



COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT  
*Awards*

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OCTOBER 25, 2024



## EARLY CAREER EXCELLENCE AWARD

The Early Career Excellence Award was launched this year to honor College of Arts and Sciences alumni who have earned a baccalaureate, master's or doctoral degree from the college in the past 10 years and who show exceptional promise for outstanding contributions to their communities.

Through their superior early achievements, Early Career Excellence Award winners have demonstrated promise to become national or international leaders in their chosen fields of study, as well as leaders in their local communities. Each honoree has already garnered recognition of their positive contributions to their field of study through awards, publications, patents, presentations, and other significant career milestones. Additionally, recipients have demonstrated a positive impact on their local community through their professional activities, community service, volunteerism or local leadership roles.

These honorees 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.



### Mallinson Institute for Science Education **Ramón Barthelemy**

Ph.D. '14

Associate Professor, University of Utah

**Dr. Ramón Barthelemy's** work has centered on the lives, educational experiences and career paths of marginalized students in physics and STEM, including work with LGBTQ+ individuals, graduate students of color and women in physics. He received his doctorate in science education with a focus on physics from Western Michigan University in 2014. Currently, he is a tenured associate professor of physics and astronomy at the University of Utah. Prior to this faculty position, he was a Fulbright Scholar in Finland, a Science Policy Fellow in the U.S. Department of Education and a private sector consultant.

Barthelemy founded and leads the Physics Education Research (PER) group at the University of Utah, with a primary focus on equity in physics, a distinctive aspect of the group's work. The group has been highly productive, securing over \$5 million in external funding to support their research.

Barthelemy's work has been widely recognized. He was the recipient of the Fulbright Finland Alumni Award in 2020, the American Association of Physics Teachers Doc Brown Futures Award in 2021, the WEPAN Research Award in 2022 and became a Fellow of the American Physical Society (APS) in the same year. In 2023, he was honored with the LGBTQ+ Educator of the Year award from Out to Innovate, which celebrates an "LGBTQ+ educator who has enabled significant growth for LGBTQ+ students in science or technology." That same year he received the APS 5 Sigma Award for his advocacy work supporting the physics community.

Beyond academia, Barthelemy is committed to supporting science education in the public sphere through his candidacy for the Utah State House. He became the only candidate in the state to qualify for the ballot solely through volunteer efforts, collecting more than 1,000 signatures.



Department of

**History**

**Caitlyn Dial**

Ph.D. '16

Director of Development, Michigan State University Libraries

**Dr. Caitlyn Dial** has served as the director of development for Michigan State University Libraries since 2022, where she leads a team of development professionals and student interns. In her current role, she develops and manages a diverse portfolio of major and principal gift prospects, emphasizing six- and seven-figure donations. She works closely with donors and campus partners to create giving opportunities, providing guidance on tax laws and university policies to ensure mutually beneficial donations.

Prior to assuming this position, she was the executive director of Michigan Women Forward: HERstory, where she led the organization through a successful merger, managed a major relocation of the museum and orchestrated the annual Michigan Women's Hall of Fame Awards dinner, consistently raising over \$100,000 each year. She also worked closely with the board of trustees, serving as an ex-officio member on various committees and was responsible for overseeing the institution's budget.

Dial received her doctorate in history from Western Michigan University in 2016, where she also served as an instructor and was essential in the construction of HIST 2100: History of the United States Since 1877 and HIST 3150: History of Popular Art and Architecture. She is actively involved in several boards and committees, including the board of directors for the Brighton Area Historical Society and as a trustee for the Brighton District Library. She is president of the Michigan Museums Association and a member of the WMU Department of History Alumni Advisory Committee. Additionally, Dial co-chaired the 2019 Association of Midwest Museums Annual Conference. She is also trained in diversity, equity and inclusion, and received a DEI in Veterinary Medicine Certificate in 2021.



