Dear Alumni & Friends:

The 2011-12 year has been nothing short of extraordinary and our events and activities truly illustrate that we are true to our goals: We strive to graduate students who participate in dance and dance-related activities; integrate theory and practice; have the skills to forge careers; and can articulate their place in the arts. As you read the articles and alumni profiles in this newsletter, I think you will see many examples of exceptional student and alumni success.

Our current students have distinguished themselves as performers by being invited to perform at Chicago’s Harris Theatre for Music and Dance and the Dance Chicago Festival. WMU dancers were selected to close the gala concert performance of the east central conference of the American College Dance Festival Association AND they were selected to perform at the selective national American College Dance Festival at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC in May 2012. Other students have distinguished themselves as scholars. Senior dance major Katie McGrath conducted research on audition anxiety and a poster about her research has been accepted for presentation at the October 2012 meeting of the International Association of Dance Science and Medicine in Singapore. Other students are breaking into the dance profession by presenting choreography in Michigan and Illinois and securing internships. For example, this summer junior dance major Colleen Griffin will participate in an arts administration internship with our good friends at River North Chicago Dance Company. Dance majors played a significant role in the Legacy Projects performance that celebrated the College of Fine Arts 40th anniversary. It’s truly been a year of growth and recognition for the department!

As many of you know, I will step down as department chair on June 30, 2012. After a sabbatical in the fall, I will return to the teaching faculty in January 2013. It has been an honor to serve the department in a leadership role and I will miss my close working associations with Partners in Dance and many administrators and staff members in the College of Fine Arts. However, I am excited about new artistic, scholarly and pedagogical investigations; and I’m thrilled to return to daily contact with the students. Longtime department faculty member and experienced administrator Jane Baas will take over as department chair on July 1.

With my warmest wishes,

Nina
Alumni Updates

Stephen Brotebeck MTP, BFA ‘00

Stephen is months away from receiving his MFA in Directing for the Musical Theatre Stage at Penn State University. He is currently the Directing Intern for Ghost, The Musical, opening on Broadway April 23rd. He resides in NYC.

Ashley Howard BA ‘09

Ashley has been working for the Walt Disney Company for a little over 2 years. By working at the Walt Disney World Resort in Florida, she helps make people's dreams come true every day while she gets time to live out her dream as an Entertainment Cast Member as a performer in Shows and Parades. She has been extremely grateful for the many performance opportunities that the company provides and loves the variety of the job. She has performed in 11 shows and parades across property at the resort. At the Magic Kingdom she performs in Disney's Electrical Parade, Move It-Shake It-Celebrate It Street Party, Celebrate a Dream Come True Parade, Mickey's Once Upon a Christmastime Parade, The Muppet's VoluntEARS Cavalcade, and The Hoedown Happening. At Hollywood Studios she performs in Disney/Pixar's Block Party Bash, Fantasmic!, and Pixar Pals Countdown to Fun Parade. At Disney's Animal Kingdom she performs in Festival of the Lion King and Mickey's Jammin' Jungle Parade.

Tiffany Alexandra Taylor Huzar BFA ‘07, MFA ‘10 at U of O

Alexandra Taylor currently lives in NYC where she is choreographing and performing with her company Alexandra Taylor Dance (ATD), and performing with Esther M Palmer, SINecdoche Dance, and other local artists. As one of the founders of the trans-national TransForm Dance Collective, Alex premiered In the Kitchen at the first TransForm concert in San Diego, CA. She showed her work in progress, So we go there, where nothing is waiting at Alexandra Beller’s Choreolab in June 2011. She worked on new projects for the TransForm: March 2012, a concert in South Carolina. One project was a long distance collaboration with fellow University of Oregon grad Marcie Mamura. You can see their process exchanged via wearealwayssomewhereelse.blogspot.com. Alex was also one of the dancers featured in the photo book STUDIO SESSIONS: Collaborations with Dancers by dance photographer friend, Ari Denison. Lastly, in January Alex took a position at her favorite dance home, Dance New Amsterdam as Executive Assistant, where she does clerical work and also projects for funding and project management. Keep up with ATD at alexandrataylordance.blogspot.com. Photo by Ari Denison.
Alumni Updates

Erin Lamont BA ‘02
Erin choreographed the season finale of ABC's hit show “Suburgatory” and choreographed People's Choice Awards 2012 with Neil Patrick Harris and Kaley Cuoco. You can find out more about Erin's endeavors at her website: www.erinlamont.com.

