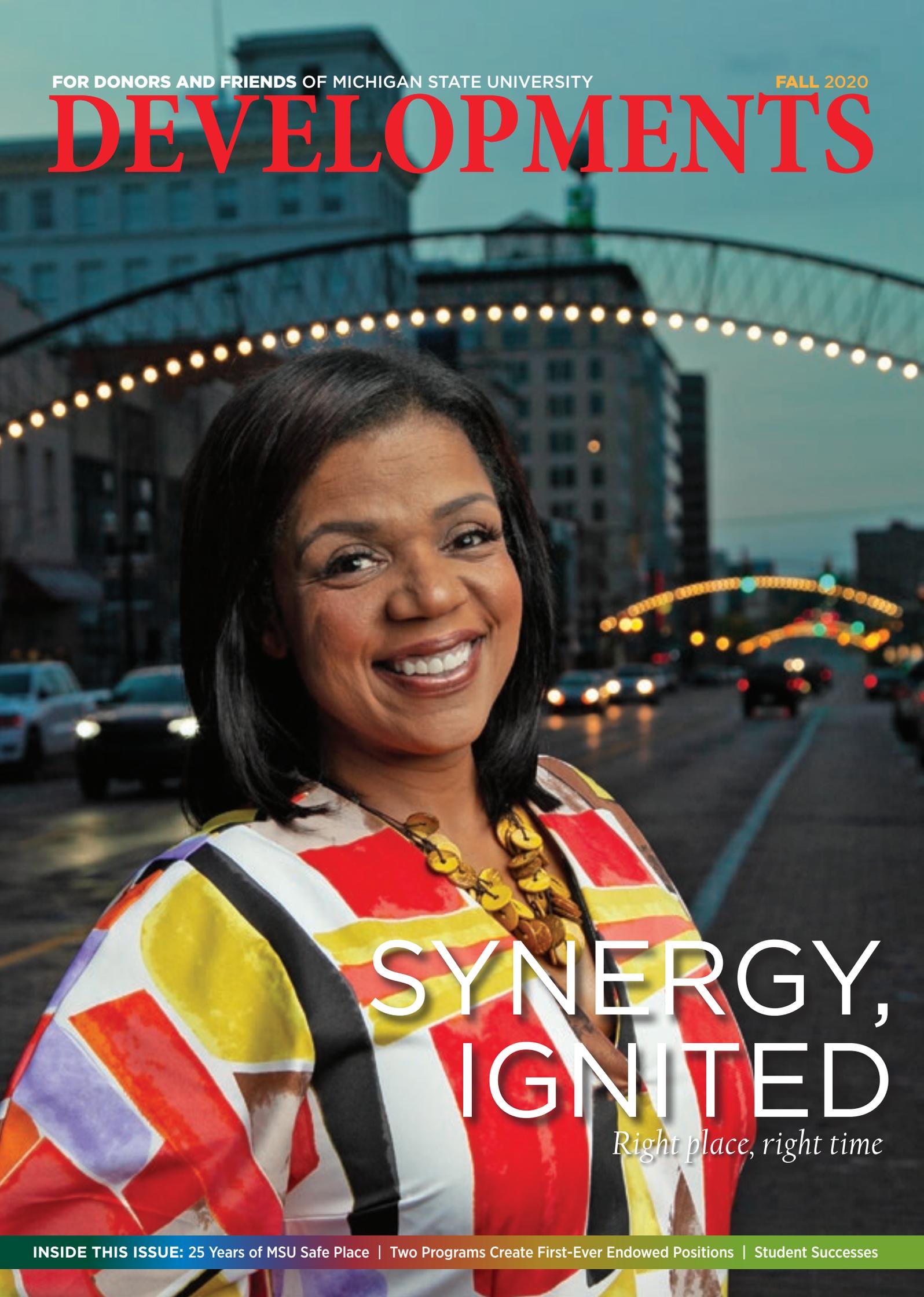


FOR DONORS AND FRIENDS OF MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

FALL 2020

# DEVELOPMENTS



## SYNERGY, IGNITED

*Right place, right time*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE: 25 Years of MSU Safe Place | Two Programs Create First-Ever Endowed Positions | Student Successes

#### OFF THE BEATEN PATH

On the map of MSU, Baker Woodlot appears as one large, green block south of Service Road between Farm Lane and Bogue Street. For those who choose to venture inside, a lush wonderland awaits. There, the Rachana Rajendra Neotropical Migrant Bird Sanctuary—established through a gift from the Rajendra family to honor their late daughter Rachana, a bird lover—plays host each year to some familiar feathered favorites: black-capped chickadees, pileated woodpeckers, northern cardinals, American robins and Baltimore orioles.



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### For Donors and Friends of Michigan State University

MSU Developments, published three times each year, is devoted to the inspiration and impact of private philanthropy at Michigan State University.

The generosity of thousands of alumni and friends empowers MSU's students, faculty and leaders to accomplish the extraordinary every day.

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The correct reference is Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, and the federal tax identification number is 38-6005984. If you have already named MSU in your estate plans, please contact us so we can welcome you to the Linda E. Landon Legacy Society. For more information, visit [giftplanning.msu.edu](http://giftplanning.msu.edu).

**Learn more at [givingto.msu.edu](http://givingto.msu.edu)**

# DEVELOPMENTS

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## ON A FAST TRACK TO SUCCESS

*Claire Kendell, '21, electrical engineering student, received the prestigious Ford Motor Company Alan Mulally Leadership in Engineering Scholarship, awarded to only 10 students around the world*

Claire Kendell doesn't often pause in the middle of a run. But when an email popped up on her phone with the subject line "You have received the Alan Mulally Leadership in Engineering Scholarship," it got her attention.

"I had to read it quite a few times," says the electrical engineering senior and member of MSU's Women's Track and Cross Country teams. "I was just so honored and grateful. I was smiling every step of a very fast run home that day."

Claire is one of 2020's ten recipients of the \$10,000 scholarship, awarded each year to outstanding engineering students at premier partner universities. The competitive award program, which began in 2015 and will continue for 10 years, is funded by the Ford Motor Company to honor former president and CEO Alan Mulally.

"Ford's Mulally scholarship is providing opportunities for promising engineering students to continue developing their skills on the way to becoming successful innovators," says Farah Harb, global education programs analyst, Ford Motor Company Fund. "We're proud of our investments in education and our relationship with Michigan State University to support and inspire the next generation of leaders."

Engineering has been on Claire's horizon since high school when she found herself drawn to a career in STEM because of a genuine love for problem solving. She came to MSU as a junior, transferring from the University of Detroit Mercy. She recalls that MSU's encouraging atmosphere made hitting her stride on campus easy.

"Coming from a smaller school, I was super intimidated by MSU's size," she says. "But it's been great and I think a big part of that has been being on the team. They're a really supportive and hardworking group of people."

Joining MSU's chapter of the Society of Women Engineers was another plus that she says gave her an automatic network in engineering.

After recently completing her third internship in the auto industry, she has her eye on a career in electrified propulsion systems, which she sees both as a challenging area and a major player in mitigating climate change.

"I want to apply all these skills and technical knowledge I've gained to something I can see making a big difference down the road," she says.

