



COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT
Awards

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OCTOBER 14, 2022



Dear Friends and Alumni,

The WMU College of Arts and Sciences is proud to honor our 2022 Alumni Achievement Award winners, chosen by faculty from the units in which they earned their degrees. It is a great pleasure to count these award recipients among our more than 40,000 college alumni. Tonight's honorees truly exemplify our college's mission to ignite and sustain a passion for learning and discovery in the humanities, social sciences and sciences, to help students, staff and faculty succeed in life and contribute to the betterment of our communities, from local to global.

This year's award honorees represent an impressive breadth and diversity of careers and accomplishments, with a particularly strong commitment to learning and discovery. Our honorees this year include numerous award-winning educators, among them the American Physiological Society's 2022 Arthur C. Guyton Distinguished Educator of the Year; a winner of the Donald F. Koch Quality in Undergraduate Teaching Award, given to the top undergraduate instructor at Michigan State University; a Fellow of the Society of Behavioral Medicine; a pioneer of integrated environment and social justice education; a Michigan Outstanding Earth Science Education Award winner; a national leader in the scholarship and practice of teaching mathematics to children; and a teaching excellence award winner in philosophy. Our winners contribute to the betterment of their communities, serving as mentors for award-winning students studying materials science and physics; engaging in youth outreach; and lending their time and talent to organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, the MSU Extension Program, Second Harvest, American Refugee Committee, Climate Youth Leaders, United Way, and March of Dimes. They include entrepreneurs, such as the chief operating officer of an award-winning, minority-owned, veteran-owned business; an expert in supply chain work in the food manufacturing industry; and a sculptor and photographer with work that has been recognized nationally and internationally, as well as public servants serving as a finance analyst for the Michigan Supreme Court and a leader in environmental remediation in the state of Michigan.

We are so proud to honor these alumni, who demonstrate the core values of our college through their actions and their accomplishments. On behalf of the Western Michigan University College of Arts and Sciences, thank you for your remarkable achievements and contributions, and congratulations to every one of our 2022 College of Arts and Sciences Alumni Achievement and Pillar honorees!

Sincerely,

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



Department of
Biological Sciences

Dr. Erica Wehrwein

BS '98, MS '01

Associate Professor, Michigan State University

Dr. Erica Wehrwein is a two-time graduate of Western Michigan University's Department of Biological Sciences, receiving her B.S. in Biomedical Sciences in 1998 and her M.S. in Biological Sciences in 2001. During her master's, she was named as the department's Distinguished Graduate Student. Wehrwein received her Ph.D. in Physiology from Michigan State University in 2008 and was a postdoctoral trainee at the Mayo Clinic.

Wehrwein is currently an associate professor of physiology at Michigan State University. She is now able to merge her diverse professional skills and passions at MSU, where she leads a capstone experience course, helping students through human physiology research projects while also mentoring them in grant writing, offering professional development and teaching. She uses her clinical experience from Mayo Clinic to teach in the medical school.

She also serves as youth outreach director for the physiology department, which includes hosting K-12 students on campus for camps, inviting students to visit classrooms for science fairs and organizing physiology understanding (PhUn) Day at the Impression 5 science center.

Wehrwein is also the founder of the Physiology Majors Interest Group, an organization made up of 300 university faculty involved in physiology education worldwide. This consortium of educators developed a set of recommended curriculum guidelines for undergraduate physiology majors that have been key in a new American Physiological Society (APS) strategic initiative to launch a national Center for Physiology Education (CPE). Wehrwein serves as co-chair of the CPE developmental task force that developed the center's mission and goals and will serve on the advisory board when it launches in fall 2022.

For her professional efforts and commitment to students, Wehrwein was named as the 2022 Arthur C. Guyton Distinguished Educator of the Year by the American Physiological Society, and last year she received the Donald F. Koch Quality in Undergraduate Teaching Award for the top undergraduate instructor at Michigan State University.