**World Languages  
and Literatures**

**Ian Hollenbaugh**

B.A. '13

Assistant Professor, Washington University

**Ian Hollenbaugh** graduated summa cum laude from Western Michigan University in 2013 with a bachelor's in Latin and English. During his time at WMU, he was a member of the Lee Honors College and Phi Kappa Alpha. In 2015, he completed a post-baccalaureate in Classics at UCLA and gained admission to their renowned program in Indo-European languages, concentrating primarily on ancient Greek and Sanskrit. He earned his doctorate from UCLA in 2021, along with graduate certificates in classics and linguistics.

Hollenbaugh has served as an assistant professor of classics and linguistics at Washington University since 2021. His research focuses on tense and aspect in Indo-European languages, particularly ancient Greek and Sanskrit. He has built an international reputation through his publications in esteemed journals and has been invited to lecture across the U.S., Canada, England and Germany. Recently, he was awarded a Mellon Membership at the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton for the 2024-2025 academic year. Hollenbaugh is also a member of various professional societies, including the Society for Classical Studies, the Linguistic Society of America and the American Oriental Society.



Department of

**Physics**

**Katrina Koehler**

Ph.D. '19

Assistant Professor, Houghton University  
Researcher, Los Alamos National Laboratory

**Dr. Katrina Koehler** is a distinguished scientist renowned for her significant contributions to physics and engineering, as well as her dedication to mentoring the next generation of scientists. She earned her doctorate in physics from Western Michigan University in 2019, where she was awarded the George E. Bradley award for exceptional research performance. She now serves as key researcher at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) and as an assistant professor at Houghton University.

At LANL, Koehler has spearheaded pioneering advances in high-performance detector technologies. Her notable accomplishments include the development and implementation of the Hyperspectral X-ray Imaging (HXI) detector, which won the 2023 R&D Award, and the co-development of the Spectrometer Optimized for Facility Integrated Applications (SOFIA), recognized with the 2022 R&D 100 Award. Additionally, Koehler received the 2022 Distinguished Performance Award from LANL for her contributions to the Trinity experiment anniversary special issue of "Nuclear Technology". In 2019, she was honored with the LTD18 Young Researcher Poster Award, second place, for outstanding poster presentation within five years of receiving her Ph.D.

Beyond her research, Koehler is actively engaged in the academic community. She serves as the faculty advisor for the Houghton University Intercultural Student Association and is a member of the Academic Council and Faculty Development Committee. She has also authored multiple papers in peer-reviewed journals on her extensive research in nuclear physics and spectroscopy. Her work often includes contributions from students she mentors, emphasizing her role in academic development and dedication to cultivating the next generation of scientists.



## DEPARTMENT, SCHOOL OR INSTITUTE AWARD

Each department, institute and school in the College of Arts and Sciences is invited to honor a single alum who has completed a baccalaureate, master's or doctoral degree in their unit with the annual Alumni Achievement Award. Recipients are selected by the faculty and staff of their department, institute or school.

Alumni Achievement Award recipients have made outstanding contributions in their fields of study. Their professional excellence has been recognized by peers and industry leaders via awards and significant career achievements. These awardees have developed careers of distinction that positively impact their professional communities at the national and international level, and they have been leaders in their local communities through professional activities and community service.

Recipients of the Alumni Achievement Award exemplify the mission and core values of the College of Arts and Sciences: collaboration, creativity, equity, integrity, intellectual freedom and student success, while fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion to create welcoming environments that allow everyone to succeed.



School of  
**Public Affairs and Administration**  
**Renée Branch Canady**

M.P.A. '93

Chief Executive Officer, MPHl

**Dr. Renée Branch Canady** is recognized as a national thought leader in the areas of health inequities and disparities, cultural competence and social justice. She has published and presented broadly on these topics and her passion for this work is evident in her personal, academic and professional life. She currently serves as chief executive officer of MPHl, a public health institute with a shared mission of working together to center equity, promote health and advance well-being for all. Prior to joining MPHl, she served as a health officer and director of the Ingham County Health Department in Lansing, Michigan. In this position, she oversaw the county's statutory responsibility to promote the health and safety of residents and lead the development of the Ingham County Health Equity Social Justice program. She has also held faculty and administrative positions at Michigan State University in the College of Nursing, where she developed a research trajectory in maternal health and health inequities. She was an assistant professor in the C.S. Mott Department of Public Health, where she created and led a core Master of Public Health course on health equity.

