Jacques Gonzales and William Jackson, a professor in the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology.

DRIVERS, START YOUR ENGINES—REMOTELY

MSU is racing into the future with a two-year agreement with Italian university Politecnico di Milano and the University of Alabama to participate in the Indy Autonomous Challenge (IAC). The IAC brings together academic institutions and public-private partnerships to challenge students to develop a new generation of vehicle software to operate fully autonomous race cars.

“This is the future of racing and helps put the future of mobility technologies on an expansive, thrilling international stage,” said Satish Udpa, University Distinguished Professor of electrical and computer engineering at MSU.

MORE ON WEB | Learn more: go.msu.edu/iac-race

WILMARIE MORALES-SOTO

Investigating Mob Mentality

Spartan researchers delve into the relationships and social interactions of hyenas.

After more than 35 years of surveillance, MSU researchers are exposing some of the secret workings of mobs.

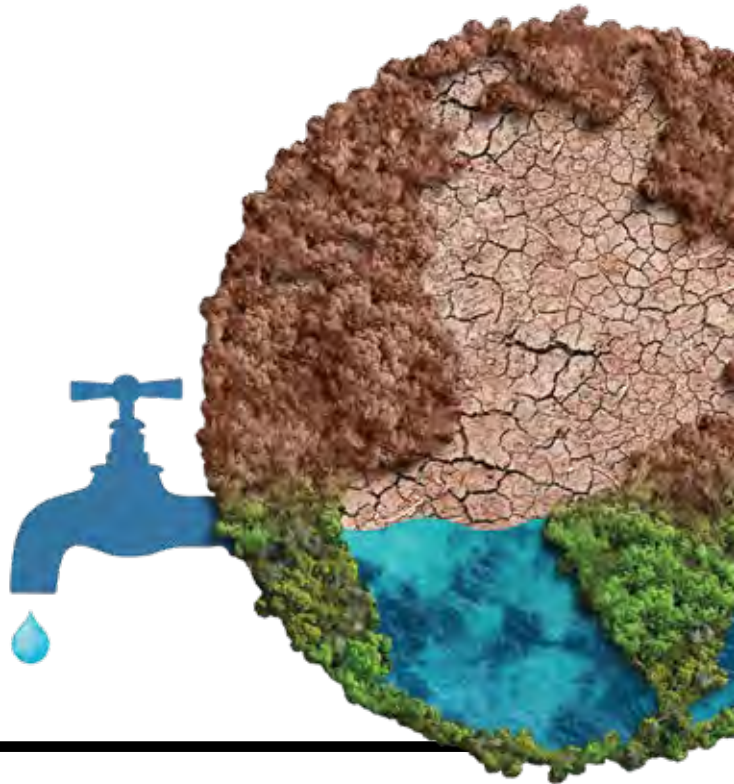
To be clear, these mobs are made up of spotted hyenas. Publishing in the journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B, the MSU team revealed that relationships and social interactions between hyenas can influence when two or more animals decide to work together to attack lions. This type of cooperative behavior is called mobbing.

“Hyenas are sensitive to social relationships,” said Kay Holekamp, a University Distinguished Professor of integrative biology in MSU’s College of Natural Science. “They base their decisions about whether or not to cooperate in mobbing lions on both immediate-term friendly behaviors and long-term, friendship-like relationships.”

The team at the Maasai Mara National Reserve in southwestern Kenya observed about 1,000 mobbing interactions across several generations of hyenas over the past three decades. Holekamp’s team is still working to find what other secrets those data sets hold.



GETTY IMAGES



SEEKING LEADERS TO SOLVE GLOBAL WATER CRISIS

As a world leader in water research, MSU is addressing global water issues by developing a graduate training program focused on the broad technological, scientific and cultural skills needed to resolve current and future water challenges. The program is being developed with the help of a \$3 million National Science Foundation Research Traineeship (NRT) program award.

Building on interdisciplinary collaboration among faculty from 13 departments across seven MSU colleges, the project anticipates training 58 doctoral students, including 33 NRT-funded trainees, from engineering, computer science, biology, ecology, public health and social science.

MORE ON WEB | Learn more: go.msu.edu/water-crisis



“Developers like the biophilic benefits of mass timber. Biophilia is the idea that there are benefits to bringing nature indoors. Research has found that when we have materials like exposed wood in buildings, the occupants of those buildings report qualities like better mental health, a sense of well-being and greater productivity.”

Sandra Lupien
Director of MassTimber@MSU

Exploring Michigan’s Emerging Mass Timber Market

Researchers create models to forecast the supply and demand of mass timber in Michigan.



“Instead of hauling and getting mass timber from Canada, why can’t we start a processing facility in Michigan?” said Raju Pokharel, an assistant professor in MSU’s Department of Forestry who is studying ways Michigan can capitalize on its vast number of forests. “Michigan has wood, but it’s struggling to sell and use it optimally.”

“Mass timber” refers to a variety of engineered wood products comprising dimensional lumber layered together to form panels, columns and beams.

Sandra Lupien is the project manager for this study. She’s the director of MassTimber@MSU, a program that

advances mass timber construction and production in Michigan through outreach, communications, research, education, policy and partnerships.

There are no approved or planned projects for a mass timber production facility in Michigan yet. Lupien said the goal of the supply-and-demand analyses is to provide prospective manufacturers with the insights they need to scope a mass timber facility in the state.

MORE ON **WEB** | Learn more: go.msu.edu/timber

MSU’s STEM Teaching and Learning Facility

Opened in 2021 on the corner of North Shaw Lane and Red Cedar Road next to Spartan Stadium, the STEM Teaching and Learning Facility was Michigan’s first mass timber building. Mass timber buildings can go up quickly and efficiently, and with a lower carbon footprint, the material offers a sustainable alternative to steel and concrete.



ARAN KESSLER



“If you’ve ever had to get a replacement filling because there’s a crack in it or it is wiggling around, that’s what we’re working on here at MSU—reducing that rate of failure and the lifetime of the initial filling.”

Caroline Szczepanski
Assistant professor of Chemical Engineering and Materials Science and Director of MSU’s Szczepanski Research Group

WORKING TO EXTEND THE LIFE OF DENTAL FILLINGS

“We have found that what nature gave us is hard to improve on, let alone replicate,” said Caroline Szczepanski, assistant professor of Chemical Engineering and Materials Science and director of MSU’s Szczepanski Research Group.

In her lab, Szczepanski and her students conduct polymer research. Since scientists haven’t been able to duplicate the structure of a tooth, the group looks for “out of the box” ideas to mimic the complex bone structure of the mouth.

Statistics show it’s a dentistry project worth pursuing. More than 90 percent of American adults need a filling at some point, and in 2019, replacing failed fillings was a \$5 billion industry.

“If you’ve ever had to get a replacement filling because there’s a crack in it or it is wiggling around, that’s what we’re working on here at MSU—reducing that rate of failure and the lifetime of the initial filling,” she said.

MSU / GETTY IMAGES

WORKS CITED

- Five MSU researchers and professors have been recognized on the “2023 Highly Cited Researchers” list, an annual ranking by Clarivate Analytics that recognizes research scientists from across the globe who have significantly influenced their fields of study. Of the world’s population of scientists and social scientists, highly cited researchers are 1 in 1000.
- **DAVID ROY**, interim director of the Center for Global Change and Earth Observations in the College of Social Science and a professor in the Department of Geography, Environment and Spatial Sciences.
 - **GREGG HOWE**, University Distinguished Professor of biochemistry and molecular biology in the College of Natural Science.
 - **JAMES TIEDJE**, University Distinguished Professor and director of the MSU Center for Microbial Ecology in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.
 - **JIANGUO “JACK” LIU**, University Distinguished Professor and the Rachel Carson Chair in Sustainability in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.
 - **MORTEZA MAHMOUDI**, assistant professor in the Department of Radiology and Precision Health Program in the College of Human Medicine.



Gymnastics Celebrates 50 Years

Michigan State gymnastics kicked off its 50th year of competition in January.

STUDENT-ATHLETES RECOGNIZED FOR NIL ACHIEVEMENTS

MSU athletics hosted the second-ever EverGreen NIL Celebration presented by MSUFCU and continues to be the only Power 5 institution in the country to celebrate the name, image and likeness achievements of its student-athletes.

“I travel from university to university teaching student-athletes how to create content for their NIL partnerships, and I get a close look at how universities are navigating the space,” said Sam Green, a digital content creator and NIL content advisor. “When I think of innovation, I immediately think of Michigan State.”

MORE ON WEB | Learn more: go.msu.edu/nil



Since its first season in 1974, the Spartans have put together a 597-337-5 (.638) overall record and made 22 NCAA postseason appearances. Last season, MSU captured its first Big Ten regular season title and eclipsed the 198,000 overall team score mark for the first time in program history with a school-record 198,225.

A special logo was created for the 50-year anniversary of Spartan gymnastics, with merchandise for fans made available for purchase at Jenison Field House and online through MSU licensed vendors.

The logo incorporates elements from the structure of Jenison Field House and includes rhinestones to represent each season, as well as a larger rhinestone to symbolize MSU’s 2023 Big Ten title. A ribbon across the ‘50’ signifies the upward growth of the program.

MORE ON WEB | Learn more: go.msu.edu/gymnastics-50

100%

NINE SPORTS POSTED A PERFECT GRADUATION SUCCESS RATE IN 2023:

Women’s Golf, Gymnastics, Men’s Tennis, Women’s Tennis, Men’s Track & Field/Cross Country, Women’s Track & Field/Cross Country, Volleyball and Wrestling.

MSU ATHLETICS

Women’s Soccer Makes Historic NCAA Tournament Run

The Spartans concluded a historic season with a 14-5-3 record, highlighted by a second-consecutive Big Ten title and the program’s first appearance in the NCAA Third Round.