Anne Bak Marine BFA ‘93
Anne continues to work as a dance and artistic coach for national and world figure skating competitors at the Detroit Skating Club in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. She also choreographed and performed for the Archdiocese of Detroit's "Art for God's Sake" event last spring as well as a couple of appearances with Eisenhower Dance Ensemble during the company's 20th Anniversary season. She also now spends a good amount of time volunteering at her children's elementary schools teaching creative dance classes.

Molly (Brichtson) Mattei BFA ‘06
Molly was married to fellow WMU alumnus Gerry Mattei this past July, and they are currently living in Los Angeles. She is in her first year as a faculty member at Flintridge Preparatory School teaching 7th-12th grade dance. Molly is also working on dances for the camera with Ptero Dance Theater, and is performing in the annual Pasadena Dance Festival with Lineage Dance. Molly would love to help answer any questions about dancing in Los Angeles! mollymattei@gmail.com

Rachel Nadler BA ‘11
Rachel is currently dancing with the Chicago Verge Dance Theatre, a contemporary dance company in its second season. In addition, she teaches dance at the Lincoln Park Athletic Club and at A Fairy Tale Ballet. Rachel danced in RidME, a piece choreographed by Ericka Lashley for the RAD Festival in Kalamazo in March 2012.

Jackie Nowicki BFA ‘08
Jackie is a rehearsal assistant to Dianne McIntyre in the restaging of Helen Tamiris's How Long, Brethren? She also performed with Jessica Taylor's, DAMAGEDANCE at Scotland's Fringe Festival in Edinburgh. She has worked with KDNY Dance Company at the Alvin Ailey Dance Center; Derek Mitchelle for So You Think You Can Dance-Ukraine; Matthew Neff's performance of Petrouchka; Mark Dendy's performance for the 92nd Street Y’s 75th Anniversary; Shiroun’s west coast tour; Brice Mouset at Manhattan Movement and Arts Center’s; DAMAGEDANCE, Banana Peel Dance Company, and Malleable Dance Theater. Jackie has taught at numerous dance studios, universities, and schools throughout the U.S.
Alumni Updates

Caitlin Perna BA ‘10
 Shortly after graduation, Caitlin moved to the San Francisco Bay Area where she jumped into teaching at a local studio. That fall she had her first performance opportunity with a new company called Detour Dance under the direction of Kat Cole and Eric Garcia. Caitlin has since had the privilege to work with Jamie Wright and The DanceWright Project and Enrico Labayen in Labayen Dance/SF. In the summer of 2011 Caitlin was chosen to participate in the Fog Fest: Choreographers Festival as a choreographer and performer. Currently, Caitlin is rehearsing with a brand new company in the Bay Area, Cardinalidea, directed by fellow WMU dance alum Jessie Cosentino. This spring Caitlin is taking a break from life in California to go traveling throughout Europe and volunteering at an organic farm in Italy as a WWOOFer. If she decides to come back, her plans this summer will be to continue rehearsals and perhaps intern as a techie in a small SF theatre.

Morella Petrozzi BFA ‘89
 Morella is the co-director of Danza Viva in Lima, Peru which performed their “Bloques de Formacion Para Bailarinas 2012” in February at the ICPNA de Miraflores in Lima, Peru. Danza Viva performed “Latidos de Andromeda,” a multidisciplinary project that was co-choreographed by Morella & Claudia Odeh. This performance was at the ICPNA de la Molina, a gallery in Lima, from March 30th to April 22nd 2012. Morella plans to travel and stay in Paris from May to July 2012 and then travel to Austria to participate in the ImPuls Tanz Festival held in Vienna.