Canady graduated from Western Michigan University with a master's in public administration in 1993. After leaving Western, she earned her doctorate in medical sociology from Michigan State University.

Canady's influence extends through service on numerous boards and committees, including the Council on Black Health, the National Network of Public Health Institutes, the National Public Health Accreditation and the Ascension Health System Michigan Market. Canady was appointed by Governor Gretchen Whitmer to the State of Michigan Coronavirus Task Force on Racial Disparities, where she chaired the Health Equity workgroup. Additionally, she has provided guidance for several advisory boards including the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) County Health Rankings Scientific Advisory Group, the National Collaborative for Health Equity Advisory Committee, the Institute for Alternative Futures Public Health 2030 Project Advisory Group, the National 10 Essential Public Health Services Task Force and the Birth Detroit advisory board.

Outside of a professional setting, Canady serves her community as a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., the Links, Inc. and as part of the ministerial leadership of the Tabernacle of David Church in Lansing.



**Institute for Intercultural and  
 Anthropological Studies**  
**Regina Campbell**

B.S. '93

President, CEO, King Arts Complex

**Regina Campbell** graduated from Western Michigan University in 1993 with a bachelor's degree in psychology and minor in African American Studies. She pursued graduate studies at Wayne State University, earning a master's in social work in 1999. Later, she also received a master's in urban and regional planning from the University of Michigan in 2005, and a master's in business administration from the University of Phoenix 2015.

She is the president and chief executive officer of King Arts Complex in Columbus, serving as a major anchor of the King-Lincoln District. The Martin Luther King Jr. Performing and Cultural Arts Complex is a preeminent culture and arts institution in Ohio preserving, producing and presenting the cultural expressions of African Americans. Prior to this role, she was also the president and CEO for Build Institute, a small business hub in Detroit.

To date, Campbell has led teams and initiatives that have facilitated over \$31.4 million in funding and resources for minority small-business owners, working with hundreds of entrepreneurs and assisted in launching numerous startups. As a cultural advocate, she is committed to promoting economic development for women and minorities. She leverages shared cultural experiences to serve the "whole entrepreneur," providing access to resources to build vibrant, thriving communities.

In addition to her role at Build Institute, Campbell is also a social entrepreneur as co-founder and president of 901 ROC Development, LLC.



Department of

**Economics**

**Seife Dendir**

M.A. '03, Ph.D. '05

Professor, Chair, Department of Economics,  
Radford University

**Dr. Seife Dendir** is a two-time graduate of Western Michigan University, earning both his master's in 2003 and doctorate in 2005 in applied economics. While he was a Ph.D. candidate, Dendir who was mentored by Professor Eskander Alvi, received a graduate research award.

He currently serves as a professor of economics and chair of the Department of Economics at Radford University, where he has taught various undergraduate courses and in the MBA program. His research interests include economic development, applied microeconomics, data analytics and economics pedagogy. He has published several papers in academic journals and his recent publication on intergenerational educational mobility in Sub-Saharan Africa won the 2023 IPMUS Research Award. His other publications covering sundry topics from the peak age of soccer players to the effectiveness of online proctoring of exams have also garnered various awards and widespread interest from other researchers and popular outlets.

Dendir has been recognized for his teaching and research at Radford University, receiving the Davis College of Business and Economics Outstanding Faculty Award in 2015 and the Dalton Scholar award in 2019. He has also been a visiting scholar at the United Nations University World Institute for Development and Economics Research and the African Studies Center Leiden.

Dendir lives in Virginia with his wife and their three children. He enjoys spending time with his family, reading, playing and watching sports and traveling.