Department of
Economics

Mike Burns

BS '98, MA '01

Senior Director, Supply Chain, Blommer
Chocolate Company

Mike Burns, a two-time Western Michigan University graduate, has spent his career mostly in supply chain positions in the consumer packaged goods industry, notably in food manufacturing. He has had the good fortune to work with growing brands such as Malt-O-Meal cereal and Clif energy bars, both of which were privately-owned family businesses that were subsequently purchased by larger organizations.

Burns attributes his work style and career to these smaller, leaner enterprises. "If individuals define culture, then culture defines a career," he says. He is appreciative of the opportunity to work with company leaders who encouraged innovative thinking and provided possibilities beyond the established scope of responsibility. His responsibilities at Malt-O-Meal Company, formerly MOM Brands and acquired by Post Holdings in 2016, grew from Demand Planning (forecasting) to inventory Planning, Distribution Operations, Sales and Operations Planning (S&OP), and Customer Logistics over his 20-year tenure. Most of those positions arose as the company evolved, giving him the opportunity to launch and grow the role while drawing on previous work experience and academic study.

After graduating, Burns worked in an entry-level position as a production scheduler at International Paper—a role he says left no room for creativity or variation from the standard. Later, as Manager of Demand Planning, he used his experience in applied statistics to create a forecasting system that used multiple statistical models to estimate consumer orders. These models were used to optimize production planning, create capacity models, and stock inventory to support customer service. Burns most recently joined The Blommer Chocolate Company, where he manages the supply chain team.

Despite a career spent prioritizing company growth and success, he was later encouraged to give his time to the nonprofit sector in Minneapolis, offering supply chain services to Second Harvest and the American Refugee Committee (now Alight). These services were varied but always focused on planning and process improvement. His most impactful volunteer experience was an ARC assignment in Sudan's Darfur region working among humanitarians facing adversity. Burns has since built and implemented a warehousing seminar used by eight global refugee sites, as well as helped organize a virtual 5K Run to raise donations and raise awareness of Uganda's refugee crisis.

Burns gives special recognition to two WMU professors, Drs. Susan Pozo and Myron Ross, who had a significant impact on his professional life. Their commitment to their field and method of positive reinforcement in the classroom gave him a fundamentally analytical and disciplined approach to applied methodologies, which influenced his management style.



Institute of the
**Environment and
Sustainability**

Jenny Doezeema

BS '06

Vice President for Learning and Engagement,
Kalamazoo Nature Center

Jenny Doezeema is the Vice President for Learning and Engagement at the Kalamazoo Nature Center, which is nationally recognized for its conservation work and educational programming. Jenny graduated from Western Michigan University in 2006 with environmental studies and secondary education degrees. She later received a master's teacher certificate from Michigan Technological University.

For 15 years, Doezeema has been an acclaimed environmental educator in the Kalamazoo region. Soon after graduating from WMU, she co-founded the nonprofit Michigan Earth Corps, whose mission was to provide Michigan youth with service learning and stewardship opportunities. She also pioneered elementary-classroom-level environmental and sustainability curricula for Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS).

Prior to her current position, Doezeema was the long-time Farm Director at Pretty Lake Camp; Director of "Keeping the Doors Open" for KPS; and later, Director of the Kalamazoo Nature Center's ecological field station, Heronwood Field Station in Alamo Township, Michigan. As VP of Learning and Engagement, Doezeema has developed numerous new programs to strengthen KNC's educational mission, combining quality ecological content with attention to current environmental and social justice issues.

She has a deep commitment to the Nature Center's diversity and inclusion goals and has focused on increasing representation and accessibility in KNC educational programs for children, youth, and adults. For example, she organized a Climate Youth Leaders program to support young people seeking to become effective climate action advocates. And, during the pandemic year in which school children were at home doing virtual classes, she led efforts to distribute nature-based learning materials like seed kits to student households.