She also hopes to pursue a master's in engineering degree as well as an MBA, to help her continue to increase her skill set and potential impact.

Looks like Claire won't be slowing down any time soon.

.....  
**LEARN MORE** about supporting students in the College of Engineering by contacting Senior Director of Development Stephen Bates at [batesst@msu.edu](mailto:batesst@msu.edu) or by calling (517) 355-8339.



Claire Kendell balances her busy training schedule as a member of the MSU Track and Cross Country teams with her equally busy schedule of academic pursuits.

## WOODRUFF TAKES OFFICE AS PROVOST

*Teresa K. Woodruff is a leading researcher and advocate for women in science*

Following a national search, MSU welcomed Teresa K. Woodruff as its new provost and executive vice president for academic affairs in August.

She most recently served as dean of the Graduate School and associate provost for graduate education at Northwestern University, where she earned her doctorate in biochemistry, molecular biology and cell biology.

Woodruff is an expert in ovarian biology and reproductive science. She coined the term "oncofertility" to describe the merging of two fields: oncology and fertility. Oncofertility is now globally recognized as a medical discipline.

In addition, she is widely recognized as an effective advocate for women in science and led efforts to change federal policy to mandate the use of females in fundamental National Institutes of Health research. She is past president of the Endocrine Society and editor-in-chief of Endocrinology. For her commitment to teaching and mentoring, Woodruff was presented with the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring in 2011.

"Teresa's experience and credentials are impeccable. But more importantly, she has a great understanding of education and research at a university with the scale and impact of MSU," MSU President Samuel L. Stanley Jr., M.D. said. "She is a pioneer in her field and a champion for equity in health care for women. Throughout her career, she has recognized the importance of STEM education and advocated for its support at the national level. In addition, her time as dean of the Graduate School at Northwestern has given her a great appreciation of the critical importance of the arts and humanities in higher education's efforts to provide for the needs of today's society."



"I am confident Teresa shares our priorities for student success, campus safety and diversity, as well as our commitment to the pursuit of academic excellence and world-changing research."

As provost, Woodruff is the chief academic officer for the university, providing leadership for academic programs, research and outreach involving faculty, students and staff.

"I am excited about the work ahead and committed to supporting the aspirations of our diverse community of scholars and the broader goals of MSU," said Woodruff. "I have been deeply impressed by the faculty, students, administrators and staff I have met, and I am eager to work collaboratively to further empower the great teaching, learning, arts and humanities, research and service missions of this community. Together, we will foster a culture of high aspirations, strong core values and enriched student experiences that will drive a mission of excellence across the diverse and inclusive academic continuum that is uniquely MSU."

Woodruff also is an MSU Foundation Professor of obstetrics, gynecology, reproductive biology and biomedical engineering.

## NEW TAX LAW AND 2020 CHARITABLE GIVING

The CARES Act of March 2020 not only aims to provide financial relief from the coronavirus pandemic but also could influence your charitable giving decisions in 2020.

still make direct distributions from your IRA to charities starting at age 70 ½.

- You may apply up to 100% (rather than 60%) of your cash gifts to charities against your adjusted gross income.

### UNDER THE NEW LAW:

- You may deduct up to \$300 in gifts to charities, even without itemizing your deductions.
- Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) from your individual retirement accounts are suspended for 2020. Previous tax law increased the age for RMDs to 72. You may

.....  
**LEARN MORE** about giving options in estate planning by contacting Senior Director Deanna Gast in the Office of Gift Planning at [gastd@msu.edu](mailto:gastd@msu.edu) or by calling (517) 884-1000.

Visit [go.msu.edu/new-law](http://go.msu.edu/new-law)

## YOUNG ARTISTS “IN THE MAKING”

In a field that can feel intimidatingly exclusive, the Park West Gallery, an art gallery in Southfield, Michigan, founded by alumnus Albert Scaglione (M.S. '63, Ph.D. '70), chooses to be the very opposite when it comes to art: accessible, educational and welcoming.

Thanks to a recent \$90,000 gift to the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at MSU, the Park West Foundation is helping to bring hundreds of future artists, art educators and art aficionados into the fold.

The gift supported the creation of *In the Making: Young Minds at the MSU Broad*, a program offering vital arts exposure to underserved youth in the Lansing School District. The program is designed and facilitated by the Scaglione Art Fellows, a cohort of MSU undergraduate student educators.

Each semester six Scaglione Art Fellows engage youth in conversations about art during field trips to the museum and guide them through art-making experiences of their own. “A lot of the kids I worked with said they were bad at art, but ended up with at least one piece that they were really proud of,” says one fellow. “Exposing kids to different forms of art can really empower them, and can even help a kid find their potential career path.”

Despite being cut short due to COVID-19, *In the Making* still served nearly 1,400 Lansing-area schoolchildren during its inaugural run. The students learned how people communicate their lived experiences through art, and then had the opportunity to do so themselves. In total, the Scaglione Art Fellows led their young students to create more than 5,000 works of their own.

“My students became eager each week to dive deeper into the art process,” says one teacher. “To hear their reluctance for the experience to end made this teacher’s heart and soul smile.”

As the program continues in the 2020-2021 school year, the MSU Broad has had to creatively adapt to the changing landscape of online learning due to COVID-19. The Scaglione Art Fellows will deliver their lessons through video presentations and “live” online interactions with classes. Teachers will be engaged in professional development to support the youths’ art education as well.

“For over 50 years, Park West Gallery has helped introduce millions to the joys of appreciating art,” says Albert Scaglione, founder and CEO of Park West. “Art enriches people’s lives and that’s why the Park West Foundation is so passionate about advocating for young people to get more access to the arts. I couldn’t be more



The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at MSU is the ideal backdrop for the Scaglione Art Fellows to engage youth from the Lansing School District in lively conversations about art.

proud of the vital, hands-on work that the Scaglione Art Fellows have accomplished in such a short time. I look forward to seeing what they do next.”

### New Leadership with a New Approach

The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum welcomed Mónica Ramírez-Montagut as its new director on July 1, 2020.

Ramírez-Montagut brings nearly 20 years of arts and culture experience to the MSU Broad. Throughout her extensive career, her approach to art is known for being both publicly engaged and socially conscious.

“I am elated to welcome Mónica to our Spartan community. Her wealth of experience in arts and culture will be a driving force in furthering the mission of the museum to be both a teaching institution and cultural hub for our community,” says MSU President Samuel L. Stanley Jr., M.D. “I am confident she will bring a fresh perspective to MSU and a renewed energy to the museum, our university and Michigan’s arts community.”



Ramírez-Montagut most recently served as director at the Newcomb Art Museum at Tulane University, but her diverse professional background also includes work in the fields of performing arts and architecture. In particular, she is an expert on the work of Zaha Hadid, who designed the MSU Broad facility.

“I am thrilled to join the talented team of the MSU Broad and continue to offer extraordinary contemporary art exhibitions and programs while simultaneously exploring ways in which to address critical social issues impacting our communities,” says Ramírez-Montagut. “As a dynamic university museum, MSU Broad is uniquely poised to develop interdisciplinary collaborations and community participation into a powerful stakeholder formula for furthering the field of art while moving the needle toward social justice.”