Department of

**Spanish**

**Phillip Eskander**

B.A. '11, B.S. '11

Internal Medicine Specialist, Bronson Methodist  
Hospital, Bronson Battle Creek Hospital,  
Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center

**Dr. Phillip Eskander** was a multifaceted student at Western Michigan University, receiving a dual bachelor's degree in Spanish and biomedical sciences, with minors in Arabic and chemistry in 2011. He was a member of the Lee Honors College and consistently maintained a high GPA during his time at Western. After graduating from WMU, he pursued medical school at Michigan State University graduating with a Doctor of Osteopathy in 2015.

Eskander is an internal medicine specialist practicing in Southwest Michigan, with affiliations at Bronson Methodist Hospital, Bronson Battle Creek Hospital, and Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center. He is dedicated to diagnosing and treating a wide range of illnesses, diseases and health conditions. His patients often commend his compassionate and respectful approach, noting his ability to communicate in clear and accessible language that ensures understanding even for those without a medical background. Eskander's generosity has been honored by Bronson Hospital with the Annual Giving Society Honor for his gift to the Bronson Health Foundation.

Eskander has always been passionate about travel, having backpacked through Spain and Latin America. He emphasizes the importance of the Spanish language in his life, noting the significant advantage it has provided him in the medical field. During his time at WMU, he participated in a study abroad program in Jordan, expanding his global experience. His travels also took him to Nepal, where he survived a devastating 7.3 magnitude earthquake in 2015 and stayed to assist with recovery efforts. These experiences have shaped his worldview and continue to influence his approach to both life and medicine.





Department of  
**Biological Sciences**  
**Michael Fombang**  
 BA '10  
 Owner, MSGGLOALSOLUTIONS

**Dr. Michael Fombang** is a dynamic professional with over a decade of experience in the medical field. He is not only a trained medical doctor but an entrepreneur, relationship coach and devoted husband and father. Throughout his career, he has delivered motivational speeches to a variety of professional groups and authored a collection of printed works supporting individuals and business in their growth and relationships.

As Western Michigan University's first Seita Scholar to graduate, Fombang earned a bachelor's degree in biomedical sciences in 2010. In 2016, he received his M.D. from the University of Science Arts and Technology and in 2023 completed an executive MBA and executive leadership training from the University of Colorado Denver.

In addition to his medical career, Fombang is a founder of several ventures including MSGGLOALSOLUTIONS and Fombang Capital. Beyond his professional achievements, he also serves on the board of directors and as a committee chair at the American College of Healthcare Executives. He is a member of the American College of Healthcare Administrators in Chicago, demonstrating his continued commitment to both the medical and business spheres.



School of  
**Environment, Geography,  
 and Sustainability**  
**Rebecca Harvey**  
 B.A. '82, M.A. '88  
 Principal, Harvey Consulting LLC

**Rebecca Harvey**, AICP, PCP is a two-time graduate of Western Michigan University, receiving a bachelor's degree in geography and earth science in 1982 and master's in community development and planning in 1988. After just one year as a graduate assistant, she was hired by Oshtemo Charter Township as the community's first planning director. She completed her master's program with a thesis on the Oshtemo Township Access Management Plan, which was adopted as Southwest Michigan's first active access management plan.

She served as Oshtemo's planning director for 15 years and gained experience in township and suburban/rural planning issues, Michigan zoning law, land use development and the community planning process. She held leadership positions on local and regional land use-related committees and served as president of the Michigan Association of Planning. She has also authored and presented on access management and open space preservation planning in Michigan.

After leaving her role as Oshtemo's planning director in 1998, she entered the field of planning consulting at the request of local communities. She developed a successful consulting business, providing planning assistance to various governmental units throughout Southwest Michigan. With certifications in form-based code, placemaking, and charrette, she has partnered with McKenna on significant projects such as Governor Snyder's Regional Prosperity Initiative and MEDC's Project Rising Tide. Last year, Harvey Consulting LLC and McKenna received the Planning Excellence Award for Best Practice from the Michigan Association of Planning for the Barry County Master Plan.