MSU finished 7-1-2 in Big Ten action, the team’s second-best conference record in program history. MSU is the first women’s soccer program to earn back-to-back Big Ten titles since Penn State in the 2015 and 2016 seasons, and joins Penn State, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Ohio State as one of five teams to win multiple titles.

The title is the second for Head Coach Jeff Hosler, who since taking over the program in 2021 has recorded the highest number of Big Ten wins (21) among all head coaches in the league.

“This is uncharted territory for our program, for all the players on our roster,” said Hosler following the 2023 season. “I think we grew a lot as a program.”



“This is uncharted territory for our program, for all the players on our roster. I think we grew a lot as a program.”

Jeff Hosler
Head Coach, Women’s Soccer



BUILDING A DYNASTY

The MSU women’s cross country team claimed the 2023 Big Ten Championship title, going back-to-back and topping the conference for a fourth time in five years.

Senior Makenna Veen and grad-senior Katie Osika earned First Team All-Conference honors. Osika later was named Big Ten Cross Country Women’s Athlete of the Year and was awarded All-American honors for the second-straight season.



MSU ATHLETICS

ADRIAN DOMINICAN SISTERS BACK AFRICAN AMERICAN AND AFRICAN STUDIES

The Adrian Dominican Sisters, a Catholic congregation of more than 400 Dominican sisters and 200 laypeople headquartered in Adrian, Michigan, recently made a \$500,000 gift to create student scholarships within the Department of African American and African Studies (AAAS) and to support AAAS faculty with student engagement initiatives.

Rooted in reparations and recognizing the powerful contributions being made by AAAS toward racial and social justice, the gift will benefit the students and faculty for generations to come.



‘UNPARALLELED ENGAGEMENTS WITH ART’ AT THE MSU BROAD ART MUSEUM

The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at MSU will benefit from a significant \$7.5 million bequest gift from alumnus Alan Ross and his spouse, Rebecca Ross.

Their gift will further the impact of the existing Alan and Rebecca Ross Exhibition Endowment, which was established by the couple with a previous \$1 million cash gift in 2014 to support the museum’s exhibition program.

The Alan and Rebecca Ross Education Wing in the Zaha Hadid-designed museum—an open, light-filled public programming space that hosts thousands of children, MSU students and adults each year—was named in their honor.

“It is deeply meaningful to have the support of Alan and Rebecca Ross, who are leaders in the arts community in Michigan and beyond,” said MSU Interim President Teresa K. Woodruff, Ph.D. “Their partnership is a tremendous asset as we grow and expand the MSU Arts strategy.”

Their generosity helps further the goals of the MSU Broad Art Museum’s exhibition program. The program presents innovative research, scholarship and interdisciplinary learning through a global roster of artists, grounded in dialogue with their growing permanent collection of works spanning from the ancient world to the present day.

MORE ON WEB | Learn more: go.msu.edu/broad-gift

CHASE STANTON

Innovative Course Uses Creative Arts to Combat Stress, Boost Mental Health

Rob Roznowski, professor in the Department of Theatre, is spearheading an innovative Integrative Arts and Humanities course that delves into the transformative potential of the creative arts to alleviate anxiety and stress.

The curriculum encompasses various artistic disciplines, including theatre, dance, music, art and creative writing.

Roznowski designed the class to reignite creativity among students, especially non-arts majors, and found that many of the students experienced a revitalizing return to creative freedom after years of neglect.

“We began observing art at the

museums and gardens on campus and then eased our way into self-creation,” Roznowski said. “For many, they were returning to drawing or creative writing for the first time in many years. They knew the arts restorative properties but never took the time to engage. This course forced them to do so.”

In the final segment, students devised their own creative arts exercises tailored to help peers de-stress during finals. After presentations in class, they offered these free activities to students in residence hall neighborhoods.



“On a very basic level, engaging in a creative act relieves the mind from the focus on negative self-talk or the stress of the list of demands that you need to fulfill.”

Rob Roznowski
Professor in the Department of Theatre



Music Alums in Korea Unite for Special Concert

The Michigan State University Alumni Concert in Seoul, South Korea is an annual tradition for Korean graduates of the MSU College of Music since at least 2008.

The tradition marked its return to live performances with a concert in November at Ilshin Hall in Seoul. It had previously been virtually rekindled as “Global Spartans in Music” after going into hiatus during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Preparing for this concert, we felt like we returned to the old days at MSU,” said flutist Wonjung Ha.

MSU COLLEGE OF MUSIC / MSU COLLEGE OF ARTS & LETTERS



ADDRESSING OPIOID
USE IN RURAL
MICHIGAN

Part of the Michigan Center for Rural Health in the MSU College of Osteopathic Medicine, the Northern Michigan Opioid Response Consortium has brought together 50 partners to address the opioid epidemic across a 25-county region in Michigan’s northern Lower Peninsula. Providing support and assistance to those with substance use disorder, partners include local health care facilities, community mental health agencies, local public health agencies, emergency medical services and more.

MORE ON
WEB | Learn more:
go.msu.edu/opioid-use

1974

The year MSU established the Rural Physician Program in Marquette, MI, one of the pioneer rural medical training programs in the country.

UP Campus Offers Hands-on Training

On a cold, blustery evening, third-year College of Human Medicine student Karmyn Polakowski laid on a gurney at Marquette Mountain Resort in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. By her side, fellow medical students ran through a simulated emergency scenario, treating Polakowski for “injuries” sustained in a skiing accident.

The mock scenario is part of the Northern Wilderness Emergency and Sports Medicine “COMPASS” elective, unique to the College of Human Medicine’s Upper Peninsula Region Campus for more than a decade.

“The program gives our students the knowledge and skills to care for people

outside of the clinical setting where little to no resources are available—including emergent situations while in the wilderness or at sporting events,” said Stuart Johnson, D.O., community assistant dean at the UP campus.

Through the National Ski Patrol’s outdoor emergency care course, an advanced wilderness life support course and other hands-on learning, students experience the UP’s environment while learning valuable skills they can use as future physicians.

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MSU COLLEGE OF HUMAN MEDICINE



Transforming Workplace Culture: MSU’s Innovative Climate and Response Unit

MSU Alum Lydia Weiss, '08, leads the charge in empowering units against gender-based violence.

In the ever-evolving landscape of workplace dynamics, Michigan State University has taken a groundbreaking step towards fostering respectful and sustainable work environments. At the forefront of this initiative is the Prevention, Outreach and Education (POE) Department’s Climate and Response Unit, led by Lydia Weiss.

Weiss, assistant director of the Climate and Response Unit, played a pivotal role in the inception of this program, which was formed in 2019—just one year after the establishment of POE. Since its launch, the unit has supported over 54 university teams, providing a foundational assistance to those affected by gender-based violence.

To engage in Climate and Response work, units undergo an intake process, a critical initial step in understanding the unique dynamics and challenges they face. Weiss emphasizes the importance of a values-based approach, tailoring plans to help units navigate the aftermath of policy violations or harm within their teams.

“We help units develop trauma-informed sustainability plans, ensuring thoughtful consideration of gender-based dynamics, leaving leaders empowered to positively shift the climate,” said Weiss.

Recognizing the ripple effect of harm within a community, Weiss underscores the communal healing process. The Climate and Response Unit employs a multi-layered approach, involving departmental leadership consultations, team listening sessions, and gathering leader perspectives to inform the process. The Climate and Response team, equipped to support units of any size, can also provide recommendations for alternative

resources at Michigan State and in the community.

“We facilitate forward movement in a mindful and trauma-informed way, letting individuals know they are not alone, and external support is available,” said Weiss.

While POE currently relies on anecdotal data, the Climate and Response Unit recently secured the Institutional Courage Grant, paving the way for a formal evaluation process. This reflects a commitment to measuring the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at transforming workplace cultures.

In collaboration with Human Resources and Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs, POE has developed a Climate Assessment Toolkit. Leaders are encouraged to independently access this toolkit as a proactive measure to understand and improve the climate of their teams.

MSU’s POE Department and the Climate and Response Unit stand as beacons of change, guiding units towards respectful and sustainable work environments. As they continue to evolve and expand their impact, the transformative work led by Lydia Weiss and her team serves as an inspiring model for creating positive change in workplaces.



Footprints of Progress

As provost and vice president for academic affairs at the International University of Grand-Bassam in Côte d’Ivoire, DeBrenna Agbényiga, ’99, ’05, ’14, is living out the dreams of her ancestors. BY DREW MENTOCK

In August 2023, DeBrenna Agbényiga, Ph.D., MBA, MSW, became the provost and vice president for academic affairs at the International University of Grand-Bassam in Côte d’Ivoire, a role that incorporates profound connections to her ancestry and her nearly two decades at Michigan State.

“It’s a position that I never could have imagined, but I felt like it was written for me,” Agbényiga said. “It aligns all of my skill sets and capabilities and gives me the opportunity to make such a big footprint on the continent with respect to American-style education in Francophone West Africa.”

In 1997, Agbényiga made the move from South Carolina to East Lansing with her sights set on a master’s degree in social work. MSU’s program offered a strong foundation in macro-practice social work, which was a strong appeal of Agbényiga. While on campus, she also joined the student chapter for Black Social Workers, serving as president for a year.

“As a student, I had the opportunity to grow and learn in a profession that is so near and dear to my heart,” Agbényiga said. “My

“I was successful at MSU because I had a strong sense of belonging that was solidified by so many people and offices I encountered. That sense of belonging came with mutual respect and support that allowed us to challenge while being challenged.”

field placement opportunities with the Lansing Area AIDS Network and Mayor David Hollister’s office set the stage for me to impact lives within and outside the USA.”

Over the next 15 years, she also earned her Ph.D. in social work and an MBA in strategic management at MSU.

During this time, Agbényiga simultaneously worked at the university, holding positions as a diversity specialist, assistant dean for equity, diversity and inclusive academic affairs and associate dean for graduate studies and inclusion.

She also taught as an associate professor in the School of Social Work and the Department of Human Development and Family Studies.