Colleen T. Sullivan BFA ‘03
 Colleen will graduate from New York University this May with a Bachelor Degree of Science in Nursing. Then she will return to MI to take her nursing boards (NCLEX), start her new career & get married to her best friend, Josh Champagne, on September 29, 2012. Current Email: colleentsullivan@gmail.com

Angie Wieland Yetzke BA ‘94
 Angie is finishing her MFA in Choreography/Performance this spring at U of WI-Milwaukee. In June she begins her Laban certification through LIMS. She teaches at Hope College in Holland, MI, and lives in Jenison with her husband and 2 boys (10 and 7).
From February 29th through March 4th, seventeen Western Michigan University dance majors, faculty members Sharon Garber, David Curwen, and Nina Nelson were in New York City to take classes, see performances, and enjoy some of the many opportunities New York City has to offer. The Gina Gibney Dance Center was the host site for the New York stay. Gina Gibney and her staff organized master classes, panels and concerts for the WMU group. Each day’s activities were organized around a theme, and the evening performances exposed the dance majors to the variety of venues and creative practices in New York. The group saw performances at the historic 92nd Street Y and the well-appointed Brooklyn Academy of Music. More experimental dance was presented at the Chocolate Factory and the Ballet du Grande Théâtre de Genève performed at the Joyce Theater. Adding to the excitement were “star” sittings, a tour of the American Ballet Theatre facilities, taking classes at Broadway Dance Center and Steps on Broadway, and chance meetings with alumni. One night President Obama had a fundraiser in the building next to the Gibney Dance Center, so that made the group feel like they were in the center of activity.

The group also gathered with alumni at the Gibney Dance Center to celebrate Lutin Tanner, a 1995 graduate of WMU and the Department of Dance’s 2012 Outstanding Dance Alumni award recipient. For five years Lutin performed nationally and internationally with Garth Fagan Dance. He then went on to become Resident Lighting Designer & Production Manager for Dance New Amsterdam. Recently Lutin has designed lights for numerous choreographers such as Arthur Aviles, Larry Keigwin, Alex Beller, Earl Mosley and Camille A. Brown. He is currently Resident Lighting Designer for Rasta Thomas Bad Boys of Dance with whom he tours internationally. Lutin’s wife, Adrienne Hurd, teaches at the Ailey School and she invited WMU dancers to take her class the day following the reception.

Students said the following about their New York City experiences:
“Being able to actually talk to dancers, choreographers, and people with the dance scene was inspirational and insightful.”
“The master classes… were incredible and I loved the wide variety of teachers and styles that we got to experience. The panels and panelists were so rich with information…”
“I learned so much more than I expected; this trip exceeded my expectations in every way.”
Senior Brunch & Outstanding Alumni Award

On April 22, senior dance majors, dance faculty, dance faculty emeriti and members of Partners in Dance gathered at Nina Nelson’s home to celebrate the seniors’ graduation and to induct Jane Baas into the department’s Outstanding Alumni Academy. Students were treated to some advice and Tom Foolery from David Curwen. Partners in Dance president Carole Snyder and department chair Nina Nelson offered congratulatory remarks. The seniors shared their post-graduation plans.

Jane Baas was recognized for her teaching excellence, student mentoring, dance science research, keen administrative work, and service to the community and dance profession. Jane is well-known as a researcher in dancer wellness and has been invited to present her work at several conferences of the International Association of Dance Science and Medicine (IADMS). In addition, she has mentored students interested in the dance science area. Jane has also served as the chair of the media committee of IADMS. As a teacher, she has helped students understand how to be healthy and knowledgeable dancers through her kinesiology courses. As a mentor and advisor, she has helped countless students with course selection, double majors, study abroad, internships, graduate school, alumni networking, job placement and much more.

WMU Dancers Perform at Harris Theatre for Music & Dance

On January 12, 2012, a combined cast of WMU dance students and members of DanceWorks Chicago (DWC) performed Nelly van Bommel’s dance Addio Amore at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance at Millennium Park. The performance was a part of the Eat to the Beat lunchtime series hosted by the Harris. The program included two other dances performed by DanceWorks Chicago company members, and DWC artistic director Julie Nakagawa served as the program’s emcee. Approximately 500 people attended the event, including several WMU alumni, dancers’ family members and Department of Dance supporters.