Department of
**Geological and
Environmental Sciences**

Sara K. Pearson

MS '94

Source Water Unit Supervisor, Michigan
Department of Environment, Great Lakes
and Energy (EGLE)

Sara K. Pearson, an experienced geoscientist and environmental leader, received her master's degree in environmental earth science from WMU in 1994. After graduating, she worked as a consulting hydrogeologist in Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids before joining the state's environmental regulatory agency's remedial section in 2004. She has spent her career overseeing complex, multi-million dollar contamination cleanup and revitalization projects involving local governments, community interest organizations, and state and federal agencies. She has taken an active role in efforts to reform Michigan's environmental remediation standards and regulations. In her present role leading the Source Water Unit within the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE), she actively mentors her team to help them improve their talents and achieve their professional goals.

Pearson's dedication to both technical expertise and mentorship is evident in her professional service efforts. She has served on the national and Michigan boards of the American Institute of Professional Geologists (AIPG), as well as the Interstate Technology and Regulatory Council (ITRC). In these roles, she has planned, coordinated and sponsored technical training for peer-to-peer learning, as well as arranged professional field excursions and served as co-chair of yearly professional development workshops. She also gives back to WMU's Department of Geological and Environmental Sciences, where she has long served on the Advisory Council and is now Vice President. She has shared her significant knowledge with students by providing seminars about jobs in environmental protection and working with Western's student chapter of AIPG.



**Global and International
Studies**

Kathryn Giroux

BA '13

Senior Content Writer, Articulate

Kathryn Giroux is one of Global and International Studies' many rising stars since leaving her memorable work at Western Michigan University. An indicator of Giroux's future success while at Western was her submission of one of the finest Honors Thesis ever written at Lee Honors College. That work, which recounted and contextualized modern technology as she traveled the world, was a sign of things to come.

Giroux is currently a Senior Content Writer for "Articulate" based in Portland, Oregon. Prior to her position with "Articulate," Giroux taught story structure and interview techniques to a community of 6,000-plus filmmakers from around the world.

In her years at WMU, Giroux worked with refugee relief through Samaritas and became a member of Alpha Lambda Delta. She has worked abroad extensively in Southeast Asia. As a further sign of her energy and commitment, she just completed a fundraising bike ride across the United States... no small feat.

At the nearly 10-year mark since her graduation, Giroux represents the very best of WMU in the world. She is just getting started and great things are to come yet for our Global and International Studies Honored Alumna.



Department of
History

William (Bill) Parsons

BA '67, MSL '71

Retired director, Administrative and human resources, Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone, P.L.C.

William (Bill) Parsons earned his bachelor's degree in history from Western Michigan University in 1967. Bill retired as director, administrative and human resources, Miller, Canfield, Paddock & Stone, P.L.C., in 2007, a position he had held since 1984. Prior to that, he served as the administrative manager of Brown Coleman and Dement (1979-1984), and was employed in the personnel and trust departments of the former First of America Bank (1971-1979).

During his career, Parsons has held membership in the State Bar of Michigan; American Bar Association, legal administrators' section; and the Association of Legal Administrators. He is the author of a chapter titled "Fundamentals of Human Resources," in *The Lawyer's Handbook*, 3rd edition, 1993.

In addition to his career, Parsons is a member of the WMU President's Circle Pyramid Society; a life member of the WMU Alumni Association, serving on its board of directors for 2009-2010 and its executive and distinguished alumni award committees; and a member of the Lee Honors College Advisory Board. He has also served on the Kalamazoo Valley Community College Advisory board and is involved with the United Way and March of Dimes.

Parsons has made WMU gift pledges to the Lee Honors College, the Department of History and the Mike Gray Athletic Fund. In 2005, Bill created the Sarah E and William J Parsons Endowed Scholarship for the Lee Honors College. The scholarship is awarded to a full-time student of at least junior standing who is enrolled in the Lee Honors College; preference is given to students who plan to study abroad.



Institute for
**Intercultural and
Anthropological Studies**

Michael Scott Johnson

BA '00

Sculptor and Photographer, Gallery Myrtis Fine Arts and Advisory

Michael Scott Johnson is a New York-based sculptor and photographer. Over the past decade, Johnson has explored his vision of the ideal aesthetic, cultural memory and social realism, both in his own practice and through his teaching residencies. From childhood, Johnson has been fascinated with the narratives of the African Diaspora. As an undergraduate student, Johnson was recognized and intellectually mentored by noted African-American anthropologist, Dr. Warren Perry. He is the 2005 recipient of The Viktor Lowenfeld sculpture prize presented by The Hampton University Museum for his sculpture "the Tao of Physics." Since 2004, he held a wide range of artist residencies at institutions including Lincoln Center's Cork Gallery, The Town Hall, The Schomburg Center, The Dwyer Center, The Williamsburg Historical Society and MoCADA.