**LEARN MORE** about supporting the MSU Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum by contacting Assistant Director of Development Sandra Brown at [sandrab@msu.edu](mailto:sandrab@msu.edu) or by calling (517) 884-3914.

Mónica Ramírez-Montagut is the new director of the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at MSU.



## MSU SAFE PLACE ENDOWMENT MARKS 25 YEARS OF SERVICE

*Peter and Joanne McPherson create new endowed fund for the program Joanne helped found in its ongoing mission to provide shelter and support while seeking to end domestic violence*

Former First Lady Joanne McPherson had not even officially arrived on MSU’s campus when she was inspired to take action that would have a life-changing impact on thousands of Spartans and their families.

Being driven from the Lansing airport to Cowles House by a friendly MSU police officer, she took the opportunity to learn more about what might be needed to improve the lives of MSU students. Something he said really struck her: there was not a safe place for students experiencing domestic violence to go.

Starting from that summer night in 1993, Joanne would spend the better part of the next year working diligently to change that. Thanks to her leadership, MSU Safe Place became the first—and still the only—university-based shelter where students, staff, faculty and their partners experiencing abusive relationships can find refuge and support. The program offers temporary, emergency shelter for survivors and their children, as well as advocacy, support and counseling services while working to end stalking and interpersonal violence through public awareness and community education.

After that early conversation with an MSU police officer, Joanne talked to members of the campus and local community about domestic violence and service gaps to members of the university.

“I learned there were certainly needs in the community,” she recalls, “but also that there were many resources that could be pulled together for solutions.”

She found herself doing things she had never done before: creating a task force comprised of campus and community members; obtaining advice from social workers, lawyers and doctors; fundraising and grant writing; public

speaking; and hiring a director. “So many people helped,” Joanne says, including the campus police, campus housing, MSU CATA Transportation, student organizations and the City of East Lansing. Several sororities went from door to door to obtain cash gifts and in-kind contributions. Now deceased professor Milt Muelder, the MSU Federal Credit Union and others contributed financially. Joanne’s husband, former MSU President M. Peter McPherson, threw his strong support behind the project, which helped open doors, but he is quick to credit Joanne with all the “real” work.

“She is a doer and a multi-tasker” says Peter. “She pulled people together to solve all manner of difficult issues—from a process to adjust schedules so students would not be in the same classes as their abusers, to ensuring a secret location for the shelter and complete confidentiality. And, of course, she also expertly argued the case to me every night.”

Fast forward to today and the McPhersons are still leading. Recently, the couple made a \$50,000 challenge gift to create an endowment to support MSU Safe Place, which they hope will double in size as other donors are inspired to contribute. The endowment commemorates the 25th anniversary of MSU Safe Place and honors both Joanne and founding director Holly Rosen, who is still very much on the job.

“SHE’S A DOER AND A MULTI-TASKER. SHE PULLED PEOPLE TOGETHER TO SOLVE ALL MANNER OF DIFFICULT ISSUES.”

“Holly was key for creating a sustainable program that has now stood the test of time,” says Joanne. “She had just the right mix of knowledge and know-how, commitment and passion.”

Holly is just as appreciative of Joanne’s role.

“Her connections, endless energy, vision and firm insistence that these services be provided got MSU Safe Place up and running barely a year into her tenure as first



M. Peter McPherson and Joanne McPherson behind Cowles House as they began their 1993-2004 tenures as president and first lady of MSU. *Courtesy: MSU Archives and Historical Collections.*

lady,” she says. “I am so appreciative for that and for the ongoing commitment from both the McPhersons.”

Enthusiastic support from the community has sustained MSU Safe Place from the beginning, allowing all services to be offered free of charge.

A 5K “Race for the Place” has raised thousands of dollars every spring since 1994. COVID-19 prevented the event from happening this year, but many sponsors and participants donated all the same to raise more than \$22,000.

Over the years, several endowments have been created to support Safe Place programming, including one to support advocacy work made by MSU retiree and Safe Place volunteer Sashi Reddy and her husband C.A., an MSU professor.

**LEARN MORE** about how you can support MSU Safe Place on an ongoing basis, as well as to respond to this current \$50,000 endowment match challenge initiated by the McPhersons, by contacting Executive Director for Constituency Programs Vivian Leung at [leungv@msu.edu](mailto:leungv@msu.edu) or by calling (517) 884-7597.

**LEARN MORE** about MSU Safe Place at [safeplace.msu.edu](http://safeplace.msu.edu)

# THE CORE EXPERIENCE

## Consumers Energy Foundation renews its commitment to support engineering students after more than 10 years of partnership with the College of Engineering

Ten years ago, the College of Engineering sought to reinvent how first-year engineering students lived and studied, hoping to be part of the solution for Michigan's booming need for more engineering and technical talent.

The Cornerstone & Residential Experience, known as CoRe, sought corporate sponsors to bring real-world expertise and challenges into entry level classroom and learning experiences—exposure that would excite freshman students about the possibilities in engineering careers from their first days on campus.

Consumers Energy was the first official partner, helping to develop the program from the ground up and

supporting it with an initial \$200,000 grant from the company's foundation which has been renewed for \$250,000 every three years since 2010.

It's been a game changer for the company, says Carolyn Bloodworth, secretary/treasurer of the Consumers Energy Foundation.

"Michigan State really opened our eyes to see that partnerships like this are critical to getting students excited about working in our industry," she says. "CoRe allows us to build longterm relationships with students and to play a meaningful role in supporting and encouraging them to persevere in a difficult field."

Consumers Energy led the way for others to invest, including BOSCH, General Electric and Tenneco. Today, the CoRe program serves more than 1,800 entering engineering students at MSU, many of whom are women and other minority-represented groups in engineering.

The partnerships are turning college experiences, relationships and network access into serious career opportunities. For Consumers Energy that has included placing about 30 MSU students into internships each year.

"The goal of our internship program is to attract the most innovative, creative and diverse group of talent to Consumers Energy to help drive our company's mission," says Kolby Bogan, University & Internship program lead at Consumers Energy. "The CoRe program is strongly passionate about the success of first-year engineering students, which helps to set the positive tone for the duration of their college careers and prepare engineering students for the workforce. We take great pride as a company in building relationships with strong talent and participating in networking opportunities to expand our engagement through programs like CoRe."

The success of the Consumers Energy/CoRe partnership can be seen in the 425 MSU alumni currently employed at Consumers Energy.

Molly McClorey, a 2019 mechanical engineering graduate, considers it extreme good fortune to have participated in CoRe, which led to an internship at Consumers Energy after her second year.

"This was an incredible opportunity and I have felt welcome in the Consumers Energy family ever since," she says. "I continued in the Gas Engineering Intern Program for three different rotations, eventually landing my current job within the company's Engineering Entry Program, a two-year program consisting of four different six-month rotations. I am currently in my second rotation and loving every second of the program!"

Alumna Alyse Way completed her civil engineering degree in 2016, and today serves as a Consumers Energy transmission pipeline engineer in the metro-Detroit area.

"My goal as a student was to graduate and to work for an organization where I could make a difference," she says. "Consumers Energy provided me an opportunity to learn about the energy industry and to 'leave things better than I found them' both at work and in my community. I work to ensure that heat gets to the homes of millions of Michigan residents by enhancing the deliverability and integrity of our natural gas pipelines."