College of Fine Arts dean Margaret Merrion and Mrs. Linda Dunn hosted a bus trip from Kalamazoo so that departmental supporters and students who would perform the dance in the Winter Gala Dance Concert could see the performance.
Winter Gala Dance Concert Resounding Success

The February 2012 Winter Gala Dance Concert was a resounding artistic success. The concert included choreography by an unprecedented five guest artists; and dances ranged from the abstract *piDgeon* by Eddy Ocampo to the theatrical *Addio Amore* by Nelly van Bommel. *Like a Butterfly* by dance major Katie Mattar showcased the ability of the dancers to merge traditional concert dance with popular street dance. David Curwen’s complex collaborative dance titled *Jinsha* beautifully integrated the work of our dancers and talented students and faculty from other areas of the College of Fine Arts and from the Office of Information Technology. Assistant Professor Kirsten Harvey has been researching facial expression and emotion in dance, and her dance *Black Iris* clearly showcased a unique vocabulary that brought out the expressiveness in the dancers. Assistant Professor Megan Slayter has been researching the work of Loïe Fuller for several years, and *La Mer* was the first of Fuller’s group dances that she and her research partner reconstructed based on archival material. Megan has been invited to the Maryhill Museum of Art in Washington state to present *La Mer* as part of the dedication of a new wing. (http://www.maryhillmuseum.org/Events/dedication.html). The Winter Concert was also the venue for a landmark event in the department: the presentation of the creative work of the first winner of the great Works Dance Project National Choreography Competition. Lauren Edson’s dance *Foreground* is a poetic work that highlights the extraordinary talent of WMU dancers.

The concert attracted a record number of audience members to the performances in the D. Terry Williams Theatre. Also, in an effort to let prospective students and their families know more about our program, the department offered complimentary tickets to students who had been admitted to the dance major through the audition. Many took us up on our offer. It is so important to the department that our audiences have the opportunity to see high quality choreography and dancing and that WMU dance students have the opportunity to work with first class guest artists and faculty.

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Partners in Dance

Partners in Dance is Western Michigan University’s support organization dedicated to promoting greater awareness of dance and providing critically needed financial support for the special needs of WMU’s Department of Dance, including scholarships, visiting artists’ residencies, and the Great Works Dance Project. Membership levels begin at $35 for an individual and offer many worthwhile privileges, including discounts on tickets for Department of Dance concerts, opportunities for field trips to professional dance performances, and special Department of Dance mailings. Your membership in Partners in Dance will help us keep the art of dance healthy and strong. We invite you to join us in supporting dance by becoming a member or renewing your membership for the 2012-2013 season.

To join Partners in Dance please call 269-387-5830
On March 22nd, 2012 Ashley Deran was presented with a Presidential Scholar Award in Dance. This is the 32nd year that this award has been awarded to outstanding seniors who were nominated by WMU faculty. These scholars are chosen on the basis of academic and/or artistic excellence in their major. President John Dunn and President of Faculty Senate Dr. Peter Krawutschke presented Ashley this prestigious award. The Faculty Senate hosted the event.

Ashley is from Schaumburg, IL, and is a graduate of Schaumburg High School. A member of the Lee Honors College, she will complete her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in dance with a minor in psychology in April 2012. Ashley received numerous WMU dance scholarships including the Jean Warner Labelle Endowed Dance Scholarship and the Wendy L. Cornish Dance Scholarship. She is also the recipient of a CFA 40th Anniversary Legacy Grant for collaborative art. While at Western, her choreography has been showcased by WMU’s Orchesis Dance Society and Western Dance Project, as well as produced in the 2011 Winter Gala Dance Concert. She has had the opportunity to be a part of the Great Works Dance Project, working with world-renowned guest artists such as Jason McDole, Amanda McKerrow, Willy Shives and John Gardner. Ashley is currently a contracted photographer for WMU’s Office of University Relations. She was also a member of the Western Dance Project, Alpha Lambda Delta Honors Society and the Orchesis Dance Society executive board. Following graduation, Ashley plans to return to Chicago to pursue a career in choreography and performance. She also will continue exploring her love for dance photography.

Above Photograph: Left President John Dunn, Center Ashley Deran, Right President Peter Krawutschke
Celebrating Nina Nelson
Our Chair & Professor

Nina has been the Department of Dance’s Chair for a total of over 11 years. She has been a professor at Western Michigan University since 1982. Nina can even credit Western as the place where she met her husband, Wayne Fuqua, who also works at the university as the Department of Psychology’s Chair. After this semester, Nina plans to step down as chair and go on sabbatical before returning to the dance department to continue teaching dance. We thank her for all the wonderful work she has done throughout her 30 years at Western as well as the years she has devoted to being chair of the department.
Graduating Presentations

Senior BFA dance majors at Western Michigan University Ashley Deran, Corey Neumann, Kaitlyn Pollack, Marley Schmidt, and Rachel Siegel, presented their Graduating Presentations entitled *Incite, In Mind* on WMU’s Campus in April 2012.

