



Honors Program 2016 Newsletter

MIDWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY
<http://www.mwsu.edu/academics/honors/>

History in the Making Edition

WORD FROM THE NEW DIRECTOR



Sam Watson

I was both excited and humbled by the offer made to me by Provost Betty Stewart a few weeks back to direct the Honors Program at Midwestern State University starting in the 2016 fall semester. I'll use

this space to introduce myself and talk about my initial thoughts for the coming academic year.

I have had experience with different honors programs as an undergraduate student, parent, and faculty member. I was a student in the honors program at the University of Georgia from 1982-1986. As a proud and contributing alumnus, UGA Honors has invited me back over the years to participate in events designed to support current students in their career preparation. My older daughter is a rising senior at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and has been in the honors program there since her freshman year. Honors at GW has a different model than the one used at UGA and has taught me that there is more than one design or way to build a successful and effective honors program. When I first came to

MSU in 1992 as a newly minted, and still pretty green, assistant professor of political science, I regularly taught the honors sections of American government (POLS 1333 and 1433). The students in those courses were a joy and I still stay in contact with several of them as their children approach or pass the same age they were when in my class.

In 1999, I was named the political science department chair at MSU, and in 2003, I became dean of what is now the Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences. This coming year, however, will be my first foray into honors program administration. Hopefully, my service as a department chair and dean will help, as will the fine examples already set by individuals such as Tuck Harvey, Mark Farris, Michael Vandehey, and Betty Stewart in steering MSU Honors. I am fortunate and grateful that Juliana Felts continues to serve the program, and will become assistant director this fall.

My plan this year is to listen and learn from as many conversations and discussions as possible as to how to successfully maintain and advance the program in the coming years. I look forward to meeting with students, faculty, alumni, and friends associated with the program, to attending the annual meeting and activities of the National Collegiate Honors Council and Great Plains Honors Council, and to drawing on the expertise of a number of my friends and colleagues involved in honors program administration from around the country.

Let's get started!

Best, Sam

Redwine Honors Program Graduate Recipient of Rotary Global Grant: Lanier to Study Peace and Conflict in Ireland



KRISTIN LANIER visited Ireland during a mini-vacation when she was in Great Britain with the Midwestern State University Study Abroad program. She fell in love with the Emerald Isle and wanted to go back. Her wish will come true because Kristin is the recipient of a Rotary Global International Scholarship that will send her back to Ireland to earn a master's degree in Peace and Conflict Studies at the Magee College campus of Ulster University in Londonderry, Northern Ireland.

Kristin graduated in May with a degree in theatre from the Lamar D. Fain College of Fine Arts, and she received the President's Medal of Excellence. She didn't know anything about the Rotary Club or the \$30,000 scholarship until Honors Program Coordinator Juliana Felts introduced her to the organization. Felts has been involved in Rotary as an Ambassadorial Alumna since she received a scholarship to study in France in 2008, and has participated in the training program for new scholars almost every year since. She was familiar with the application process.

"Rotary North in Wichita Falls always does a great job letting MSU know when the scholarship applications are open for the Global Scholar program," Felts said. "I had a few Honors students in mind who I thought might be interested. Kristin was at the top of that list – she is an outstanding Honors student, and her previous travels give her an excellent background to succeed as a Global Scholar in Ireland."

One of the first things Felts noticed when she interviewed Kristin about the scholarship was that she was laid back and flexible. "Any time you are going to be living abroad for any amount of time, flexibility is a necessary characteristic," Felts said.

The Global Grant application process is not an easy one. Kristin and Felts met multiple times with Rotary North of Wichita Falls, and each time Kristin made revisions and accepted suggestions the club offered without becoming frustrated with the application process.

The Troubles, the common name for Ireland's 30-year conflict, began in Londonderry, where Kristin will be studying. Protestant unionists wanted to remain part of the United Kingdom but Catholic republican nationalists wanted to become part of the Republic of Ireland. Although the situation has been in a peace-building state since 1998, the process is ongoing. Building peace after conflict involves rebuilding relationships.

"I wanted to be exposed to something new and realized that Northern Ireland would be an ideal place to study different approaches to peace building, what happens when peace comes after conflict, ways to come back from conflict, and how to promote understanding between parties," Kristin said.

Kristin is the oldest sibling in a closely knit family, and has played peacemaker for her younger siblings many times. When she was 13, she traveled to Australia as a student ambassador with the People to People program and is grateful for all she learned about Australian culture. She is still in contact with her Australian "mom." Her key lesson from Australia was that people can find peace through understanding each other.