Alyse's involvement with CoRe has come full circle. She now volunteers to work with MSU students whenever she can.

"I once walked in the students' shoes so now I can give back through sharing my story," she says.

The Consumers Energy Foundation is the philanthropic arm of Consumers Energy, Michigan's largest utility. Consumers Energy provides natural gas and electricity to 6.7 million of the state's 10 million residents in all 68 Lower Peninsula counties.

**LEARN MORE** about corporate support for the College of Engineering by contacting Corporate Development Director Jennifer Jennings at [jjennings@msu.edu](mailto:jjennings@msu.edu) or by calling (517) 432-6573.

**LEFT:** Alyse Way, '16, is a transmission pipeline engineer with Consumers Energy and is passionate about sharing her experience with future engineering graduates at MSU.

**RIGHT:** Molly McClorey, '19, credits an internship with Consumers Energy for helping her land her current job in the company's Engineering Entry Program.





# Right PLACE Right TIME

*Synergy, Ignited*

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For MSU's endowed faculty, being able to make the most of an opportunity is far more than a happy coincidence. The positioning of an academic all-star, the marshalling of resources—all are part of a well-thought-out plan, years in the making. It starts with the vision of donors whose passion and generosity create an endowed position. Add in the aspirations of a teacher, physician or researcher who is named to hold the position. And finally, top it off with an unwavering commitment to genuinely partner with communities of people whose lives, in turn, will be forever changed because of the work that endowed positions fund. It's synergy, on fire.

The C.S. Mott Professorships in MSU's Public Health Division in Flint are a perfect example of how the effect of endowed positions can quickly multiply. A \$9 million endowment from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation in 2014 now funds four professors and has made the College of Human Medicine's Flint campus an epicenter for work in the field of public health.

"With the steep challenges we currently face, and through the foundation's investment, we are now uniquely positioned to reduce health disparities and create equity through education and research," says Interim Dean Aron Sousa.

## Letting the community guide decisions...from the start

The Division of Public Health in downtown Flint, now comprising 16 faculty members, is one of the fastest-growing research divisions at MSU, bringing in more than \$72 million in grants to the community, including the Flint Lead Exposure Registry. Its leaders are steeped in the community.

When Debra Furr-Holden, a trailblazing epidemiologist from Johns Hopkins University who wanted to make a difference, first accepted a C.S. Mott Professorship in Flint five years ago, she knew exactly where she was going and why. She had spent her teen years in Flint and she was excited by the groundwork that had already been laid there for a truly community-engaged public health program. Now associate dean for Public Health Integration, she says she wanted to be not just a professor but a scholar activist making a difference that could be "seen, touched and felt."

"I've had the opportunity to contribute and bring my gifts, talents and training to bear at a time and in a place where the need was great, but also the will of the people was just out of this world," she says. "The Mott Foundation and the people of Flint gave me a big opportunity to stand true to who I say I am."

Working with her is C.S. Mott Professor Mona Hanna-Attisha, the renowned pediatrician and public health advocate whose research first exposed the Flint water crisis. Hanna-Attisha says she first fell in love with Flint, pediatrics and the community-based, community-service approach of MSU's College of Human Medicine as a medical student. Later, when she had just completed her master's in public health, she began hearing about the Mott Foundation's support for building a new kind of public health model in Flint. Like Furr-Holden, she jumped at an opportunity to return, in her case to lead an MSU pediatrics residency program in 2011.

"There was this commitment to build public health capacity in Flint in a way that had never been done before," she says, "to work in total partnership with the community to identify needs, and then build capacity with the community to improve disparities."

She couldn't have known how much of an impact her dedication to this work would have in Flint, but the work continues to inspire her.

"We are here because we want to make an actionable, demonstrated difference in the lives of the community that we are privileged to work with," she says. "We know our work isn't just about research that's going to be in a publication, but that what we are doing in Flint is actually improving the lives of people."

## A base of support fosters rapid growth

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation recognized a need to address a myriad of challenges facing the Flint area through a public health lens, says Neal Hegarty, vice president of programs. The foundation also saw MSU's commitment to a community-based approach, he says, where meaningful engagement with residents is one of the most important metrics and working to address issues that are identified by the community is a core strategy. A shared appreciation for practical approaches that directly help the people of Flint is deeply embedded in the partnership.

"Both MSU and the Mott Foundation value community impact, and we both recognize the strength that exists in all aspects of our community," he says. "MSU public health is committed to all voices, especially the most underserved in society."

This puts Flint and MSU's public health program on the leading edge for finding solutions to health disparities. When Governor Gretchen Whitmer recently declared racism as a public health crisis in Michigan, such a declaration had already happened in Flint, which is poised to become a model for the rest of the state in how environmental injustice can be addressed.

The public health program has grown, evolved and expanded exponentially beyond the foundation's initial investment, notes Hegarty.

The foundation, the professors, the university and the community have set a virtuous cycle in motion, with each spin helping to build up strengths that in turn build up other strengths. While the program was designed and implemented before the Flint water crisis, it was in place and ready to act to support the people of Flint at a critical time, as it is now during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For example, the National Institutes of Health recently funded a study led by C.S. Mott Professor Todd Lucas with a pair of formidable goals: communicating effectively

about the value of COVID-19 antibody testing and better understanding why COVID-19 causes a disproportionate number of African Americans to suffer severe cases and deaths.

"Rather than rest on laurels, the entire team has worked aggressively to grow, evolve and develop with the endowed funds as core resources," Hegarty says. "To me, this work represents some of the best community-engaged scholarship, and the first few years of work has set a base for many years of impact for the Flint community."

All the C.S. Mott professors see the foundation's support as vital to their success.

Senior clinical psychologist Jennifer Johnson left a large, Ivy League psychiatry department to come to an empty building in Flint to begin MSU's Division of Public Health as the first Mott Professor. It was a risk she was willing to take to have the opportunity to help build something new and build it right.

"I had never seen a university build an academic unit in partnership with a community," she says. "I knew if I was serious about making a difference, I had to come here, as the very first person, ensuring that the division was built on a foundation of academic excellence and stayed true to its community-partnered mission."

Her research is aimed at improving the mental health and substance abuse care for pregnant women and people involved in the criminal justice system. She has been extremely successful in Flint, as evidenced by a prolific number of grants and publications.

Her portfolio of work includes many firsts; the first large randomized trial of any treatment for major depressive disorder in an incarcerated population; the first randomized trial of suicide prevention for justice-involved individuals; and an extensive study of the scale-up of a postpartum depression prevention program in 90 prenatal clinics serving low-income women nationally.



C.S. Mott Professors, clockwise from top left: Todd Lucas, Debra Furr-Holden, Jennifer Johnson, Mona Hanna-Attisha.

## WELCOMING NEW FACES, AND LIFTING UP FAMILIAR ONES



It is common to talk about endowed faculty positions as recruiting tools to lure highly accomplished teachers and researchers to MSU from other institutions. But an endowed position is also an excellent way for Michigan State to acknowledge and add fuel to the great work that its existing faculty members have been doing on campus for years.

The College of Engineering did this recently with Xiaobo Tan, naming him the prestigious Richard M. Hong Endowed Chair in Electrical Engineering.