“I was successful at MSU because I had a strong sense of belonging that was solidified by so many people and offices I encountered,” Agbényiga said. “That sense of belonging came with mutual respect and support that allowed us to challenge while being challenged.”

Today, she oversees IUGB’s academic enterprise, which includes its schools, faculty, recruitment, enrollment, retention, student life, research and more. Her responsibilities are similar to those she held in her previous post as provost and vice president for academic affairs at Stonehill College in Massachusetts—but with an important added duty.

“A major difference is the



DeBrenna Agbényiga, Ph.D., MBA, MSW
College of Social Science, MSW ’99, Ph.D. ’05
Eli Broad College of Business, MBA ’14

intersection of institutional organization culture and the country’s cultural context that I must balance as we work to reach our strategic goals,” Agbényiga said. “IUGB is poised to be an economic driver for Côte d’Ivoire, and this requires building strong relationships within and beyond the institution.”

In addition to cultural importance, Agbényiga recently realized her new position holds a strong personal significance as well.

Last July, she and her husband led friends from Michigan on a trip to the West African country of Ghana, where they visited many areas, including Elmina Castle.

The once-prominent slave depot was built in the late 1400s and Agbényiga had toured the site many times before. While working at MSU, she led expeditions to Jamaica and Ghana through a study abroad program she created. It also included a stop at the Elmina Castle, where students walked through the same

doorway as those once forced into the transatlantic slave trade.

On her most recent trip, when Agbényiga entered the castle’s dungeon, she felt an even more profound kinship with her forebears during this visit.

“Now I am returning and living out the dreams of my ancestors,” Agbényiga said. “They didn’t know what they would face as they walked through the door but continued to dream. Now I get to go back and help fulfill some of those.”

PHOTO COURTESY OF DEBRENNA AGBÉNYIGA

The Keeper of Detroit's History

By linking the past with the present, journalism alum and leader of the Detroit Historical Society Elana Rugh, '90, finds purpose in preserving Detroit's history and culture for future generations. BY DANIEL P. SMITH

Elana Rugh had a plan. *Step one:* Follow in her dad's footsteps and attend the University of Michigan. *Step two:* Major in journalism. *Step three:* Ascend the industry's broadcasting ranks with an artful blend of creativity and objectivity, relatability and relevance. "Maybe become a host on the 'Today' show," Rugh smiles. But as often happens in young lives, different possibilities emerge, and a new plan takes shape. Rather than attend Michigan, Rugh switched allegiances and enrolled at Michigan State, swayed by MSU's accredited journalism school and the welcoming campus environment she experienced during a high school visit. And rather than pursuing broadcast journalism upon graduation—her intended plan—Rugh charged into the nonprofit world, spurred by a multi-year job at Phone Bank Systems (PBS) during her undergraduate years. An upstart telemarketing company with a basement office on the corner of M.A.C. Avenue and Grand River, PBS led fundraising efforts for nonprofits such as the Detroit Zoo and the Detroit Opera House. The work energized Rugh more than she ever imagined.



Elana Rugh
College of Communication
Arts and Sciences, '90

"I loved how it made me feel—the idea of working for the greater good, working altruistically," she says. "There was a shift in my head and my heart, and I decided to take a different path." Back home in Bloomfield Hills after graduation, Rugh spotted a

classified ad in the local newspaper for a fundraising assistant position. That \$18,000 a year gig with the Michigan Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society kicked off Rugh's nonprofit career, one stretching 33 years and touching health care, education and the arts, and seemingly every slice of nonprofit duties, from recruiting volunteers to shepherding events, penning newsletters to chasing donors. "When you throw your hat in the ring, you learn you're able to do lots of things," says Rugh, who also spent six years at the Henry Ford Health System. In 2018, after an 11-year run as president of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society's Michigan Chapter, Rugh was named president and CEO of the Detroit Historical Society (DHS). Rugh was an admittedly unorthodox choice, given that she is not a historian and has not claimed experience at a cultural institution, but her proven ability to build and lead high-performing teams and stimulate financial stability prevailed. Over the last five years, Rugh has steered DHS's growth, ushering the organization through the COVID-19 pandemic, strengthening its fiscal position, managing some 300,000 historical artifacts and expanding the diversity of stories the museum shares, including the institution's first-ever LGBTQ exhibits and a 2023 show titled "The Hustle" celebrating Detroit's Black entrepreneurs—restaurateurs, garage owners, beauty salon operators and more.



“When you throw your hat in the ring, you learn you’re able to do lots of things.”

"We are the keepers of Detroit's stories, and that's incredibly important given history's role in shaping our understanding of the world," Rugh says, noting that every public school third grader in Detroit visits the museum. With an earnest spirit and strategic mind, Rugh is now pushing to secure DHS's long-term sustainability. She is working with legislators on a millage—pushing a fractional portion of property taxes to the DHS—to ensure the museum thrives for years to come. "We have an opportunity to completely change the trajectory of this important cultural institution, one that really matters to people," Rugh says. "In this way, I can't say I've ever had a job so inspiring."

Unraveling the Brain

When it comes to education, neuroscientist, inventor and business owner Greg Gage, '94, uses his imagination to make brain science accessible to all. BY DAVID SILVERBERG



Greg Gage
College of Engineering, '94

The brain is an amazing and complex organ,” begins Greg Gage on the stage of his most-viewed TED Talk, filmed in 2015. “And while many people are fascinated by the brain, they can’t really tell you that much about the properties [of] how the brain works because we don’t teach neuroscience in schools.”

In a video totaling more than 23 million views on YouTube, the

bespectacled speaker then asks a volunteer to join him onstage. He attaches electrodes to her arm which are affixed to the Spikerbox—an invention concocted by Gage to help educate everyday people about the wonders of the brain. The Spikerbox shows the activity of live neurons, visualized by sounds and spikes on a smartphone screen, similar to how seismographs measure earthquakes.

When Gage tells her to curl her arm, the spikes react sharply. The

crowd gasps. “These are the motor units that are happening from her spinal cord out to her muscle,” Gage explains, “and as she’s doing it, you’re seeing the electrical activity that’s happening.”

But he’s not done. He invites another volunteer to the stage and attaches a separate set of electrodes to his arm. With both volunteers connected to the same device—Gage calls this human-to-human interface—he asks the first volunteer

to squeeze her hand. And when she does, the second volunteer’s hand suddenly curls up too.

The crowd erupts in shocked laughter. “You know, when you lose your free will, and someone else becomes your agent,” Gage says, “it does feel a bit strange.” He’s gone on to appear on seven more TED Talk or TEDx stages.

A mix of wonder and joy is par for the course for Gage, who regularly elicits these expressions from audiences since he founded Backyard Brains, an organization focused on DIY experiments to teach the public about how our brains work.

“Democratizing science is what Backyard Brains is about,” he says in an interview from Serbia, where he’s helping a publisher translate his 2021 book “How Your Brain Works: Neuroscience Experiments for Everyone,” written with his Backyard Brains co-founder Tim Marzullo. “And one thing critical to what we do is that we don’t take ourselves too seriously, like when we give talks. I think a lot of scientists can learn from that.”

An adjunct assistant professor of molecular and integrative physiology at the University of Michigan, Gage spends most of his days visiting classrooms and conference halls to share nuances of brain science in interesting and inventive ways.

Gage is quick to comment about what he thinks the education system got wrong about neuroscience. “You read about it in a book and a lab class and then recreate what the sheet says, and let’s be honest, not many

people can learn science that way.”

But some departments get it right. Gage remembers an MSU physics class that lit a fire under him. “I had my first ‘Is everybody else hearing this?’ moment when learning about electrons and how strangely yet predictably they behaved. The next semester I enrolled as an electrical engineer and fell in love with electronics.”

By blending his passions for device tinkering and breaking down neuroscience in accessible ways,

Gage found his calling.

When he thinks about his relationship to science, and what he tries to preach to students young and old, he says, “There is creativity to science, and there is the ability to fail and come right back up again. The next generation of scientists can benefit a lot by tackling uncertain problems and looking beyond securing the best GPA.”

In other words, don’t take it too seriously—learning is meant to be fun. And Gage is living proof.



“There is creativity to science, and there is the ability to fail and come right back up again. The next generation of scientists can benefit a lot by tackling uncertain problems and looking beyond securing the best GPA.”

Liftoff

Throughout the ups and downs of life and a 50-plus-year writing career, things still seem funny to Tom McGuane, '62. BY GEOFF KOCH

Tom McGuane’s longtime Montana neighbor and friend, actor Michael Keaton, had a problem. The night before, Keaton had awoken to find his house ablaze. The fire, which may have started in a propane grill on Keaton’s porch, spread to the attic and roof before being doused by the Big Timber Volunteer Fire Department. The next morning, McGuane, after hearing the details, including the possibility that the house might be a goner, drolly asked Keaton if a tent catalog might help. “You jerk*!” replied Keaton, still smudged with smoke. “I’m homeless!”

“I can’t help it. Things seem funny to me,” said McGuane, sitting on his porch on a glorious fall day, the kind that surely attracted the writer to the area in the first place. “My heroes when I was young were writers like Gogol, also Ilf and Petrov. They wrote these serious yet comic stories. ‘Laughter through tears’ is the Russian expression.”

Occasions for tears have been frequent in the years since. Jim Harrison, a close friend and fellow Spartan with whom he exchanged weekly letters for decades, died in 2016. More recently came dual

cancer diagnoses for his brother-in-law, Jimmy Buffett, who died in September, and his wife of nearly 50 years, Laurie, who appeared vibrant and healthy on the day of this interview, still with “a smile that could paint your house,” as described in a 1986 profile of McGuane in The Washington Post. McGuane had politely waved off interview requests during the pandemic when Laurie was in treatment, and he was her primary caregiver. “My marriage is by far the most important thing in my life and has been for decades,” he said, adding a quick one-word answer when prompted for the secret of a lasting partnership: “Comedy.”