*Incite, In Mind* consisted of six new dance works. The senior students who received their Bachelor of Fine Arts Degrees this April choreographed the first five. Ashley Deran’s piece, *Under Ouse*, explored the feelings of heaviness and symbiotic relationships while Corey Neumann’s *Tranen Von Regen* presented an abstract representation of emotions and feelings that are often difficult to express. Neumann’s piece used water to enhance the tangible aspects of this specific concept.

*Beneath’s Consciousness*, choreographed by Kaitlyn Pollock, was inspired by dreams and how certain individuals can be mentally or physically affected by dreams. Made in collaboration with the 11 dancers in her cast, Marley Schmidt’s piece used partnering to explore the connections and disconnections that can be created between dancers. *LoveMe & mEnd*

by Rachel Siegel portrayed the mental and emotional states an individual goes through during specific close relationships with a person. Through fast-paced and dynamic movement, this piece strived to create an atmosphere that is universal to all human feelings about love and loss. The sixth piece, *Two Sides. To Sides*, by Autumn Eckman, showcased the strengths and struggles of each individual senior BFA dancer.

Photos by Zach Sutton
Students Travel To China

Dance faculty members David Curwen and Sharon Garber will be taking 8 dance students to Taiwan and China in May 2012. All 8 students will have finished their junior year of studies at the time of the trip and will be returning to WMU for AY 2012-13. The 1st week of the trip will be spent at the Taipei National University of the Arts in Taipei, Taiwan ROC, which has a renowned dance department offering training in ballet, modern and classical Chinese dance forms. The 2nd week will be spent in the dance department at Sichuan University in Chengdu, China, which is highly competitive and renowned for Chinese classical and folk dance training. WMU students will be taking dance classes at both universities, and will teach classes to Chinese students in jazz and hip hop, genres not taught there. For further cultural exchange, they will share their personal choreographic works in informal showings. The trip will conclude in Beijing with 3 days of sightseeing.

One goal of the trip is for the dance faculty to continue developing the rich and valuable relationship begun last year between WMU and Sichuan University. WMU hosted Sichuan faculty member, Yan-Lei, in 2010-11, which was followed by invitations to Professors Curwen and Garber to teach at Sichuan University in May 2011. For the students, the trip will be an educational opportunity to practice their dance studies in a global context, take classes with the Taiwanese and Chinese students and share their choreographic works in informal showings. The trip is part of the “Student Global Initiative” funded by a CFA Faculty Fellowship Grant.

Professor of the Day

On April 9 and 10, alumna Matt Baker returned to WMU as “Professor of the Day.” Matt’s residency was co-sponsored by the College of Fine Arts and the Department of Dance. Matt is currently performing with Larry Keigwin and Kyle Abraham. While at WMU Matt taught modern dance master classes and shared tips with students about the New York City dance scene. He strongly suggested that students attend intensive summer study programs while at WMU. These workshops are great places for dancers to meet new people and get jobs. He also stressed the importance of using social media to keep connected with the profession and said that he got his most recent job with Mr. Abraham through Facebook. Another tip was to be willing and able to juggle having multiple jobs. Finally, Matt strongly suggested using the WMU alumni network when looking for housing. For more information on Keigwin+ Company visit www.larrykeigwin.com/ For information about Kyle Abraham visit http://abrahaminmotion.org/.
Great Works Dinner

On Friday, February 3rd, the Department of Dance and the Partners in Dance board of directors hosted the annual Great Works Dinner. Seventy-five friends and supporters met at 5:00 at the CityScape Events Center in Kalamazoo to honor Jerry French, the winner of the Community Dance Advocacy Award; hear from guest artists Lauren Edson and Julie Nakagawa; and socialize and meet new friends. Mrs. Ruth Wiser, winner of the 2011 Dancing with the WMU/Kazoo Stars scholarship fundraising event, was the honorary host and provided opening remarks. The Millennium Group and the Partners in Dance Great Works Dinner committee beautifully handled all details of the pre-dinner reception and dinner.