Department of  
**Physics**

**Muhammet Hasoglu**

M.A. '04, Ph.D. '08

Assistant Professor, Hasan Kalyoncu University

**Dr. Muhammet Fatih Hasoglu** earned a M.A. in physics in 2004 and his Ph.D. in 2008 from Western Michigan University. Here, he received the David Carley Memorial Graduate Fellowship in 2003, the Leo R. Parpart Physics Scholarship in 2006 and the Graduate Research and Creative Scholar Award from the Department of Physics in 2008. After graduation, he worked as a teaching assistant and lab instructor at Marmara University in Türkiye and WMU.

He is an assistant professor at Hasan Kalyoncu University (HKU) in Gaziantep, Türkiye. Throughout his career, he has held various administrative and academic roles, including chairman of the Department of Computer Engineering, member of the University Senate for the Engineering Faculty and vice director and director of the Graduate School of Natural and Applied Sciences. He was promoted to associate professor in 2015 and granted professorship in 2020. For the past two years, he has been the dean of the Faculty of Aeronautics and Aerospace.

Hasoglu's technical expertise includes advanced programming in Fortran, C, and Python, as well as proficiency with atomic structure codes and operating systems. From May 2017 to April 2018, he served as primary investigator and project coordinator for a TUBITAK 1002 project focused on calculating the photoabsorption cross section of the silicon atom in the X-ray region.

In 2015 and 2016, his leadership and academic work was honored with the Academic Service Appreciation Award. He has also been a member of several professional organizations, including the American Physical Society's Division of Atomic, Molecular and Optical Physics.

Hasoglu's dedication to education, research and service has made significant contributions to his field and institutions showcasing an unwavering commitment to advancing knowledge and fostering academic growth.



**World Languages  
and Literatures**

**John Martin III**

B.A. '06

Assistant Director of Research Data Architecture,  
Research Data Management Core, University of  
North Carolina at Chapel Hill

**Dr. John Martin III** is the assistant director of research data architecture at the Research Data Management Core, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. As data architect, Martin is responsible for the coordination, development and integration of a research data ecosystem at UNC Chapel Hill. Working with engineers, system administrators and developers, he designs innovative solutions to complex data management problems and fosters robust infrastructure for long-term research data preservation and accessibility.

Martin earned a bachelor's degree in Latin from Western Michigan University in 2006. Following graduation from WMU, he earned a master's in Islamic studies from the American University in Cairo in 2012 and a doctorate in information science from UNC Chapel Hill in 2023. His academic journey demonstrates a unique blend of expertise grounded in both technical and humanities-based knowledge.

His research focuses on information disclosure, critical research methodology and Middle East cultural and research institutions, with topics spanning from information poverty to sustainable digital preservation. His work has been published in various peer-reviewed journals and book chapters, and he has been invited to speak at many conferences, presentations and lightning talks. In addition to his success in academia, he is involved in various professional organizations including the Association for Information Science and Technology, the Association for Computing Machinery, the American Association for Public Opinion Research and the American Statistical Association.





Department of

**Philosophy**

**Kristopher Phillips**

MA '07

Assistant Professor, Eastern Michigan University

**Kristopher Phillips** received a master's degree in philosophy from Western Michigan University in 2007. After graduating from WMU, he earned a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Iowa in 2014.

Phillips has served as an assistant professor at Eastern Michigan University since fall 2023. Before this position, he spent nine years teaching at Southern Utah University, where he also served as the chair of the Department of Languages and Philosophy.

Trained as an early modernist in European philosophy with an emphasis on Descartes, Phillips's research interests intersect metaphilosophy, the philosophy of education and early modern Philosophy. He is developing a book manuscript that draws from a variety of early modern European thinkers to argue the importance of a well-rounded, philosophically grounded education as a public good. Additionally, he serves as the editor-in-chief of "Pre-college Philosophy and Public Practice," an open-access, peer-reviewed journal dedicated to publishing interdisciplinary scholarship at the intersection of public-facing issues and philosophical education.