Mallinson Institute for Science Education

Daniall Poulsen

BA '00, MA '06

Science teacher, Portage Northern High School

Daniall Poulsen, B.A.'00, M.A.'06, received her degrees in science education from WMU. Since 2001, Poulsen has been a science teacher at Portage Northern High School teaching International Baccalaureate Environmental Science, Earth Science, Biology and Astronomy. Poulsen continually strives to enhance her teaching and to assist others in doing the same. She was one of 60 educators chosen from 300 applicants to take part in the two-year (2009–2010) ocean curriculum development and application program at the National Geographic National Teacher Leadership Academy. She has mentored three pre-interns and four student-teacher interns. She received the 2011 Michigan Outstanding Earth Science Educator Award from the Michigan Earth Science Teachers Association.

Poulsen frequently takes part in and presents at conferences on state and national science education. Her former department chair at Portage Northern High School, Kathy Mirakovits, recalled encouraging Poulsen to present at professional conferences. Mirakovits noted that Poulsen first believed she had nothing worthwhile or unique to share. She did, however, rapidly become an exceptional presenter. Mirakovits observed a teacher tell her colleagues trying to pick which session to attend at a Michigan Science Teachers Association gathering, "Go to everything Daniall Poulsen is presenting, it is always wonderful!"

Poulsen has always had a passion for photography and has received many compliments on the caliber of her images. She made the decision in 2012 to turn her interest in photography into a business. After five years of working full-time as a teacher, a parent and a photographer, she realized that something had to give. In order to maintain the high standard in everything she does, she made the decision to transition to part-time teaching. Currently, she divides her time between Daniall Poulsen Photography and Portage Northern High School.

Poulsen was born and raised in the small Michigan town of Schoolcraft, where both of her parents were high school sweethearts and where her grandparents still reside. Poulsen also married her high school sweetheart and continues to call Schoolcraft home. Poulsen and her husband enjoy watching their children participate in sports and working on home improvement projects together. They have three children, the oldest of which is a junior at WMU, plays forward on the soccer team and is working toward becoming a nurse.



Department of Mathematics

Dr. M. Lynn Breyfogle

Ph.D. '01

Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences and
Professor of Mathematics, Bucknell University

Dr. M. Lynn Breyfogle was a high school mathematics teacher when she felt called to engage with aspiring and experienced math educators to enhance mathematics teaching and learning. After completing her Ph.D. in Mathematics Education at Western Michigan University in 2001, she taught in the Mathematics Department at Bucknell University, teaching courses on Calculus, Secondary School Mathematics Methods, Introduction to Mathematical Thought, Geometry and Statistics for Elementary Teachers, and Foundation Seminars. In 2012, she was appointed Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Bucknell.

Breyfogle has notably given continuing professional development to mathematics teachers in 12 central Pennsylvania school districts, as well as hosting two highly successful Mathematics Teacher conferences on Bucknell's campus for the 17 public school districts in the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit. Her research focuses on influencing the views of beginner and practicing teachers about mathematics and promoting successful classroom dialogue. Recently, two articles she co-authored in 2004 and 2005, "Focusing on students' mathematical thinking" and "Questioning our patterns of questions" in Mathematics Teacher and Mathematics Teaching in the Middle School, respectively, were translated into Turkish by Zeynep Arslan, a visiting Turkish scholar to WMU, and will be used with Turkish teachers during professional development.