Tan joined MSU in 2004, and has been steadily earning accolades and building his body of research ever since. He earned an NSF CAREER

award in 2006, an MSU Teacher-Scholar Award in 2010, and was named an MSU Foundation Professor in 2016. In 2018, he received the College of Engineering's Withrow Distinguished Scholar Award. He has published more than 250 peer-reviewed papers and holds four U.S. patents in his research areas.

An endowed position will only add to his impressive list of accomplishments—and it will uplift Tan's entire area of research, too.

"I look forward to working with my colleagues within the department and beyond to advance our education and research goals. In particular, I plan to use the funds to help propel MSU's excellence in robotics."

**ABOVE:** Xiaobo Tan will use the Hong Endowed Chair in Electrical Engineering to push MSU's robotics excellence to new levels.

"The endowed professorships allow us to take more risks and to pursue bigger efforts to make the large, systemic changes that are needed to improve health for vulnerable populations," she says. "They also provide us with prominence and stature to bring attention to needed issues, system reforms and invisible populations."

A health psychologist, Lucas is the newest Mott Professor. His research is aimed at developing effective interventions to change stress experiences and promote health behaviors like screening tests as a means to address health disparities, especially in minority populations. For him, the Mott Professorship is a "dream come true."

"It provides support to effect great change in areas that I am directly interested in, and also a higher purpose in connecting this change to the Flint community," he says. "Great things happen when big ideas are supported, and that's where I feel I am at."

Furr-Holden likens it to being empowered to swing wide and swing hard.

"Having that endowment allows us to be bold," she says, "to do the kind of innovative, collaborative, community-partnered research that would otherwise be difficult. We get to say 'let's go, game on.'"

## A tool to recruit the very best

Endowed chairs date at least as far back as ancient Rome. Steeped in tradition and ceremony, they represent the highest accolade a university can bestow upon a professor. Endowed positions send a strong message about what is valued at the university, which in turn attracts people who want to innovate in those areas.

So important are chairs that recruiting a world-class faculty member sometimes cannot happen without them, according to Sousa, who has played a key role in filling critical faculty positions to expand the college's research and service mission. He notes that it can take more than a year to fill specific gaps with the right faculty, as those with the highest level of accomplishment typically have deep roots in the academic community, including extensive research teams and labs. It can take time and convincing for them to make a transition.

"We know these positions act as a magnet—attracting highly talented faculty and making it clear that the MSU College of Human Medicine has opportunities and resources to offer nationally renowned faculty," he says. "These funds open doors and allow the college to impact public health on a large scale—with opportunities we would not otherwise have."

Endowed positions allow colleges and departments to go into the recruitment process with confidence.

**RIGHT:** Michele Grimm, the Wielenga Creative Engineering Endowed Professor, spent her summer working to help the College of Engineering transition to online learning for the fall semester—from her makeshift "office" on her back deck. **BELOW:** Pausing for a celebratory photo with Thomas Wielenga at the 2019 MSU Investiture for Endowed Faculty.



## Re-engineering engineering... creatively

When Thomas Wielenga approached MSU in 2017 with the intention of making a gift to support the College of Engineering, he had some very specific ideas in mind.

Wielenga—who earned his undergraduate degree in 1978 and went on to pursue a master's degree in computer-aided design and a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering from University of Michigan—wanted to establish an endowed professorship in mechanical engineering. He wanted MSU to use the position as a lure for someone who wasn't just a great researcher, but also an innovative teacher with big ideas on how to improve engineering education as a whole. And he wanted to call it the Wielenga Creative Engineering Endowed Professorship.

This idea stemmed from Thomas's abiding belief that creativity is essential to everything.

"My philosophy is that there's something called the creative process, and that everything evolves through that process," he says. "It's how we became humans and how humans invented things and the processes by which we use the things."

A professor of mechanical engineering who was willing to be that creative force was exactly what Michigan State needed, he thought. He could not possibly have foreseen just how valuable that creativity would be in 2020.

## Teaching teachers how to teach in a time of COVID-19

Michele Grimm, the inaugural Wielenga Creative Engineering Endowed Professor, had just finished teaching her morning classes on March 11, 2020, when it was announced that students should immediately return home to complete their semesters remotely. For Grimm, the transition to teaching in a virtual format felt seamless. Her regular course materials relied heavily on technology and digital experiences, so she could continue her lessons as planned, with minimal interruption to her students' learning.

But for many of her colleagues in the College of Engineering, it wasn't so easy, and concern about the 2020-2021 school year loomed. So, Grimm offered herself up as a resource, headed up a committee and spent the summer helping as many engineering faculty members as possible get ready for a fall semester unlike any other.

She says: "Rather than trying to exactly replicate what we've always done in person into an online environment, I encouraged everybody to take a step back and look at the objectives—what do we want students to get out of these lessons, and how can we get there without hands-on, in-person instruction?"

With more than two decades of research and experience in the world of curriculum development—and a deep appreciation for the value of working in virtual spaces from a research perspective—this was a challenge that Grimm was completely prepared to tackle.

## Taking the title of “teacher” — and running with it

At the outset, Michele Grimm’s teaching career was only supposed to last three years. At least, that’s what she told herself in 1994, when her husband’s medical residency landed the pair in Detroit and she was offered a three-year position at Wayne State.

In the 25 years that followed, she not only taught courses, she helped design them. She developed Wayne State’s undergraduate and graduate programs in biomedical engineering, served as associate dean for seven years, and found that she loved the administrative side of academia just as much as the research side.

Much of her work at Wayne State focused on developing engineering curriculum that used technology and hands-on experiences in new ways, and was more engaging than traditional lecture-style instruction.

Outside of her work on the administrative side, Grimm’s research walks the line between engineering and medicine in the field of injury biomechanics, in particular, neonatal brachial plexus injuries. Due to the nature of these injuries—they are rare and occur as a result of the way a baby’s body passes through the birth canal—it is not possible to conduct patient-based clinical studies. So recreating the circumstances virtually helps engineers and doctors work together to figure out exactly how they happen and how to prevent them.

The body of scientific research she built at Wayne State will continue to play a big part in her career here at Michigan State, but digging into how to make engineering education click with students is what made her truly excited to bring her talents to East Lansing.

“I always said I wasn’t going to leave Wayne State for ‘just another faculty position,’” Grimm says. “I was actually considering department chair positions when the Wielenga Professorship at Michigan State came available. It was clear that in this position, I’d be able to do some really neat things—work with the department and come up with creative solutions—without the administrative burden hanging over me.”

## Future-proofing higher education

The work Grimm is doing will help the College of Engineering do two things that Thomas Wielenga believes are imperative: first, make an engineering degree more cost-effective by both reducing time to graduation and graduating students who are more immediately prepared for the workforce; second, help a brick-and-mortar university like MSU keep up with online degree programs that are only going to become more popular.

“I felt that the way engineering is taught now is very similar to the way I learned it 40 years ago. Even the textbooks are nearly the same. But there is a whole new set of tools that exist now. I wanted Michigan State to be able to bring in someone with a creative approach to using those tools,” says Wielenga.