McGuane’s lasting success as a writer traces back in part to the lucky break of getting paired with Russel Nye as a faculty advisor at MSU. Nye, a Pulitzer winner, told McGuane to protect his writing and keep at it no matter the academic, financial and other pressures that were sure to come along. “It was a vote of faith in what I might do,” McGuane said. “For a young writer, you have no reason to believe that what you’re doing is very important. It looks like a waste of time to most people, including your parents.”

With a new contract at The New

Yorker, McGuane is still chipping away at his project, which seems to be documenting the tragi-comic nature of relationships and being human in a time of unrelenting change. He brushed off questions about faith, but his persistent efforts to evoke a smile, whether on the page or face to face, leave a distinct balm-for-the-soul impression, or at least a grin.

What about a one-word rallying cry to summarize his life’s purpose?

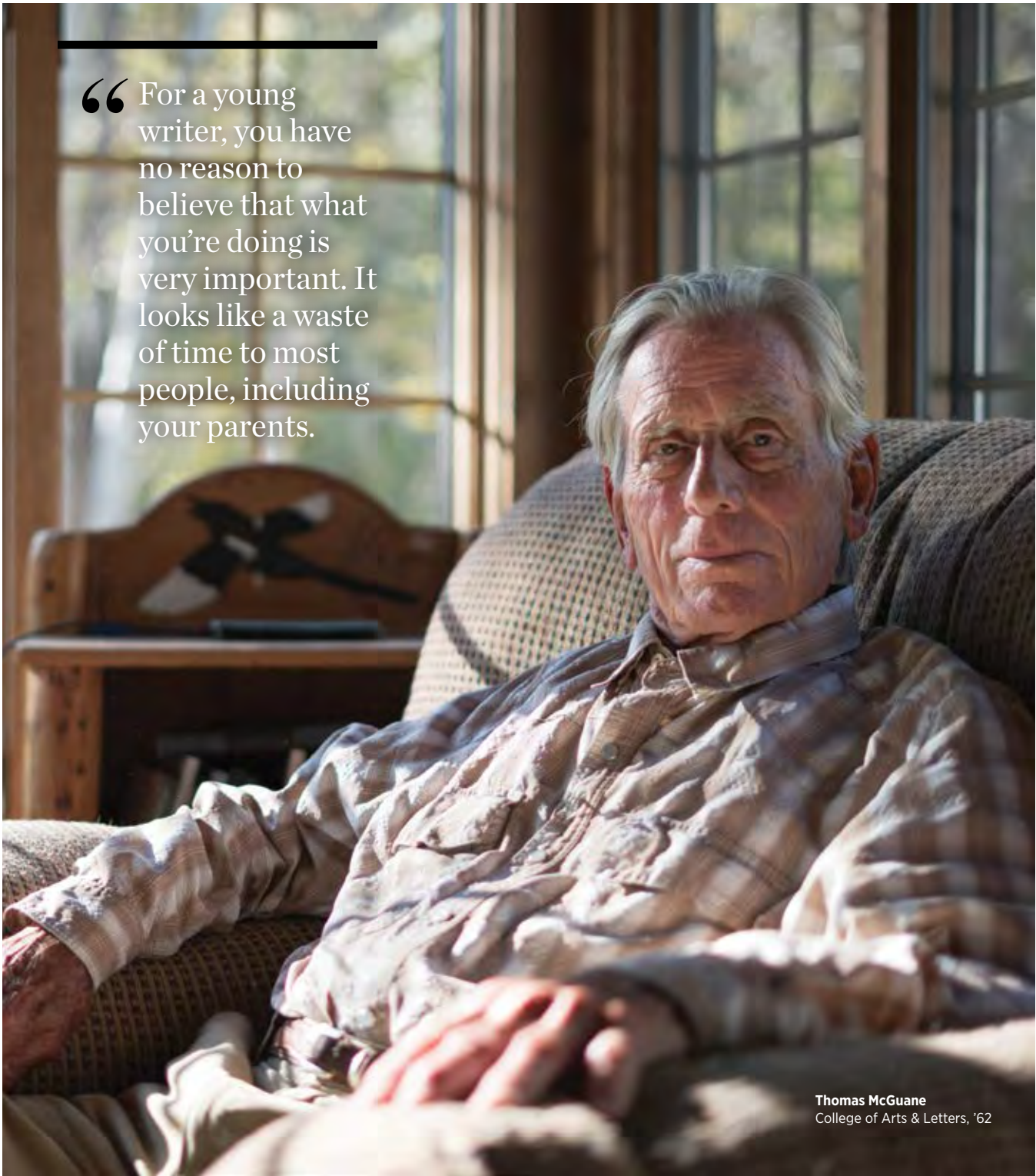
“That’s pretty restrictive,” he said, before cracking a mysterious smirk. Maybe it was a fleeting thought of his wild times in the 1970s (which earned him the nickname Captain Berserko), or of old friend Harrison’s final poem, which included a line about the “tender connection between men and galaxies,” or, most likely, of looking forward to walking with Laurie and the dogs with the sun still coming down through the cottonwoods, which hadn’t yet lost their leaves for the season.

“Space travel? No, that’s two words,” he said, the smile spreading across his craggy face. “How about ‘liftoff’?”

**He didn’t say “jerk.”*

“For a young writer, you have no reason to believe that what you’re doing is very important. It looks like a waste of time to most people, including your parents.”

ALAN ZHOU



Thomas McGuane
College of Arts & Letters, '62



A Curious Leader

Kevin M. Guskiewicz reflects on his new position as Michigan State University's 22nd president.

BY TIM CERULLO, '08 | PHOTOS BY NICK SCHRADER, '20, AND DERRICK L. TURNER, '86

Kevin Guskiewicz is a Lifelong Learner.

“

I’m a very curious person in general. I think the best leaders are those who will always be curious.

The accomplished neuroscientist, sports medicine researcher and academic leader joins MSU as the university’s new president following a 28-year association with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he was appointed chancellor in 2019. He’s known for his well-rounded educational leadership vision and believes in the necessity of the arts and humanities—as well as sciences—to develop fully engaged citizens and tomorrow’s leaders.

“I think he will be a difference maker who will gather all Spartans back together to accomplish our common goal of making Michigan State University the best institution in the world,” said Men’s Head Basketball Coach Tom Izzo, who was a member of the 29-person committee tasked with finding MSU’s new leader.

We sat down with Guskiewicz to discuss his future as both MSU’s 22nd president and a Michigander.



What drew you to this position and when did you know you wanted to be a Spartan?

The search firm reached out back in mid-September. At the time, my wife, Amy, and I were headed to a wedding near Frankfort, Michigan, driving up from Grand Rapids and stopping in some small towns along the way. It felt like home in a lot of ways.

We flew into East Lansing on a Friday afternoon in early November. I went for a jog the next morning and there was a lot of energy on campus. We bought a few tickets to the football game and watched MSU beat Nebraska and then walked downtown for dinner. There was just something

about it that felt good, and I think that was an important step in the process.

When I started talking to campus leaders to get their perspective on the mission of the institution and the road forward, I learned it’s a passionately public university that feels a commitment to the state of Michigan. I like the fact that it’s stayed true to the rich traditions and land grant mission, but has pursued contemporary thinking. It speaks to that commitment to serve the people of Michigan and the nation, and I’m going to make certain that Michigan State is the university for Michigan.



Why is it important to you to have an active and engaged alumni base?

As a university president, there are a lot of constituents that you need to be connected with and I've always believed that alumni are a key constituency. I want Michigan State alums to always be proud of their alma mater. I recognize that there have been some challenges over the past decade, but I sense an immense love for this place. That is so important, and it's something that drew me to the position and to continue asking questions.

I've got a lot of learning to do, and I think the more questions you ask, the more ideas about how we think about the future will arise. To embrace rich traditions while also helping lead the institution in new directions, you have to engage your alumni—and that's what I will do. I want to be sure all those voices are at the table.

We're putting together a Spartan bus tour to get out across the state, but I do realize with 500,000 living alums, many of them live outside of Michigan. I look forward to getting to meet them and invite them back to campus. I want it to be a campus that alums will always feel proud to be a part of.

What are you looking forward to during your Michigan bus tour?

With about 70% of undergraduates coming from the state, I think that it's important to touch down in the towns and communities that our students call home. I'm going to put together a team of faculty, who will join us on the trip, to help us map out what this will look like. I want to stop in these communities so we can all learn more about the impact our research has in a particular area. I want to stop in the hometowns of our legislators so we can introduce them to our faculty and staff and hear what's important to them—what Michigan State should be doing to help drive the economy of their region. It's about building trust and reinforcing the importance of the tax dollars that come to Michigan State. It's important they see the great return on that investment. And if we do this right, I think there will be future commitments to help support the university.

As one of my goals, I want to be careful that we don't become too tuition dependent. This is a concern across higher education right now. A lot of institutions are becoming overly reliant on tuition for running the institution.

What makes you excited to become a Michigander?

I grew up in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, outside of Pittsburgh, which has a Midwestern feel to it. I know a lot of people from Michigan, and I've talked to a number of people who are passionate about the state and the impact it has on solving some of the great challenges of our time. I've already had a chance to meet with a couple legislators who talked about the importance of Michigan State in the agriculture industry, and I'm really looking forward to learning more about agriculture and MSU Extension across Michigan.

I also know it's a beautiful state. That trip from Grand Rapids up to Frankfort was on a perfect fall day. There's a lot of beauty in Michigan, and I look forward to getting out and seeing that, which is another reason why it's so

Guskiewicz on campus with his wife, Amy, and daughter, Tessa.

“

I've got a lot of learning to do, and I think the more questions you ask, the more ideas about how we think about the future will arise. To embrace rich traditions while also helping lead the institution in new directions, you have to engage your alumni—and that's what I will do. I want to be sure all those voices are at the table.



important to connect to the alumni base—to hear what's important to them about our great global public research university and also to help me better understand the state of Michigan.

And cold weather doesn't bother me. I can assure you that.