Breyfogle has served in a variety of capacities within Bucknell and in professional organizations. At Bucknell she served as Writing Program Director, chaired the Composition Council and served on the initial College Core Curriculum (CCC) Committee to implement the new College of Arts & Sciences general education curriculum. She most recently chaired the university-wide Retention Investigation Task Force, which laid the groundwork for the THRIVE project on campus. She sat on the editorial board of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) periodical Teaching Children Mathematics and the 2011 NCTM Yearbook Motivation and Disposition: Pathways to Learning Mathematics. She was a member of the Editorial Panel for the 2008 AMTE Monograph Cases in Mathematics Teacher Education: Tools for Developing Knowledge Needed for Teaching, served on the Board of Directors, was elected Secretary for 2008-2011, chaired the Common Core State Standards Task Force, and was the inaugural Vice President for Professional Learning (2017-2020). She was chosen to attend the renowned ACE (American Council on Education) Fellowship and the HERS Institute for Women Leaders in Higher Education (2017-18).

On a more personal note, she and her husband, Jim, are extremely proud of their identical twin daughters, who were born in 1999, during Breyfogle's graduate years at Western Michigan University. They have both graduated from college and are successfully pursuing their dreams, one as a nautical archaeologist and the other as a naval flight officer.



Department of
Philosophy

Dr. Peggy Vandenberg

M.A. '91

Retired professor, Grand Valley State University

In 1991, **Dr. Peggy Vandenberg** became the first of many distinguished Western Michigan University alums to receive a master's in philosophy. In addition to earning her Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Utah, Vandenberg went on to teach philosophy at Grand Valley State University for 25 years, retiring in April 2019. During her career at GVSU, Vandenberg received a teaching excellence award and was active on numerous university committees.

Vandenberg's achievements include serving as a regular presenter at the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics; co-editing and contributing to the Routledge 2015 volume, *Developing Moral Sensitivity* (with Deborah S. Mower and Wade L. Robison); co-directing, with Deborah Mower, the 14th International Conference for the Society for Ethics Across the Curriculum (SEAC) and the 19th International SEAC Conference, both at Grand Valley State University; and co-directing with Deborah Mower a four-week National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute, *Moral Psychology: Putting the Humanities to Work*. She is a contributor and reviewer for the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, as well as reviewed for *Teaching Ethics* and the NEH.

Her presentations and publications are primarily on the ethical theories of the 18th-century Scots: Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, Adam Smith and Thomas Reid. Three notable publications are "Relationships and the Spectator Perspectives in Hutcheson, Hume, and Smith" in *Cultura: International Journal of Philosophy of Culture and Axiology*, "Reid and Hume in Agreement on Moral Foundations" in the *Journal of Scottish Thought* (University of Aberdeen Press 2011), and "A Humean Look at Feminist's Ethics" Special European Legacy Edition on Hume (Routledge, June 2013).



Department of
Physics

Dr. Elias Garratt

Ph.D. '13

Diamond Crystal Growth Scientist, General Technical Services/Army Research Laboratory

Dr. Elias Garratt graduated from Western Michigan University's Condensed Matter Physics Ph.D. program in 2013. Since then, he has led a successful career in experimental condensed matter physics. His career highlights include competitive fellowships (totaling over \$250,000), internal and external funding (over \$1 million), publications and student mentorship.

In 2012, as part of the National Science Foundation Fellowship, he studied the effects of ion implantation in nanocrystalline diamonds. From 2014 to 2017, he participated in the National Research Council Research Associateship Program as a postdoctoral research fellow studying scalable and controllable nanowire synthesis techniques through the National Institute of Standards and Technology. From 2019 to 2021, he was awarded the Air Force Research Lab Summer Faculty Fellow each year to investigate the applications of diamond color centers in quantum technology.

His work in diamond research as an Assistant Professor at Michigan State University was funded by the National Science Foundation, Air Force Research Lab, Department of Energy and Michigan State University Foundation. He has authored or co-authored over 20 publications in the areas of diamond material research and nanotechnology in top-tier journals, such as *Advanced Materials Interfaces*.

In addition to these many accomplishments, Dr. Garratt is most proud of his student mentorship of four Ph.D. students and six undergraduates in Materials Science and Physics. His students have won competitive fellowships, presented at professional conferences and gone on to work in top diamond-growing companies.