Conversations between Grimm and Wielenga have sparked plenty of interesting concepts to try, one of which involves using a computer environment to turn real-life problems into a game—a virtual choose-your-own-adventure lab.

“We need to make sure that students who are graduating as engineers actually know how to do engineering,” Dr. Grimm says. “The theory behind

engineering is important, but entering the workforce having had experience actually doing the engineering is just as—if not more—important.”

In a time when “going out into the world” is not encouraged, being able to replicate hands-on learning experiences in a virtual setting is more important than ever.

This is exactly the kind of creativity Thomas Wielenga had in mind, though he swears he does not have a crystal ball. He just knows that the world is going to keep creating new challenges, and universities have no choice but to keep creating solutions to meet them.

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**LEARN MORE** about support for endowed faculty positions by contacting the development officer in your college or unit or by calling (517) 884-1000.

**VISIT** MSU’s official Honored Faculty website, where you can search and sort by name, college or position to learn more about some of MSU’s best and brightest faculty members at [msu.edu/honoredfaculty](http://msu.edu/honoredfaculty)

## OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW THEIR FIELD . . . AND GROW IN THEIR FIELD



In 2011, an anonymous alumnus of the MSU College of Natural Science made a \$7 million gift to help expand the college’s Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences (EES). Included in the gift was funding for endowed faculty positions specifically intended for early career faculty members.

These positions helped MSU attract Songqiao “Shawn” Wei and Dalton Hardisty—both fresh off their Ph.D.s and postdocs, and ready to breathe new life into the area of earth science at MSU—and gave them use of the funding and prestige of their endowed positions to unlock their potential as teachers, researchers and future leaders in their respective fields.

Wei, an Endowed Assistant Professor of Geological Sciences, is a seismologist whose star is already on the rise.

It was just announced in September that Wei and his team secured a \$1.1 million National Science Foundation grant—which also provides an additional \$4.1 million worth of ship time and instrument usage for two seagoing expeditions—to study the Earth’s mantle in the Tonga-Lau-Samoa region of the Pacific Ocean.

Wei is the lead principal investigator for the project, which, he says, took a great deal of persistence to get funded. Though he has been studying the Tonga-Lau-Samoa subduction zone for more than 10 years, he has never actually been to the site, and he has a certain youthful excitement about it.

“That subduction zone has been my main focus, so I really want to go there,” Wei said. “It is where plate tectonics and subduction were discovered by scientists in the 1960s. Before that, there was no clue of plate tectonics. To me, this is kind of a historic place, and very exciting.”

Dalton Hardisty completed his Ph.D. in oceanography at University of California, Riverside, and his post-doc at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute before joining Michigan State and being named an Endowed Assistant Professor of Geological Sciences.

Hardisty is an expert in the areas of paleoceanography and geochemistry and leads a team that is studying the history of ocean and atmosphere chemistry. He, too, is a recent recipient of a \$1 million National Science Foundation grant, from its Division of Ocean Sciences,

to investigate the impact of ever-expanding low-oxygen zones in the ocean.

At his college Investiture lecture in the spring of 2019, he spoke about how it feels to hold an endowed professorship.

“I am particularly proud and feel a sense of responsibility to have one of these endowed positions, and I take it very seriously,” he said. “I am looking forward to being a leader in the department, and helping the department maintain its status as a leader going forward.”

Dave Hyndman, professor and EES department chair, said that he is very proud of the accomplishments of Drs. Wei and Hardisty.

“They are exemplars of all the things we look for when we hire new faculty members—exceptional creativity, a hardworking spirit and team players, Hyndman says. “Their early career successes have helped them to become leaders in their fields. The endowed gift from our generous alumni was critical to hiring such outstanding scientists to our departmental team, which has been a key to our continued success as a unit.”



**ABOVE:** Endowed Assistant Professors Songqiao “Shawn” Wei (left) and Dalton Hardisty bring fresh perspectives to geological science at MSU.

# HONORING A PAST WHILE BUILDING A FUTURE

*\$3.45 million estate gift will create college's first endowed professorship as well as a strategic fund and scholarship endowment*

A future \$3.45 million gift from a donor's estate plan will support students, faculty and innovation in the Honors College, a premier program at Michigan State University that provides academic challenge and achievement opportunities for distinguished undergraduate students. The donor made \$50,000 of the gift in cash so scholarship awards from an endowment could begin as soon as 2021.

The gift, from an anonymous donor who is an Honors College graduate, will establish the first endowed professorship in the college, a Strategic Initiatives Fund to help college leaders implement their most visionary ideas, and the Honors College Opportunity Endowed Scholarship to support students with financial need.

"As a student at MSU in the early '70s, I had the opportunity to enter the Honors College and I certainly took advantage of the college to the extent that I could, given my financial struggles that made attendance a semester-by-semester challenge," says the donor. "Today, the Honors College has given me another opportunity. That is to find and support students, such as I was—teetering on the brink financially and risking the loss of their dreams of a college education.

"For me, I will be rewarded twice from the Honors College: once at the beginning of my career and again at its close. My financial commitment to the Honors College is more gratitude than generosity and less munificence than privilege."

Currently, more than 4,000 students are part of the Honors College. Students

are invited to join based on their academic achievement in high school or their first year at MSU.

"We are grateful for this generous gift, which will enable us to expand MSU's Honors College resources in ways that are critical to student success," says MSU President Samuel L. Stanley Jr., M.D. "The scholarship will help give some of our brightest students the financial support they need. And in the future, the Strategic Initiatives Fund will allow investment in the best ideas as needs and opportunities arise in the Honors College, while an endowed professorship will help recruit rising academic stars who will have a significant impact on academic programs."

Honors classes taught by MSU faculty are offered through the various academic departments at MSU. Honors College students have individualized plans of study and work with faculty on research throughout the university.

"This gift is extremely important for our Honors College students now and in

the future," says Matthew Zierler, interim dean. "We have resources to enable some students with need to engage in the entire HC experience with fewer worries about needing to prioritize part-time employment.

"Importantly, the Strategic Initiatives Fund gift will allow the Honors College to continue to innovate when new opportunities arise. This flexibility recognizes that the HC is always striving to improve how we support student development. Supporting our first endowed professorship further solidifies the vital importance of undergraduate education at the HC and MSU. We are very appreciative of this gift and its ability to facilitate the great work of the Honors College students and staff."

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**LEARN MORE** about supporting MSU Honors College by contacting Director of Development Tonya Frisbey at [frisbey2@msu.edu](mailto:frisbey2@msu.edu) or by calling (517) 884-7591.



Some Honors College students showed their Spartan spirit last year at a gathering in front of Eustace-Cole Hall where the college offices are housed.

# A FIRST FOR ART HISTORY

*With \$1 million gift, alumna Carol Ann Bennett-Vallès and her husband Jean-Paul Vallès have established the first-ever endowed professorship in art history*

**A** \$1 million gift from alumna Carol Ann Bennett-Vallès and her husband Jean-Paul Vallès has established the first-ever endowed professor position in art history in the College of Arts & Letters.

“We are grateful to Carol Ann and Jean-Paul for a gift that so generously supports the university’s commitment to programmatic growth, enhancement and success in the arts,” says MSU President Samuel L. Stanley Jr., M.D. “It will allow us to support an outstanding art historian for teaching, research and learning befitting our vibrant community at MSU.”