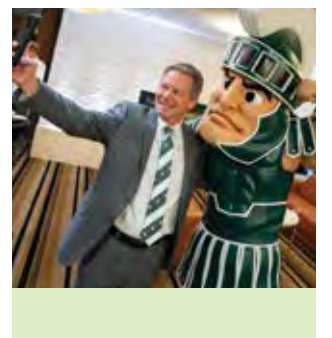
What hobbies and interests drive you outside of academia?

I'm a huge sports fan. My own research is in the area of sport-related concussions, and I've been part of developing a lot of concussion protocols for the NCAA and the NFL. It's all about improving health and safety in sports, so I spend a lot of time out and about watching pretty much any sport.

As a family, we love the arts. Performing arts, museums, music—that's a big part of the culture at Michigan State. Amy sits on the Playmakers Advisory Council at UNC, which works with the repertory theatre company, and we love going to events like that.

I'm also an avid runner. I start most of my days with a jog around campus or on the treadmill. It might be more treadmill during the winter months, but exercise is important. With my background in sports medicine, I've always said exercise is medicine.

I enjoy playing golf as well. Latrobe is Arnold Palmer's hometown. Unfortunately, I'm nowhere near the golfer he once was, and in my role, you don't have much time to work on your game. But I have heard that Michigan is a great golf state, up there among the best in the country.



Arts All Around Us

To drive learning and growth, discovery and exploration, connections and collaboration, Arts MSU places the arts at the center of MSU life—and it's inspiring Spartans across all areas of expertise.

BY DANIEL P. SMITH

The arts have a unique way of opening doors. To ourselves, to each other and to big ideas.

And Spartans, whose university was termed “an experiment” by its first president, especially recognize the value of creative, daring work.

Seeing the arts—collaborative, connective and generative at their core—as essential to a vibrant, inclusive and globally minded community advancing the common good, Michigan State University leadership launched Arts MSU last fall, an earnest and far-reaching effort that has been in the works since 2019. This unified approach seeks to integrate the arts across MSU—in classrooms, in research, in outreach, in campus infrastructure and more.

“This fall marked a tremendous step forward for our efforts to embed the arts across MSU’s missions, driving the kind of experimentation and innovation that are foundational to who we are as a university,” said Judith Stoddart, vice provost for university arts and collections. “Arts MSU makes visible the ways in which this strategy catalyzes discoveries and experiences at the intersection of disciplines, ideas and perspectives.”

By tapping into the arts’ longstanding record as a powerful and positive force in the world, Arts MSU aims to promote creativity and stimulate collaboration. It looks to heighten curiosity, accelerate discovery, propel knowledge sharing and foster richer perspectives of the world. It wants Spartans to feel more expressive and empowered, inspired and involved.

Here, Spartans share stories of incorporating the arts into their daily lives in spirited, fulfilling ways and shepherding artistic exploration and activities on and beyond the MSU campus.

GRACE KRAJEWSKI, A THIRD-YEAR HUMAN BIOLOGY MAJOR WITH A MINOR IN DANCE, IN THE INFINITY ROOM. Located in the STEM Building, the Infinity Room is an art installation within what was once a boiler for the former Shaw Lane Power Plant. It translates real time power consumption data from the on-campus T.B. Simon Power Plant into an immersive experience that displays moving patterns on all sides. The installation was brought to life by Turkish-American artist Refik Anadol in 2021.



GRACE KRAJEWSKI
Human biology major
with a minor in dance

“

These fields
that seemed
so disparate,
so distinct,
suddenly
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It began
to change
everything
for me.

GRACE KRAJEWSKI

“THE ARTS HELP MAKE ME MORE HUMAN”

A junior majoring in human biology, Grace Krajewski is also pursuing a minor in dance. It’s an admittedly unique academic balancing act connected to Krajewski’s past—she began toddler ballet classes in her hometown of Rochester Hills, Michigan, before embracing jazz, lyrical and other forms as a youth—and her future ambitions, namely medical school.

While the two disciplines excite her in different ways, each serving different personal objectives for Krajewski, she never expected them to intersect during her time at MSU. But they have—and in dynamic ways stimulating Krajewski’s mind, breeding unlikely relationships and deepening her sense of Spartan pride.

Krajewski recalls sitting in a physiology class one day learning about the organized composition of the human body. Later that same day, she listened to her contemporary dance teacher explain how the body moves in coordination.

“Lightbulbs started going off for me,” Krajewski said. “These fields that seemed so disparate, so distinct, suddenly became related, which was amazing to understand. It began to change everything for me.”

But it was only the first step in a more mind-opening, soul-enriching journey.

In October 2022, Krajewski joined a motion capture research project led by Brad Willcuts, associate professor

of musical theater, choreography and dance at MSU’s College of Arts & Letters. Given her dance background, Krajewski was tabbed to don a motion capture suit and perform a series of movements. While the motion capture work informed Willcuts’ 3D body mapping project, it also provided Krajewski a deeper understanding of the body’s interconnectedness—how muscles, joints and limbs move independently, in unison and because of one another.

Krajewski said the ability to study the human body and dance in parallel has allowed her to exercise both sides of her brain, awakened a richer understanding of the body and enlivened her experience at MSU. Above all, though, it’s helped her become a more well-rounded, approachable individual who recognizes the importance of cultivating relationships and introspection as a routine habit.

“I have no question the arts help make me more human, which is why I’m so grateful I have them in my life,” Krajewski said.

COURTESY ABEL KORINSKY, VIOLETA LÓPEZ LÓPEZ

The Intersection

Where Art, Science and Technology Meet

2024 welcomes the inaugural MSUFCU Arts Power Up artists-in-residence. The new program is a collaboration between the Facility for Rare Isotope Beams (FRIB), the MSU Museum and MSU’s STEAMPower Project.

Culminating in the creation of groundbreaking artworks at the intersection of art, science and technology, MSU will host Abel Korinsky (representative of Studio Korinsky) of Berlin, Germany, for the spring semester, and Violeta López López of Ávila, Spain, during the fall semester.

Korinsky and López will immerse themselves in the FRIB laboratory environment and explore the theme of nuclear astrophysics through their boundary-pushing work.

MORE ON
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go.msu.edu/frib-art



ABEL KORINSKY
Berlin, Germany



VIOLETA LÓPEZ LÓPEZ
Ávila, Spain

Dr. Ruth Nicole Brown
Inaugural Chairperson of the Department
of African American and African Studies
MSU Research Foundation Professor



RUTH NICOLE BROWN

“THE ARTS ARE OFTEN A BRIDGE ENABLING US TO SPEAK TO ONE ANOTHER BEYOND OUR TECHNICAL EXPERTISE”

Ask Ruth Nicole Brown about Arts MSU and she offers an enthusiastic reply.

The chair of the Department of African American and African Studies (AAAS) housed within MSU’s College of Arts & Letters, Brown appreciates the university-wide initiative and, specifically, its commitment to bringing the arts into more direct contact with the social sciences and STEM fields.

“The deepest thinker in physics often has a lot in common with the deepest thinker in AAAS, and the arts are often a bridge enabling us to speak to one another beyond our technical expertise,” Brown said.

The arts feature prominently in AAAS’s curriculum. Faculty regularly task students to leverage artistic practices like performance, poetry, painting, mixed media design and dance, while an assignment like sonic introductions challenges students to introduce themselves to classmates by integrating sound and music.

Meanwhile, AAAS faculty are artist-scholars themselves, including Brown, who engages in theatre, poetry and music. Their artistic creativity and intellectual curiosities are integrated, foundational to how they lead and transgressive.

“The arts are present in how we interact with one another, and we not only plan to

continue advancing and amplifying the arts and humanities, but we also aspire to combine our creative forces as one way to showcase the irresistibility of the chorus,” Brown said.

To that end, Brown is working to build artistic spaces within her department. This spring, AAAS will debut a recording studio to jump-start creative expression and collaborative ventures among AAAS faculty, students and staff as well as music makers across MSU and the greater Lansing community.

“The studio will be a place to build community, create culture, play together, share information and advance knowledge, all things the arts and humanities do so beautifully well,” Brown said.

Brown calls the arts a necessary component of “an excellent 21st century education” and a valuable avenue to address problems and nourish ideas. As many students come to MSU curious and eager to make a difference in the world, Brown said active involvement with the arts can feed both objectives.

“We’re living in a time in which people are leaning on the arts and humanities to express themselves, to dream new worlds and say some things differently,” Brown said. “We’re wise to support them in their journeys.”



Ruth Nicole Brown (right) with fifth-year social work major Kierstyn Powell.

RYAN FREDERICK

Prepare for Glory

An Actor’s Guide



In 2021, the Department of Theatre set out to help actors prepare for auditions, rehearsals and performances, with “The Moment Before: An Actor’s Warm-Up Podcast.”

Each episode of the six-season series is about 10 minutes in length and takes listeners through focused warmup exercises. An additional 16 episodes were added this winter by a cohort of eight MFA artist-educator candidates who drafted, workshopped, wrote and voiced two new episodes each.

“This emerging group of artist-educators have added their creative and inclusive approaches to theatre education to this ongoing podcast, creating more dynamic opportunities for students here at MSU to prepare effectively for rehearsal and performance,” said Alexis Black, assistant professor of acting and movement.

MORE ON WEB | Learn more: go.msu.edu/glory

“We’re living in a time in which people are leaning on the arts and humanities to express themselves, to dream new worlds and say some things differently.”

STEVEN BRIDGES

“ARTS ARE CRITICAL TO DEVELOPING THE WHOLE PERSON AS A GLOBAL CITIZEN”

The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University (MSU Broad Art Museum) emphasizes object-based learning, an educational approach that encourages close examination of artworks, using them as a tool to think critically about the world.

According to Steven Bridges, the museum’s interim director, senior curator and director of curatorial affairs, that educational emphasis is intentional, grounded in the belief that direct engagement with the museum’s objects—over 10,000 works spanning histories, geographies and cultures—fosters meaningful dialogue, an openness to diverse viewpoints and a greater understanding of the world.