Having developed a successful research program and lab, he was recruited by the Army Research Laboratory to expand their diamond synthesis lab, where he supports cutting-edge device research in the field of radio-frequency communication. He volunteers his time with the Materials Research Society Government Affairs Committee to advocate for continued and expanded funding for materials research in the US. In his free time, he volunteers at the local food bank in College Park, Maryland, where he currently resides.



Department of
Psychology

Dr. Bernardine Pinto

Ph.D. '92

Professor and Associate Dean for Research;
Co-Director, Cancer Survivorship Research
Center; Health Sciences Endowed Professor,
University of South Carolina

Dr. Bernardine Pinto is a clinical psychologist who earned her doctorate in 1992 from Western Michigan University after interning at the University of Mississippi and the Veterans Affairs Medical Centers. She completed a post-doctoral fellowship in Behavioral Medicine at Brown Medical School's Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior.

Her professional career began as an Assistant Professor at Brown University's Centers for Behavioral and Preventive Medicine, Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior, and she rose through the ranks to become a Professor (Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior, W. Alpert Medical School of Brown University and the Department of Behavioral and Social Sciences, School of Public Health at Brown University). She is a tenured professor at the University of South Carolina, as well as the inaugural Health Sciences Endowed Professor and Associate Dean for Research in the College of Nursing. She is also the co-director of the College of Nursing's Cancer Survivorship Research Center.

Her research interests include the creation of theoretically based exercise treatments for adult patient populations as well as the promotion of healthy habits in cancer survivors, with a particular emphasis on exercise promotion among cancer survivors. She has over 100 original articles and book chapters published, including pieces in top-tier journals in her profession. She has received grants as Principal Investigator from the National Cancer Institute, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, the National Institute on Aging, the National Institute of Mental Health, the American Cancer Society and the Lance Armstrong Foundation. Since 1996, she has received continual federal support for her study. She helped develop the American College of Sports Medicine's inaugural National Exercise Guidelines for Cancer Survivors (2010), as well as the updated guidelines released in 2019.

Dr. Pinto has substantial teaching experience, having acted as a supervisor for psychology interns, post-doctoral fellows and junior faculty at Brown University's W. Alpert Medical School in addition to classroom lectures and seminars. She currently supervises students and junior professors at the University of South Carolina's College of Nursing. In appreciation of her research productivity and mentoring, she won the Breakthrough in Leadership Award at the University of South Carolina (2021). She has given numerous national and international lectures and has garnered citation prizes for her presentations at scientific gatherings. She is an American Psychological Association member, as well as a Society of Behavioral Medicine Fellow and Chair of the Society's Cancer Special Interest Group.



Department of
Political Science

Collin Mays

BA '15

Director of the Department of Economic Inclusion,
City of Cincinnati, Ohio

Collin Mays serves as Director of the Department of Economic Inclusion for the city of Cincinnati, Ohio. He received his bachelor's degree in Political Science from Western Michigan University in 2015 and a master's degree in Public Administration from Oakland University in 2019.

Mays participated in the Capital Intern Program while on campus. He also served as President of the WMU College Democrats and Chairman of Political Affairs for the Western Student Association.

Mays has a long passion for public service. He has spent his entire career in the public sector and truly believes in the power of giving back. He previously served as Community and Economic Development for Delta Charter Township, Michigan, and as Economic Development Director for the City of Center Line, Michigan. He has been credited with assisting several small and minority-owned businesses with securing grants, and other means of capital for operation. Additionally, Mays has been recognized for workforce development program innovation.

Mays has been featured in multiple publications and has received various awards for his professional work. He was named a Spirit of Detroit award recipient in 2015. He was a 2015 Michigan Chronicle "40 under 40" honoree and made Crain's Detroit Business "20 in their 20's" class of 2019. Mays is an active member of International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA). He served as event chair for the 2021 Detroit Walk to End Alzheimer's.

In his current position, Mays is responsible for administering, enforcing, and monitoring the Living Wage Program, MBE/WBE/SBE certification programs and Local, State & Federal Prevailing Wage laws, as well as community outreach.