Carol Ann and Jean-Paul both feel strongly that the ability to appreciate and understand art is one of the key elements that does—and always will—separate humans from machines, and they hope that this professorship in art history will help the next generation keep that appreciation and understanding alive.

“In these difficult times, and in a period where various technologies and robots seem to be taking over the world, I believe that art is essential to continue to humanize the world,” Carol Ann says.

Carol Ann Bennett-Vallès earned her B.A. in fine arts from MSU in 1957, and she has fond memories of learning here. Though she specialized in painting and apparel design during her time as a student at MSU, she has spent her life channeling her artistic and creative skills within the world of synchronized swimming. She designed elaborate competition apparel for synchronized swimming teams, whose routines are as much a display of artistry as athleticism. She also developed clinics and programming for coaches and athletes, organized showcase events and served on the U.S. Synchronized Swimming Board of Governors and as a trustee of the U.S. Synchronized Swimming Foundation.

The Carol Ann Bennett-Vallès Professorship in Art History will be housed in the Department of Art, Art History and Design, which will seek an exceptional teacher who will have an impact on nearly every student who pursues a degree in apparel and textile design, art history, graphic design or studio art.

All of these students begin their education with a two-semester introduction to the history of art. In these courses, they develop a broad understanding of art history, from cave painting to contemporary art that will ground them as they build their art, design and academic skills, as well as develop their sense of taste and direction as artists and industry professionals in the visual arts.

“The Bennett-Vallès Professorship is the kind of transformational gift that will help us sustain our commitment to our students’ broad understanding of the history of art,” said Karin Zitzewitz, interim chair of the Department of Art, Art History and Design. “We are so grateful to the Vallès family for their generosity and support.”

**LEARN MORE** about supporting the College of Arts & Letters by contacting Senior Director of Development Christine Radtke at [radtkech@msu.edu](mailto:radtkech@msu.edu) or by calling (517) 353-4725.



Jean-Paul Vallès and Carol Ann Bennett-Vallès

# FOSTERING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

## *\$1M grant from Luce Foundation launches interdisciplinary program on Mekong sustainability*

**A** Michigan State University interdisciplinary team of faculty and staff is working to foster environmental justice in Southeast Asia. The Henry Luce Foundation's Initiative on Southeast Asia, or LuceSEA, is providing \$1 million in funding to help create the Mekong Culture WELL project.

The Lower Mekong River Basin in mainland Southeast Asia is home to 60 million people in five countries—Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam—with globally significant and diverse cultures, environments and economies. Political volatility, climate change and development pressures such as hydropower damming are challenging WELL (water, ecology, land and livelihoods) security in the region.

“We are grateful for the partnership of the Luce Foundation, which will help us expand work that is critical to forging sustainable and just futures in Southeast Asia and beyond,” says MSU President Samuel L. Stanley Jr., M.D. “MSU has long been a leader in seeking to meld science with humanities and the lived experiences of local communities. As in Michigan and around the world, indigenous communities in Southeast Asia have been profoundly affected by ongoing transformations to their environments, yet their critical leadership and perspectives have been overlooked for too long.”

The Mekong Culture WELL project will develop resources to build on and support MSU's interdisciplinary education and research.

“The Mekong River sustains livelihoods and food production across Southeast Asia and, indeed, across the global food system,” says project lead Amanda Flaim, assistant professor in James Madison College and the College of Social Science. “Therefore, political and ecological threats to the life of the Mekong constitute an issue of pressing global concern. Yet, xenophobic and authoritarian political agendas across Southeast Asia and in the U.S. are undermining global efforts to find and pursue solutions while simultaneously exacerbating vast and systemic inequalities. The need for truly collaborative, inclusive and interdisciplinary research, education and outreach is urgent in order to address these dislocations in sustainable and just ways. This project draws strength from our diverse, international partners—including our international faculty and students here at MSU—and we are grateful to the Luce Initiative on Southeast Asia for supporting our collaboration.”

Educational initiatives advanced through the project include research assistantships and internships abroad, curricular enrichment in the form of documentary ethnography workshops and interdisciplinary training, and expanded Southeast Asia-focused courses. Thai and Khmer (Cambodian) language instruction will be added to MSU's existing Vietnamese program.

The project will integrate satellite and local mapping of the Mekong River to determine how climate change and hydropower damming are reshaping communities in downstream regions. It will seek to convey how those communities can forge unique cultural visions of food and environmental justice.

“Stories of resistance, resilience, adaptation, knowledge and cultural connection must also feature prominently in any attempt to accurately convey the complexity and humanity of the people who call the Mekong region home,” Flaim says.

A Mekong Culture WELL website will explore interrelated issues of environmental justice in Southeast Asia and beyond, and serve as a resource for researchers, students, instructors,

policymakers and journalists as well as Nongovernmental Organizations. The content will be available in Thai and Khmer.

The MSU-based team includes: Daniel Ahlquist, James Madison College; Dan Kramer, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and James Madison College; Yadu Pokhrel, College of Engineering; Siddharth Chandra, director of the Asian Studies Center; and Zoë McLaughlin, MSU's South and Southeast Asia librarian. Administrative support is provided by Lynn Lee and Justin Burkett in James Madison College. The project is supported by MSU's Asian Studies Center, International Studies and Programs. The Center for Global Change and Earth Observation leads two NASA-funded projects that the Mekong Culture WELL project will build upon.

In addition to engaging faculty, students, and staff from diverse units within MSU, the project forges collaborations with UNESCO, the Mekong River Commission, documentarians, indigenous activists and scholars at institutions in Southeast Asia and New Zealand. Partners include: scholars Apisom Intralawan, Mae Fah Luang University, Thailand; Chayan Vaddhanaphuti and Chusak Witthayapak, the Regional Center for Social Science and Sustainable Development, Chiang Mai University, Thailand; Sopheak Chann, Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia; Alice Beban, Massey University, New Zealand; and Heather Peters and David Feingold, Ophidian Research Institute, Thailand/U.S. Global documentarians Ore Huiying, of Singapore, and Kalyanee Mam of Cambodia and the U.S., will lead workshops for students and faculty at MSU and abroad. Central to all activities will be input from and ongoing collaborations with indigenous leaders in the region like Chutima ‘Miju’ Morlaeku.

“The Mekong Culture WELL project, led by Dr. Flaim and her team in collaboration with partners in Southeast Asia, will provide much-needed information and insights on the impacts of public and private sector development programs on the environment and peoples of the Mekong region,” says James Madison College Interim Dean Linda Racioppi. “I'm delighted that Madison faculty are at the forefront of work that will inform policy and promote social justice for the area's Indigenous and marginalized peoples.”