“Ultimately, art is about breaking down silos and synthesizing information, which sits at the heart of learning, teaching and education,” Bridges said.



That philosophy, in fact, has pushed the MSU Broad Art Museum to partner on innovative programs like Global DEI Through Art. Using the museum’s collection as a gateway to cultural discovery, the annual teacher fellowship program equips Michigan-based K-12 educators with skills and strategies to broaden students’ understandings of global diversity, equity and inclusion in the classroom.

The museum’s newly opened Center for Object Research and Engagement (The CORE), however, might be the greatest testament to this educational approach.

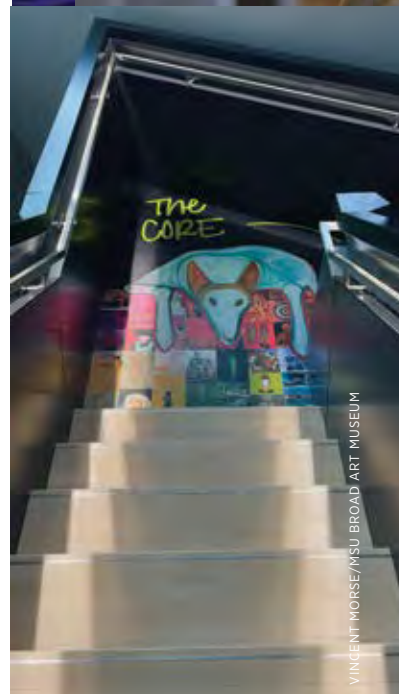
Filling more than 4,500 square feet of renovated space on the museum’s lower level, The CORE places nearly 300 works of art from the museum’s permanent collection on view, elevating access and visibility of a collection covering 5,000 years of art history. With purpose and enthusiasm, The CORE highlights diverse stories, values and worldviews. It stimulates curiosity. It uplifts scholarship and motivates fresh perspectives. And it exemplifies the spirit and mission of Arts MSU—driving experiences with the arts truly unique to the Michigan State campus.

“Arts are critical to developing the whole person as a global citizen,” Bridges said. “In putting the arts at the center of what we’re doing on campus, we’re unlocking opportunities for the type of growth and discovery central to our mission at MSU and the MSU Broad Art Museum.”



Steven L. Bridges
Interim Director of the
Eli and Edythe Broad
Art Museum at Michigan
State University
Curator and Director
of Curatorial Affairs

“In putting the arts at the center of what we’re doing on campus, we’re unlocking opportunities for the type of growth and discovery central to our mission at MSU and the MSU Broad Art Museum.”



VINCENT MORSE/MSU BROAD ART MUSEUM

On Display

The CORE at the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum

In fall 2023, following a substantial renovation, the Center for Object Research and Engagement (The CORE) opened on the lower level of the MSU Broad Art Museum. Displaying works from their permanent collection, The CORE’s custom modular displays allow the museum to rotate through a vast range of works over time.

Visitors create their own paths through the space, interacting with sensory stations and hands-on exhibits throughout.

The CORE has the capacity to display roughly 300 pieces at a time, but with over 10,000 items in the museum’s collection, there’s good reason to come back often.



MORE ON
WEB

Learn more:
go.msu.edu/core

“

After a long day of being given scientific facts and direct instructions, the arts permit my mind to wander while my heart does much of the work.



FAITH NHKUM
Microbiology major with
a minor in comic art and
storytelling

FAITH NHKUM

“ART ENCOURAGES EXPLORATION”

As a child, Faith Nhkum was fascinated by the arts, specifically animation. Every opportunity to exercise her creativity and imagination delivered energy and joy.

In high school, however, a love for science emerged. Upon arriving at MSU as a microbiology major, the California native assumed she'd be forced to surrender any artistic pursuits to the demands of science.

“I thought it was game over,” Nhkum said.

But Nhkum refused to abandon her artistic passions. She tossed an art class onto her first-semester class schedule, added a minor in comic art and storytelling at the close of her freshman year and began attending MSU Painting Club events where she encountered other artistic souls from across the MSU community—students majoring in fields like mathematics and neuroscience, physics and dietetics.

For Nhkum, a junior recently elected president of the MSU Painting Club, the arts provide an intellectual and spiritual equilibrium and access to a richer, more satisfying undergraduate life.

“After a long day of being given scientific facts and direct instructions, the arts permit my mind to wander while my heart does much of the work,” Nhkum said.

Unexpectedly, the arts are informing her microbiology studies as well, fostering creativity and problem-solving in her science, such as the type of media she will use to develop cultures.

“Art encourages exploration and I see how important that is to science when it comes to thinking about creative ways to better an experiment or developing a different approach,” she said.

Nhkum's artistic pursuits have also empowered her to generate awareness around social issues she cares about. In October, she was one of 13 MSU students awarded a CREATE! Micro-Grant, a College of Arts & Letters-spearheaded program encouraging students to use the arts as a vehicle to critically examine current events. Nhkum's charcoal drawing, soon to be displayed in the program's online exhibit, highlights the genocide of the Jinghpaw people in Myanmar, her parents' homeland.

“If I just lived in my microbiology world, I'd never have the opportunity to speak about what's happening in Myanmar,” Nhkum said. “But art gives me a voice, which is so amazing to me and, hopefully, impactful to others.”

After School Special

Groove Doctors

Their Instagram bio (@groovedoctors3) says it all: “Not quitting their teaching gigs at the local U, but still swingin' with some of the sweetest R&B/Jazz/Rock around.”

They're the Groove Doctors: Michael Lawrence (Professor of Law, Guitar/Vocals), David Stowe (Professor of Religious Studies, Drums) and Glenn Chambers (Professor of History, Interim Dean Residential College in the Arts and Humanities, Bass). The lifelong musicians and longtime friends meet up after class to let loose with their eclectic spin on hits and deep cuts from artists like Prince, Al Green and Stevie Wonder, plus a repertoire of originals they're recording into an album.

The professors—who play live shows at mid-Michigan breweries, bars, farmers' markets, festivals and weddings—have found music helpful in honing many life skills: focus, reaction, performance and self-expression. It requires a combination of creativity and discipline that helps people flourish both professionally and personally.

“Music, when you're performing, totally absorbs your attention,” said Stowe. “There's a real benefit to that kind of mindfulness.”

And while carrying a tune may not be a prerequisite for most degrees, Lawrence knows the power of music is very present in the classroom and beyond. “Focus, discipline, organization. It's all required to succeed in law school, and then as a lawyer,” he said.

“Music imitates life in a lot of ways,” added Chambers, leading into a lesson that straddles the line between music and life. “Sometimes you need to fill the space and sometimes it's better to be silent. You've just got to feel the vibe.”





SANDRA SNOW
Professor of Choral Conducting
Director of Choral Programs
Chair of the Conducting Area

SANDRA SNOW

“ARTS ARE THE ULTIMATE WAY OF LOOKING AT THE WORLD BEYOND OUR OWN LIVED EXPERIENCES”

The director of choral programs at the MSU College of Music, Sandra Snow sees an opportunity for music—already a popular artistic medium to comfort, entertain and unite—to be an even greater asset to MSU and society at large.

For Snow, Arts MSU is license to think with heightened ambition and intent about injecting music deeper into the campus environment as well as external communities to ignite relationships and invigorate lives.

The College of Music already hosts a range of choirs for music and non-music majors alike. The Choral Union, for instance, is a “town and gown” group composed of faculty, staff, retired people and members of the greater East

Lansing community ranging in ages from 18 to 80. It’s a glittering example of music’s ability to connect people from distinct backgrounds and spawn positive energy.

Bolstered by Arts MSU, Snow is now actively exploring ways to broaden music’s reach. Perhaps moving choral programs outside of the College of Music’s headquarters on West Circle Drive. Maybe offering additional participatory musical experiences that do not require involved, formal training.

“Singing is for everyone, and the benefits aren’t necessarily tied to study exclusively,” she said.

Snow also aims to expand the concept of musical scholarship, including efforts extending beyond the MSU campus. She sees opportunity for outreach-focused final

projects, such as bringing music into a hospice facility or organizing prison choirs.

“There’s so much potential meaning and value we can extract here,” she said.

Such promise excites Snow, compelling her to push boundaries and imagine new realities rooted in music and its power to feel, heal and connect.

“Arts are the ultimate way of looking at the world beyond our own lived experiences and it promotes a more

empathetic way of being in the world,” she said. “Engaging in and with the arts is a powerful means of self-expression that makes us feel present and in the moment. If we can make the arts more accessible, inclusive and alive to more people, we certainly should.”

MORE ON WEB | Learn more about Arts MSU:
arts.msu.edu

“

Engaging in and with the arts is a powerful means of self-expression that makes us feel present and in the moment.



For All to See *The MSU Museum*

Since opening its doors in 1857, the MSU Museum has been collecting objects and specimens and creating exhibitions that reflect the community’s shared histories and experiences.

The MSU Museum achieved the prestigious status of becoming Michigan’s first affiliate of the esteemed Smithsonian Institution in September 2001. This status opens up opportunities to engage in collaborative endeavors with the Smithsonian and fellow affiliates. And with substantial infrastructure upgrades coming this summer, the Museum is looking ahead to ensure future generations will continue to explore and experiment within its historic walls.

“We will continue to forge exciting and informative exhibitions and public programs that explore pressing issues,” said MSU Museum Director Devon Akmon. “Our goal is to be at the forefront of rethinking what it means to be a 21st-century academic museum.”

MORE ON WEB | Learn more:
museum.msu.edu

MSU COLLEGE OF MUSIC

Spartan

ALUMNI GRAND AWARDS

SPARTANS STRIVE TO ADDRESS THE WORLD'S MOST PRESSING PROBLEMS EACH AND EVERY DAY.