School of
**Public Affairs and
Administration**

Angela Bennett

BA '94, MPA '96

Financial Analyst, Michigan Supreme Court

Angela Bennett, B.A.'94, M.P.A.'96, earned her degrees in public administration with an emphasis on finance and human resources at Western Michigan University. During her time in the MPA program, she completed an internship with the City of Kalamazoo, which served as the foundation for her future career in public service.

Bennett, who was appointed comptroller in 1999, handled the accounting and budgetary processes for the city of Kalamazoo and participated in measures to overcome diminishing resources brought on by the 2001 recession. Her appointment as the city of Lansing's budget manager in 2005 put to the test her capacity to lead a group through the economic tsunami in local government brought on by the Great Recession of 2008. Later appointed as Deputy Finance Director and then Finance Director in 2012, Bennett is happy with her long tenure at the city, which saw not just a balanced budget but also a general fund balance of \$12 million by the time she departed in 2019. After successfully navigating the unique city council/mayoral political dynamics for over two decades, Bennett has now joined the Michigan Supreme Court as a Financial Analyst.

Bennett has been active in many professional organizations, including the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA - nationally and in Michigan), the Lansing Entertainment and Public Facilities Authority, Michigan State University Extension Program, Habitat for Humanity and St. Stephen Lutheran Church. She has received the GFOA Financial Reporting Achievement Award twice (for Kalamazoo and Lansing).

Bennett is a lifelong public servant, modeling the School of Public Affairs and Administration's core values including common good, democratic governance, ethical leadership and advocacy for social justice. A colleague of hers notes: "She has new and innovative ideas that have been incorporated into new policies and procedures [saving] time and [making] processes more efficient."



Department of
Spanish

Margaret Bullard-Marshall

BA '98

Chief Operating Officer, Aldevra LLC

Maggie Bullard-Marshall was a 1994 Western Michigan University Medallion Scholar. In 1996, she gave birth to her greatest blessing, her son Alex. Two years later, he watched her graduate summa cum laude with a double major in Spanish and Organizational Communication. Her thesis for the Lee Honors College was on integrating technology and foreign language learning. Bullard-Marshall was also a founding member of the Phi Beta Kappa academic honor society and a member of Phi Kappa Phi honor society.

Bullard-Marshall studied abroad in Spain after graduation and taught English as a second language. Back in Michigan, she worked as a waitress before becoming a customer service/fraud trainer at a bank. In 1998, Bullard-Marshall began her career as a fire underwriter for State Farm and rose through the ranks to become a public affairs specialist. She went on to work at Bronson Healthcare for nearly a decade in Corporate Communications, focusing on clinical quality, safety and satisfaction.

Bullard-Marshall assisted her husband in establishing Aldevra, a minority-owned, service-disabled, veteran-owned business in 2009. She worked there at night and on weekends in addition to her other employment until her husband persuaded her to work for him full-time. She is currently the Chief Operating Officer of this government contracting firm. They employ over 100 people throughout eight states, principally to support the missions of the Departments of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Defense. One of her most notable accomplishments was a precedent-setting ruling at the Government Accountability Office, which led to a unanimous United States Supreme Court decision in favor of veteran-owned small companies.

In addition to legislative and judicial advocacy, Bullard-Marshall spends her free time pursuing certifications related to workplace and healthcare safety, change management, project management, equity and entrepreneurship. She continues to be a VA-certified claims benefit agent and recently graduated from the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Entrepreneurship Program.

Aldevra, with Bullard-Marshall as COO, has received several awards, including the 2022 Michigan 50 Companies to Watch; the 2020 Small Business Administration Region V Small Business Prime Contractor of the Year; the 2018, 2019 and 2020 Inc. 5000 fastest-growing privately-owned companies; the HIREVETS Platinum Medallion Award; Military Friendly® Employer; and CertifiedTM by Great Place to Work®. Aldevra is a Certified Minority Owned Enterprise, a Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business, and an 8(a) Small Disadvantaged Business. Her son, Alex, works for the company and is following in his parent's footsteps while creating his own.