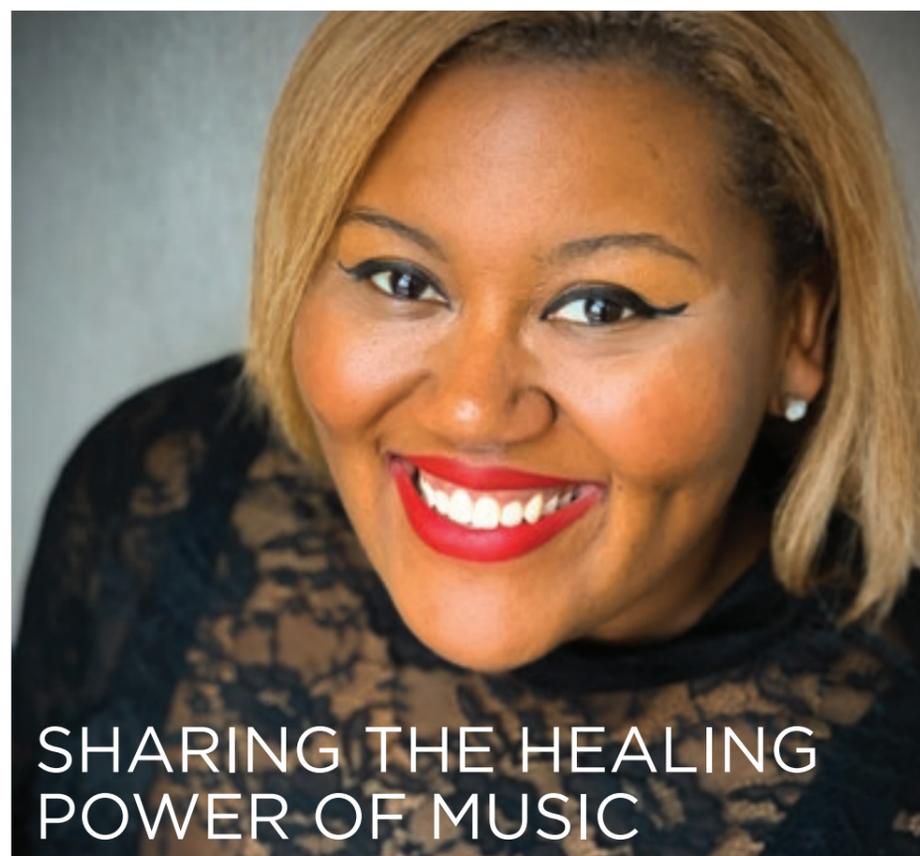
The Henry Luce Foundation seeks to enrich public discourse by promoting innovative scholarship, cultivating new leaders, and fostering international understanding. Established in 1936 by Henry R. Luce, the co-founder and editor-in-chief of Time Inc., the Luce Foundation advances its mission through grantmaking and leadership programs in the fields of Asia, higher education, religion and theology, art and public policy. The goal of LuceSEA is “to strengthen the study of Southeast Asia in American higher education by providing resources for the creation of models, strategies and partnerships that not only bolster existing program structures but also take them in new directions, contributing in the process to both institution and field building.”



The Mekong Culture WELL project will integrate satellite and local mapping of the Mekong River to determine how climate change and hydropower damming are reshaping communities in downstream regions.



## STUDENT Success



### SHARING THE HEALING POWER OF MUSIC

At 32, Coty Raven Morris (M.A., '20) still struggles to make sense of an early life where home was a slew of apartments and guardians who were absent or sick. She remembers places where she fended for herself and covered for the behaviors of caregivers. Chaos was her framework. It wasn't until high school that she found sanctuary through music and embraced a future teaching choirs.

"When I was going through trauma as a kid, school and music became my safe haven. I want to be like the teachers who inspired me," she says.

While at MSU, she took her choral conducting studies out to the community, where her enthusiasm grew an elementary choir program in Waverly Schools from 80 to 200 students.

"Coty is a wonderful musician who literally lights up the room when she steps in front of a choir," says her lead professor at MSU, Dr. David Rayl.

Coty taught choir in Texas for six years before deciding to pursue her master's at MSU. She was familiar with MSU's reputation for music education and choral conducting, and wanted to take her skills to the next level.

Today, she's back in Texas as the newest director of choirs for Crosby High School near Houston.

For the full story, visit [go.msu.edu/healing-music](http://go.msu.edu/healing-music)

## Now you know

Your voice is critical for recruiting and retaining outstanding students and building our national network of Spartans everywhere. All alumni, donors and friends can point with pride to the many strengths of our university.

### MSU faculty awarded grants for COVID-19 research

The National Science Foundation recently awarded three Rapid Response Research, or RAPID, grants—grants given by the NSF for research focusing on urgent or immediate situations—to MSU researchers for work regarding COVID-19.

### Spring 2020 Board of Trustees Awards

The MSU Board of Trustees recognizes students for having the highest scholastic average, a 4.0 GPA at the close of their last semester prior to graduation at MSU. For the spring 2020 semester, 91 students received the Board of Trustees Award.

### MSU broadcast affiliates win excellence awards

MSU's affiliated broadcast programs won multiple awards from the Michigan Association of Broadcasters. WKAR, a PBS and NPR affiliate station and division of MSU's College of Communication Arts and Sciences, earned Michigan Public Television Station of the Year for 2019. In addition to the top award, WKAR won six Best in Category awards and seven Merit awards for work in radio and television broadcasting.

## Upcoming Events

Watch your mail and email for more information on upcoming events. Future in-person events may transition to online. For more details, call (517) 884-1000 or visit [givingto.msu.edu/events](http://givingto.msu.edu/events).

**Conversation with President Stanley for donors and friends in New York, NY**  
November 12, 2020, online

**Winter University**  
February 21, 2021  
Palm Beach, FL

**Precision Health and Its Impact on the World Today for donors and friends in Boston, MA**  
November 19, 2020, online

**Billman Music Pavilion Ribbon Cutting and Open House**  
April 23, 2021  
MSU Campus

**Conversation with MSU Eli and Edythe Broad Museum Director Mónica Ramírez-Montagut and President Stanley for donors and friends of the museum**  
December 2, 2020, online

**President's Alumni Welcome Event in Georgia**  
April 29, 2021  
Atlanta, GA

**Winter University**  
February 20, 2021  
Naples, FL

**Kedzie Reunion Luncheon**  
May 24, 2021  
MSU Campus



## Developments

University Advancement  
Spartan Way  
535 Chestnut Road, Room 300  
East Lansing, MI 48824



## Help from the Spartan Family

When the pandemic shuttered campus in mid-March, Louai Massri, '20, a student in experience architecture and digital humanities, had no trouble transitioning to remote classes, but his work was another story.

“My jobs were affected when campus closed,” he said. “I had fewer work hours, and my source of income for expenses at school and at home was reduced a lot.”

But then Massri’s advisor told him about the College of Arts & Letters’ emergency fund. He applied, and received a scholarship in mid-May, which he used to cover fees from the spring semester. He also used a portion to pay living expenses.

Massri’s life experience, having immigrated with his family to the United States from Syria five years ago, instilled a sense of responsibility to give to others when you can—particularly in cases of economic or social upheaval.

“MSU is like a family, with people who are there to provide support when you need it,” he said. “In the future, if someone needs help, I will definitely help as much as I can. It’s like a circle—you help someone, you receive help, too.”

Emergency funds in nearly every college, as well as the university-wide Support Our Spartans (SOS) Emergency Needs Fund and other community response funds, are still receiving contributions that will help students facing ongoing financial challenges.

**LEARN MORE:** [go.msu.edu/SOS-funds](https://go.msu.edu/SOS-funds)