The MSU Alumni Office recognizes Spartans who positively reflect and enhance the prestige of Michigan State University with an Alumni Grand Award.

Ten Spartans received a 2023 Alumni Grand Award and were honored with a ceremony and gala in November.



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

Presented to alumni who have differentiated themselves by obtaining the highest level of professional accomplishment in their field.

YOUNG ALUMNI AWARD

Presented to alumni age 40 or younger who have distinguished themselves through a high level of professional accomplishment early in their career.

ALUMNI SERVICE AWARD

Presented to alumni who have demonstrated service to MSU and/or meritorious public service on a local, state, national or international level.

PHILANTHROPIST AWARD

Presented to individuals, families, associations, corporations or foundations with a proven record of providing major, ongoing financial support and leadership to MSU.



2023 ALUMNI GRAND AWARDS RECIPIENTS



RANDOLPH COWEN

Distinguished Alumni Award

B.A. College of Social Science, College of Arts & Letters and Honors College, 1974



LARRY THOMPSON

Distinguished Alumni Award

B.A. Culver-Stockton College, 1967; M.A. College of Social Science, 1969; J.D. University of Michigan, 1974



THOMAS WIELENGA

Distinguished Alumni Award

B.S. College of Engineering and Honors College, '78; M.S. University of Michigan, '79; Ph.D. University of Michigan, '84



BONNIE LARSON

Philanthropist Award

B.A. College of Social Science, 1970



ALLISON CAMPBELL

Young Alumni Award

B.A. James Madison College and Honors College, 2008; M.B.A. Harvard University, 2018



LEILA CHATTI

Young Alumni Award

B.A. Residential College in the Arts and Humanities and Honors College, 2011; M.F.A. North Carolina State University, 2015



ALEXANDRA CLARK

Young Alumni Award

B.A. Eli Broad College of Business, 2010; Ph.D. Massey University, 2012



ENDEA OWENS

Young Alumni Award

B. MUS. College of Music, 2015; M.M. The Juilliard School, 2018



MATTHEW AND SARAH CANTWELL

Alumni Service Award

Matthew: B.A., M.S. Eli Broad College of Business, 2004

Sarah: B.A. James Madison College, 2003; M.P.A. College of Social Science, 2005; M.S. Columbia University, 2010

Learn more about each recipient by visiting go.msu.edu/AGARecipients or using the QR code.



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MARCH 12, 2024

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Spartan BOLD	gifts of \$5,000-\$9,999/year
Spartan INSPIRED	gifts of \$10,000-\$19,999/year
Spartan EXTRAORDINARY	gifts of \$20,000+/year

LOYALTY LEVELS

Spartan LOYAL	gifts of \$100-\$499/year
Spartan PROUD	gifts of \$500-\$999/year

Annual giving recognition levels include all monetary donations and matching gifts received during the fiscal year, July 1-June 30.

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Green & White

Spartans Connect and Inspire



MAKING THE BAND

If you love the Spartan Marching Band—and who doesn't?—you have former Director of Bands Leonard Falcone to thank for his part in building its legacy. In September 1927, Falcone became director of the Michigan State College Military Band. Over the next 40 years, he would build that unit of 65 players into the premier Big Ten marching band we know today. Before retiring in 1967, he and the SMB assembled a national following and strong reputation, performing at the White House, the New York World's Fair and the Rose Bowl on numerous occasions. When it came to music performance and education, Falcone was a fixture on campus, bringing large-scale outdoor concerts to life and teaching courses until the early '70s. Pictured above, Falcone mentors two students in 1947.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES AND HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS



Our Journey Into the Future

It's the beginning of an exciting new era for MSU and Spartans everywhere.

“It’s an exciting time for MSU, and no matter where you reside, we hope you’ll join us in celebrating the past and welcoming the future.”

It’s no secret that big things are happening on campus. As we look ahead to a bright 2024 and beyond, we’re pleased to welcome Kevin M. Guskiewicz as the university’s 22nd president. His expertise in academic leadership and research will serve the university well. And with Jonathan Smith taking the helm as the new head football coach, Spartans everywhere can look forward to a promising future.

On a more somber note, I would like to express my appreciation for longtime MSU leader Dr. Kathleen Wilbur, who passed away in November. Without a doubt, her foresight, leadership and endless passion for the university has strengthened Michigan State in countless ways. Kathy will be missed dearly as both a public servant and a friend. Her belief in the power of kindness and mentorship impacted so many within the state of Michigan. Kathy’s ongoing efforts to promote the partnership between the state and federal government and higher education is the gold standard for others to follow. I believe the entire state will continue to feel the impact of her work for years to come.

Speaking of looking ahead, planning is underway for our annual Alumni Club Summit. Happening this April, the three-day event brings leaders from close to 85 clubs to campus for a chance to reconnect with the community and prepare for upcoming club events. New this year, the summit also provides an opportunity to celebrate the 200 students who received an alumni club scholarship at a scholarship luncheon. I truly appreciate the ongoing efforts of our clubs in providing resources to encourage top students from their own communities to attend Michigan State University. Impact on recruiting continues to be a strength of our clubs and brings great value to Michigan State.

It’s an exciting time for MSU, and no matter where you reside, we hope you’ll join us in celebrating the past and welcoming the future.

Go Green!

Nick McLaren

Nick McLaren, '99
ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT OF ALUMNI

Class Notes

News from Spartans Around the World



1960s

EDWARD D. DEEB, '60 (College of Communication Arts and Sciences), received the Michigan Youth Appreciation Foundation Distinguished Service Award for his contributions to Metro Detroit Youth Day and College Row. Founded by Deeb in 1991, Metro Detroit Youth Day was created to unite all walks of life for a day of constructive activities, guidance and mentorship.

JOEL WISE, HRM, '63 (Eli Broad College of Business), has retired.

CLARE ADKIN, '65, M.A. '69 (College of Social Science, College of Education), published the novel "Chance." The story is set on the iconic Route 66 and revolves around two brothers on a complicated family road trip.

JIM SARGENT, M.A. '68, PH.D. '72 (Both in Social Science), published the latest installment of his Mickey Matthews Mystery series, "Brotherly Love" (Doce

Blant Publishing). Set in 1946, the story follows the title character on an intriguing case that takes him to Ontario and Michigan.

LOUIS A. PENNER, PH.D. '69 (College of Social Science), along with fellow Spartan, Nao Hagiwara, Ph.D. ('06, '11) recently published the book "Unequal Health: Anti-Black Racism and the Threat to America's Health" (Cambridge University Press). The pair worked with two more co-

authors on this comprehensive analysis of the causes of racial disparities in health and health care.

THEDA SKOCPOL, '69 (College of Social Science, Honors College), published "Rust Belt Union Blues: Why Working-Class Voters Are Turning Away from the Democratic Party" with co-author Lainey Newman in September 2023. Skocpol received the Distinguished Alumni Award at the 2022 MSU Alumni Grand Awards.

DERRICK L. TURNER

MSU

1970s

ALAN JAY KAUFMAN, '70 (Eli Broad College of Business), received the Business Insurance Lifetime Achievement Award in September 2023. Honorees are also inducted into the Business Insurance Hall of Fame. Business Insurance is an authoritative news and information source focused on risk management, risk transfer and risk financing.

JIM BLAYLOCK, '71 (College of Communication Arts and Sciences), recently claimed the national golf championship at the 2023 Senior Games in the 75-79 age group. The event was held in Pittsburgh.

NICHOLAS HILL, '74 (College of Arts & Letters, Honors College), presented his solo exhibition, “25 Views from Kyoto to Tokyo” at CASAPLAN Art Center gallery in Valparaiso, Chile in August 2023.

DENISE CRITTENDON, '75 (College of Communication Arts and Sciences), published her debut sci-fi novel, “Where It Rains In Color” (Angry Robot Books/Watkins Media) in December 2022. The novel received a 2023 Outstanding Book Award from the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) and was selected as the Indie Author Project winner for the state of Nevada in November 2023.

JUDITH L. PEARSON, '75 (College of Arts & Letters), published her fourth book, “Crusade to Heal America: The Remarkable Life of Mary Lasker,” a biography about the health activist who helped launch the 1971 National Cancer Act, which turned the tide on survivorship of the disease.



MARY ANN RAMSEY, '75 (Eli Broad College of Business), was awarded the prestigious Virtuoso Cruise Icon recognition. Virtuoso, which specializes in luxury and experiential travel, presents this award to advisers who represent the top 1% in the company’s cruise sales.

RANDALL L. SEAVER, '75 (College of Social Science), joined law firm Moss & Barnett. Seaver, a bankruptcy attorney, joined the firm’s Litigation and Business Law practice areas.

MICHAEL VAVRUS, M.A. '75, PH.D. '78 (Both in College of Education), recently published the book, “Teaching Anti-Fascism: A Critical Multicultural Pedagogy for Civic Education” (Columbia University’s Teachers College Press).

1980s

LYNN DOMINA, '80 (College of Arts & Letters), recently published her third collection of poetry, “Inland

Sea,” from Kelsay Books. Domina currently teaches English at Northern Michigan University.

JOSEPH T. SPANIOLA, '85, M.M. '87 (Both in College of Music), received honorable mention for the 2023 American Prize in Composition for his piece, “Uplifted.” Spaniola was also recently honored for Distinction in Faculty Scholarly, Creative, and Research Activities at the University of West Florida in Pensacola.

DERRICK L. TURNER

1990s

MARK SEITZ, '88 (College of Agriculture and Natural Resources), recently celebrated his 20th anniversary as County Extension Director for North Carolina State University Cooperative Extension. He also received the Distinguished Service Award from the National Association of County Agriculture Agents Association in 2022.

RICHARD SHELLENBERGER, D.O. '89 (College of Osteopathic Medicine), was awarded the honor of Mastership in the American College of Physicians in September 2023, becoming the 50th physician from Michigan to be bestowed this honor since its inception in 1930.