Phillips is also an engaged philosophy educator outside of traditional university settings. He offers free philosophy education to middle and high school students through summer camps in Iowa and Utah, an initiative that inspired the construction of a similar program at WMU. In 2023, he was awarded the David W. Concepción Prize for Excellence in Philosophy Teaching, sponsored by the American Philosophical Association (APA), the American Association of Philosophy Teachers (AAPT) and the Teaching Philosophy Association (TPA). The prestigious award recognizes a philosophy teacher who has had a profound impact on the student's learning of philosophy in undergraduate and pre-college settings, and Phillips was notably runner up in 2021 and 2022.



Department of

**Psychology**

**Richard Seim**

M.A. '06, Ph.D. '11

Director, VISN 17 Center of Excellence for Research on Returning War Veterans

**Dr. Richard Seim** earned his master's degree in 2006 in clinical psychology and doctorate in 2011 from Western Michigan University. As an accomplished researcher and developer, he has dedicated his career to improving mental health care for veterans. In his role as director of the VISN 17 Center of Excellence for Research on Returning War Veterans, one of the largest VA facilities in the nation, he leads an interdisciplinary team developing neuroscience-informed interventions for mental health issues.

One of Seim's key professional achievements is his development of the Veteran Sponsorship Initiative, a multi-state suicide prevention program that assists active-duty service members transitioning to civilian life. He also co-developed the VA LAUNCH program with Prairie View A&M University to help students from underrepresented communities pursue advanced careers in VA medicine, mental healthcare and biomedical research.

His research contributions span anxiety disorders, PTSD and traumatic brain injury. He has authored numerous peer-reviewed publications, presented his work at national conferences, and been invited to deliver workshops, colloquia and community presentations on topics like PTSD treatment innovations and Gulf War Illness. Beyond his professional roles, Seim is committed to community service through his involvement with various organizations. He has served on the board of the National Alliance on Mental Illness Heart of Texas Chapter, in roles as treasurer and parliamentarian. Additionally, he has supervised psychology interns, postdoctoral fellows and undergraduate researchers, shaping the next generation of mental health professionals serving veterans.

His dedication has earned him several honors, including a Certificate of Appreciation from the Veterans Partners Association, an Institutional Leadership Award from Baylor University and a Public Service Award from the NextGen organization. He has also received recognition from military organizations like the Association of the United States Army.



Department of

## Mathematics

**William Vander Woude**

B.S. '71

Retired Teacher, Middle and High School Mathematics

**William Vander Woude** graduated from Western Michigan University in 1971 with a Bachelor of Science in Education in mathematics and physical education. He was inducted into two honor societies, Phi Eta Sigma and Omicron Delta Kappa, and was also a member of the men's basketball team. Vander Woude became the first WMU player to be named to the Mid-American All-Academic team for three seasons, and in 1970 and 1971 was one of only three WMU players ever to be named Academic All-American. In 1976, he also earned his master's in educational leadership from WMU.

Vander Woude began his teaching career at Paw Paw High School. Shortly after he began teaching, he was drafted into the U.S. Army and was assigned as an instructor at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, where he was a part of a teaching cadre in the Pershing Nuclear Missile program. Upon his release from active duty, he taught middle school mathematics in the Grand Rapids Public Schools. In 1975, he taught high school at Forest Hills Public Schools, where he helped develop the math department at Forest Hills Eastern High School in 2005. He served as the department head in all schools where he taught, retiring in 2010 with 39 years of dedicated service in education. Following retirement, he continued teaching at Kuyper College, North Pointe Christian High School and on the Navajo Nation at Rehoboth Christian High School.

Vander Woude found teaching mathematics to be a deeply rewarding experience, describing it as his true calling. He declined administrative roles in favor of remaining in the classroom, using many ideas he learned in the educational leadership program to enrich his teaching and foster student development. Vander Woude also took summer courses in special education to improve his ability to effectively teach mathematics to diverse learners.

Vander Woude's commitment to his community extended beyond the classroom. He was a dedicated coach, sometimes coaching up to three sports a school year, and a volunteer for the Special Olympics, youth softball and AAU basketball. He was also a deacon in his church, serving on the Benevolence and Missions committees.



## COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

The College of Arts and Sciences Alumni Achievement Award was launched this year to honor College of Arts and Sciences alumni who have earned a baccalaureate, master's or doctoral degree from the college and have achieved truly exceptional success in their chosen field of study. All college alumni are eligible to receive this award, including those who have previously won the Early Career Excellence Award or a department, school or institute Alumni Achievement Award.

College of Arts and Sciences Alumni Achievement award recipients have reached the pinnacle of success in their field. Their outstanding work has had a demonstrable positive impact at the national and international level, often transforming their fields of study, and has been recognized through their lifetime of professional achievement. Award recipients have served with distinction as model leaders in their communities, from local to global.

These honorees 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 and our core values of collaboration, creativity, equity, integrity, intellectual freedom and student success, while fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion to create welcoming environments that allow everyone to succeed.



Department of  
English

## Melba Joyce Boyd

B.A. '71, M.A. '72

Distinguished Professor, Wayne State University  
Adjunct Professor, University of Michigan

**Dr. Melba Joyce Boyd** is an award-winning poet, scholar, and documentary filmmaker, known for her contributions to African American literature, culture and film. She is the author of 13 books, including nine poetry collections and more than 100 essays on African American literature, culture and film. Describing her impact, Kresge Foundation president and CEO Rip Ranson noted that Boyd has "both reflected our times and fired up our imaginations. As both a scholar of important African American artists and in her own right, she grounds us in history and inspires us to think about the future."

Boyd was born and raised in Detroit and earned both her bachelor's and master's in English from Western Michigan University in 1971 and 1972. After graduating from WMU, she earned her doctorate in English from the University of Michigan in 1979. Since then, she has held numerous positions in academia, including at the University of Iowa and Ohio State University. She has also been a visiting professor at the Fudan University in China and a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Bremen in Germany. Currently, she is a distinguished professor in African American Studies at Wayne State University and an adjunct professor in Afro-American and African studies at the University of Michigan.

Boyd's highly esteemed poems have been translated into French, Italian, Spanish and German. As a scholar and filmmaker, her work often focuses on Dudley Randall, founder of Detroit's groundbreaking Black-owned Broadside Press, home to prominent 20th-century African American poets including Gwendolyn Brooks and Nikki Giovanni. She served as Randall's assistant editor and authored "Roses and Revelations: The Selected Writings of Dudley Randall," which won the 2010 Library of Michigan Notable Books Award. Her biography "Wrestling with the Muse: Dudley Randall and the Broadside Press" earned a 2004 Honor Award from the Black Caucus of the American Library Association. Boyd also produced and directed a 1996 documentary on Randall and co-produced another on poet Naomi Long Madgett. Among her nine poetry collections, "Dance of a Butterfly" received the 2013 Library of Michigan Notable Books Award for Poetry. Her other honors include the Spirit of Detroit Award, the Sojourner Truth Meritorious Award for Community Service and the Charles H. Wright Museum's Women's Award.

Department of  
Chemistry

## George Wellman

M.S. '67, Ph.D. '72

Retired Vice President of Worldwide Chemical  
Development, Smith & Kline Laboratories

**Dr. George Wellman**, two-time graduate of Western Michigan University, earned a master's in 1969 and doctorate in organic chemistry in 1972. Following graduation from WMU, Wellman began his career as a postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Medicinal Chemistry at the University of Michigan under Dr. Ray Counsell. After this, he took his first role as a chemist with the leading pharmaceutical company Smith Kline & French Laboratories in Philadelphia.

Early in his time with Smith Kline & French, he focused on scaling up production for the drug cimetidine, commercially known as Tagamet. The groundbreaking drug, which targets stomach acid production, revolutionized the treatment of peptic ulcers and became the first drug to surpass \$1 billion per year in sales. Wellman had the unique ability to effectively scale up pharmaceutical production, a key factor in the success of Tagamet and his achievements within the company.

Dedicating his entire career to Smith Kline & French Laboratories, Wellman rose through the ranks and eventually retired in 2001 as vice president of worldwide chemical development. He and his wife now enjoy retirement in Northern Michigan, where they reside full time near Traverse City.