The program began with Mrs. Wiser’s account of her experience with Dancing with the WMU/Kazoo Stars; her appreciation for the work ethic and talent of the dance majors; and her genuine pleasure in getting to know the dance majors, including her DWTS partner Joseph Hernandez. Choreographer Lauren Edson provided a preview to her dance titled Foreground. She and Julie Nakagawa (artistic director of DanceWorks Chicago) discussed their experiences with the WMU dance majors.

Nina Nelson, on behalf of Partners in Dance, presented Jerry French with the Community Dance Advocacy Award. Since he was a young boy, Jerry has been involved with dance as a dancer/performer, board member, philanthropist and advocate. Following is an excerpt from one of Jerry’s nominators that sums up Jerry’s contributions to dance in the Great Kalamazoo area: “Please accept my support for this incredible man who gives and gives in the most humble way, who values the artistic experience over personal recognition, who enthusiastically supports the young and the old in the pursuit of their dreams, and above all, a person who has committed much of his life to the furthering of the art form of dance.” Great Works Dinner guests honored Jerry with a standing ovation. Jerry also received an engraved plaque and Great Works Dinner poster. His name will be added to the Community Dance Advocacy Award plaque housed in the Department of Dance.

Following dinner, guests traveled to the D. Terry Williams Theatre in the WMU Gilmore Theatre Complex to enjoy the performance of the 2012 Winter Gala Dance Concert.
Students of Western Michigan University’s Department of Dance have been selected to perform Lauren Edson’s dance *Foreground* at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. at the national conference of the American College Dance Festival Association (ACDFA) to be held May 25-27, 2012. This performance marks the fourth time this decade that the Department of Dance has been invited to perform at the Kennedy Center. Over the three day national festival twenty-seven dances will be performed by university dance students from across the United States. Western dancers will perform at 2:00 and 7:30 on Sunday, May 27 and tickets may be purchased by the public for $25. To purchase tickets, visit the Kennedy Center website at www.kennedy-center.org/tickets/.

*Foreground* was selected for this national festival through three levels of adjudication. First, the dance was selected by WMU faculty to represent the University at the East Central Regional Conference of the American College Dance Festival Association that was held at Grand Valley State University March 7-10, 2012. At Grand Valley State University, *Foreground* was one of twelve dances out of forty-two selected for the conference’s gala concert. Finally, *Foreground* was one of three dances selected to represent the east central region at the national conference of the American College Dance Festival Association. *Foreground* was selected for the regional gala concert and national festival by three nationally-recognized choreographers/dancers/scholars: KT Niehoff, Patrick Corbin and Thomas F. LaFrantz. Criteria for selection for the national ACDFA conference were overall artistic excellence and quality of performance. Adjudicators described WMU dancers as "fierce, with committed brilliance" who "fully physicalized the material."

Lauren Edson is the winner of the WMU’s first Great Works Dance Project National Choreography Competition. Ms. Edson currently performs with the Trey McIntyre Project and her choreography has earned numerous awards and accolades. She was in residence at WMU in early September 2011 to create *Foreground* and returned to rehearse it and speak at the annual Great Works dinner in February 2012. *Foreground*, a dance for five women and three men, premiered in the Department of Dance’s 2012 Winter Gala Dance Concert. Faculty member Carolyn Pavlik serves as the rehearsal director for the dance and faculty member Megan Slayter was the lighting designer.
WMU Department of Dance
Faculty and Staff

Amy Avery – Part Time
Jane Baas – Full Time
David Curwen – Full Time
Sharon Garber – Full Time
Dorothy Giovannini – Accompanist
John Griffin – Part Time
Angela Guerro – Part Time
Kirsten Harvey – Full Time
Carolyn Koebel – Accompanist
Helen Lukan – Accompanist
Niki Mejeur – Part Time
Jeff Moehle – Accompanist
Whitney Moncrief – Full Time
Nina Nelson – Chair
Deb Norton – Part Time
Carolyn Pavlik – Full Time
Pat Plasko – Education for the Arts
Juliette Rousseau – Graduate Assistant
Megan Slayter – Full Time
David Smith – Part Time
Stacey Tyler – Office Coordinator
Kathy Williams – Part Time