BRIAN O'CONNOR, '91 (College of Communication Arts and Sciences), has been elected to the National Board of Governors of the Human Rights Campaign, the largest civil rights organization working to achieve equality for all LGBTQ+ Americans. He will also serve as co-chair of the Palm Springs, CA Steering Committee.

DAWN M. PATTERSON, '92 (College of Social Science), has been elected chair of the State Bar of Michigan’s Real Property Law Section. Patterson is a Detroit-based national commercial underwriting attorney with First American Title Insurance Company.

NATHANIEL R. WOLF, '94 (Eli Broad College of Business), was included in the 2023 edition of the Michigan Super Lawyers Magazine, an annual listing that recognizes lawyers who have attained a high degree of peer recognition and professional achievement.

MARC STEWART, '95 (James Madison College), has been named CNN’s correspondent in Beijing, China. Stewart joined CNN in 2022.

JACOB CALLCUT, '96 (College of Engineering, Lyman Briggs College), recently released his debut novel, “Awakening,” a near-future science fiction adventure.

D. SCOTT BRINKMANN, '97 (College of Social Science), was one of 20 attorneys named to Michigan Lawyers Weekly’s “Go To Lawyers” for Commercial Real Estate. The program honors leading lawyers nominated by their peers. Brinkmann is an attorney and shareholder at Butzel.

OVELL BARBEE, MLHR '98 (College of Social Science), recently published a book titled “The Big House: A Human-Centered and Progressive Approach to DEI and Positive Workplace Engagement.”

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MARC S. ROSENTHAL, PH.D., FACEP, FAEMS, D.O. '98 (College of Osteopathic Medicine), was recently awarded the 2023 American College of Emergency Physicians Disaster Medical Sciences Award at the ACEP'23 event in Philadelphia.

2000s

JASON DRAKE, '00 (Eli Broad College of Business), has been elected as Plante Moran's next managing partner. Drake, who has spent his entire professional career at Plante Moran, will lead one of the nation's largest audit, tax, consulting and wealth management firms.

RENÉE BRANCH CANADY, PH.D. '01 (College of Social Science), published the book "Room at the Table," in which she explores the intricacies of equity justice and dives into understanding how to advance change within public health and other fields.

MICHAEL SHEPPARD, '03, M.S. '08 (All in College of Natural Science), was recently awarded his 100th patent by the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

FERNANDO VASQUEZ, M.A. '04 (College of Education), was named assistant dean of admissions at the School of Medicine at Texas A&M University in Bryan/College Station, Texas.

MEGHAN CUNNINGHAM, '05 (College of Communication Arts and Sciences), was recently named vice president of marketing and communications for the University of Toledo.

NAO HAGIWARA, M.S. '06, PH.D. '11 (Both in College of Social Science), along with fellow Spartan, Louis A. Penner, Ph.D. ('69) recently published the book "Unequal



Health: Anti-Black Racism and the Threat to America's Health" (Cambridge University Press). The pair worked with two more co-authors on this comprehensive analysis of the causes of racial disparities in health and health care.

EVAN KAPLOE, J.D. '06 (College of Law), recently joined Strobl PLLC in Bloomfield Hills, MI as a tax attorney specialist.

LOIS M. MCCLURG, LCSW, LMSW, MSW '07 (College of Social Science), is a distinguished featured biography in the publication "Marquis Who's Who." Drawing on over four decades of diverse expertise, McClurg specializes in grief counseling. She retired in 2022.

JONATHAN NICHOL, D.M.A., M.M. '07, D.M.A. '10 (Both in College of Music), has been named the next director of the University of Oklahoma School of Music. Nichol served as interim director for the 2022-2023 academic year and has been on faculty as professor of saxophone since 2013.

MICHAEL BUTTERFIELD, '09 (James Madison College), was recognized by his peers as a 2024 Best Lawyer: Ones to Watch in the areas of commercial litigation, insurance law and product liability litigation—defendants. Butterfield recently joined Mantese Honigman, P.C.

THOMAS HENTHORN, PH.D. '09 (College of Arts & Letters), was honored with the University of Michigan Regents' Award for Distinguished Public Service. Henthorn, a professor of history at the University of Michigan-Flint, was recognized for the application of his scholarly work directly into the fabric of the Flint community.

LAURON KEHRER, '09 (College of Music, Honors College), recently published their first book, "Queer Voices in Hip-Hop: Cultures, Communities, and Contemporary Performance" (University of Michigan Press 2022).

DERRICK L. TURNER

2010s

ANDREW ELZINGA, '10 (College of Social Science), has been promoted to principal at Cornerstone Research, an economic and financial consulting firm where he consults on litigation and regulatory investigations in the life sciences and health care industries.

NUR YILDIZ, M.S. '10 (Eli Broad College of Business), was recently promoted to tax manager at accounting firm Dyke Yaxley LLC.

SARAH PRIMROSE, J.D. '12 (COLLEGE OF LAW), was recently named to the American Bankruptcy Institute's 40 Under 40 class of leading practitioners in the insolvency field. She was also named a Rising Star in the Southeast by the Daily Report. Sarah is a Senior Associate at King & Spalding LLP.

MARIA NOVOTNY, M.A. '13, PH.D. '17 (Both in College of Arts & Letters), recently published a collection of curated art and writing, titled "Infertilities, A Curation" (Wayne State University Press). The book portrays the varied perspectives of individuals who have lived with infertility. Novotny is an assistant professor of English at UW-Milwaukee and co-director of the national arts organization, The ART of Infertility.

LEAH LEWIS, '17 (College of Social Science), has joined the law firm Foran Glennon in their Chicago office as an associate.

MITCHELL W. BILD, '17 (James Madison College), a trial lawyer at the Chicago law firm of Corboy & Demetrio, was selected to the 2023 Lawdragon 500 X—The Next Generation, an elite

PHOTO COURTESY OF LAURIE DEVOS

directory of the top 500 up-and-coming lawyers nationwide.

ALEXANDRA GOVE, '19 (Eli Broad College of Business), recently received the GEM Club Top Key Account Executive award. Gove works at health care company Labcorp, where she is also member of the President's Club.

2020s

VINH LE, '21 (Eli Broad College of Business), published a DEI-focused paper in the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management.

ANGELA YUAN, '21 (College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Honors College), was named a finalist for the prestigious Schwarzman Scholarship. The scholarship selects students from around the world for a fully funded one-year master's degree and leadership program and Tsinghua University in Beijing, China.



MARYLOU IVERSON, '57 (College of Education), and **LAURIE DEVOS, '94 (College of Social Science)**, worked together on Hidden Creek Park West in Hillsboro, Oregon, a new community park designed to be inclusive and engaging for everyone in the community, including those with differing sensory, physical and cognitive needs.

A Life of Service and Compassion

Remembering Dr. Kathleen M. Wilbur, MSU leader whose quick wit and penchant for personal connections enriched the lives of everyone around her.

Dr. Kathleen M. Wilbur, an honored MSU leader and colleague known for her dedicated stewardship of MSU, passed away Sunday, Nov. 26, 2023 at the age of 70.

Kathy's distinguished 45-year career showcased her dedication to public service, higher education and leadership. At Michigan State University, where she was senior vice president for government relations and formerly served on the Board of Trustees, Kathy played a pivotal role in securing critical state funding for University General Operations, MSU Extension and AgBioResearch on an annual basis. Additionally, she assisted MSU in garnering state funding for key educational facilities, including the Engineering and Digital Innovation Center, and shaping many conversations around critical policy issues. As a key member of the university's leadership team, she significantly contributed to the institution's growth and success with local, state and federal relations.

Before her career in higher education, Wilbur served 12 years in state government as the only female director to ever lead three different state departments—the Department of Licensing and Regulation, the Commerce Department and the Department of Consumer and Industry Services.

A 2007 inductee into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame, Wilbur was a lifelong learner and a proud Spartan. She earned three degrees from MSU—a Ph.D. in higher education administration, an M.A. in higher education administration and a B.A. in journalism.

Kathy's personal life was filled with the same love and dedication she gave to her career. A beloved wife, mother, grandmother and friend, she cherished her family, creating lasting memories and instilling values of compassion and service.

As we remember Kathy Wilbur, we celebrate a life well-lived—a life of service, leadership, and unwavering commitment to making a difference. Kathy's legacy will continue to resonate, reminding us of the profound impact one individual can have on their community and beyond.

“Kathy Wilbur was a fabulous public servant and a dear friend. Her tireless work on behalf of our state was unequalled by anyone, anywhere. She was the “Rock of Gibraltar” during the most difficult of times in East Lansing. I worked with Kathy very closely in recent years and her dedication to our Spartan Nation makes her one of the greatest Spartans of all time. We will all miss her positive vision and are thankful to Tom and their family for sharing Kathy with us for many meaningful years.

FORMER MICHIGAN GOV. JIM BLANCHARD,
FORMER MSU ADVISOR



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE WILBUR FAMILY



Left: Kathy Wilbur with her granddaughter, Mary.

Above top: With former MSU Trustees Joel Ferguson, Melanie Foster and Colleen McNamara.

Above bottom: With husband, Tom.

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Strength. Guidance. Leadership.

On behalf of the Spartan community, we would like to thank Interim President Teresa K. Woodruff, Ph.D. for preparing MSU for a bright future. Your unwavering strength, guidance and leadership has been instrumental in building on our tradition of excellence in higher education.



THANK YOU!

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Snow Falls on West Circle Drive

Cook-SeEVERS Hall is an image out of a postcard amid the falling snow. Though it is one of the oldest buildings on campus, Cook-SeEVERS underwent substantial renovations in 2019, bringing the 1889 structure into the present day with modern technology, accessibility updates and meeting spaces for students in the Department of Agriculture, Food and Resources Economics.

NICK SCHRADER



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As a master's student at MSU, I'm part of a flexible program that allows me to pursue different disciplines while working alongside faculty on research that has a direct impact on people. Every day is exciting. Every day, I'm learning something new. I'm discovering myself both professionally and personally.



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