Since the Australian trip, Kristin has participated in church missions to Houston and Washington, D.C. She has taught Bible classes to 4-year-olds where she learned that the secret to keeping peace among youngsters is to keep them involved. Kristin graduated from the Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing Arts in Dallas. While working on her theatre degree at MSU, she became involved in social justice theater, which gives voice to those who may not be strong enough to speak for themselves and that may have helped Kristin secure her Rotary scholarship. "Kristin's strong passion for using theater as a community outreach tool came across well in the Rotary interview," Felts said.

Kristin will be writing blog posts to keep friends and family updated about her life in Northern Ireland. Although she has been out of the country before, her family is somewhat nervous for her safety in Londonderry this coming year so she is taking self-defense courses. Otherwise, she is ready to start her next journey and encourages anyone with the opportunity to travel abroad to take advantage of it. "Traveling abroad is letting go and opening up to new ways of thinking and seeing that the world is full of diversity," Kristin said.

Kristin has since learned more about Rotary's mission of community service and bettering yourself and the community you serve. She attended Rotary meetings and gave a presentation about community involvement and how that can have positive effects on society. She will have a support team in the Irish Rotary members. She will prepare progress reports and a final report which summarizes her studies, the relationship to her area of focus, and her Rotary and community involvement.

"The Rotary Global Grant will likely open many doors for Kristin, and I look forward to watching her grow through this wonderful opportunity and to hearing her stories when she returns," Felts said. "She has a unique vision for making the world a better place, and I know she will do great things."

Story written by Kathy Floyd ('93) and originally published by MSU Office of Marketing and Public Information

History of MSU Digitized

Several MSU librarians worked hard to create a digital history of MSU, and the unveiling of the presentations took place February 9, 2016. As part of our "History in the Making" edition, we wanted to be sure Honors Program alumni are aware of the project. You can access an online version of the presentation by following the link included in the story below. We hope many of you enjoy browsing some of the old stories and pictures—history really is in the making at MSU!



Cortny Bates, Special Collections Librarian/Associate University Librarian, and Clara Latham, University Librarian, demonstrate to Peter Fields, English Associate Professor, and Keith Lamb, Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, how the new MSU History Display in the second floor of Moffett Library works, Feb. 9. Photo by Rachel Johnson

Associate University Librarian for Technical Services Cortny Bates unveiled the digital display of MSU history on the second floor of Moffett Library on Feb. 9. She presented a new touch-screen display to faculty, students and alumni that features the pictures that used to hang on the wall by the special collections office, as well as articles from the *Wai-Kun* and *The Wichitan*.

"We went through all of the old *Wai-Kuns* and *Wichitans* from the beginning of MSU, and then scanned articles and pictures that jumped out at us," Bates said at the reception that also provided finger foods and drinks.

Special Collections Assistant Stacy Johnson said celebrating [the display] is hugely important for the spirit of the school.

"If you understand the history of your school, you get a better sense of place and where you are," Johnson said.

There are seven presentations with 50-100 pictures each. Bates and Johnson scanned every piece of history and compiled the presentations on the online presentation tool Prezi.

"We started it last May and it took us until August or September to get everything scanned," Johnson said. "Then it took us a couple months to put the Prezis together, and Cortny did a lot of that work."

About 50 people attended the unveiling including MSU President Suzanne Shipley. She said it is smart to approach library work this way because digitization is the future. "This preserves the history, organizes it, and makes it accessible," Shipley said.

Faculty, alumni and about 15 students attended the reception and viewed the display as well.

"I used the archives a lot last semester as a part of a project I was doing with the museum, and I was curious to see changes they made in the last few months," history senior Alex Van Allen said.

Thomas Shaw, a music education major, attended MSU when the first marching band started in 1946. "It's good that they're preserving things because things do fade," Shaw said.

Bates and Johnson hope people will get to look at the display and experience it even if they don't want to go through the whole presentation. And people who don't want to visit the library in person can view the presentations on the [Moffett Library website](#).

"Students don't even have to come in the library to see it," Bates said. "But it's a nice way to come and take a study break and maybe see some funny pictures."

Story written by Emily Carroll and originally published in The Wichitan.

Honors Graduates 2015

Spring 2015

Heather Baker
Emily Baudot
Mika Cluley
Joseph Hadwal

Emily Herzog
Anne Lam
Cara Mack
Robby Press
Ashele Remy

Danielle Schwertner
Clint Wagoner

Fall 2015

Gerald Sampson

Faculty Highlight



Our faculty highlight this year is on MSU President **Suzanne Shipley**. She set aside a few minutes to visit with us about her past experience as an Honors Program Director, as well as how she sees the Redwine Honors Program fitting into MSU's future.

"When I became director of the Honors Program at Cincinnati, the program was actually limited to students in the College of Arts and Sciences. After attending regional and national honors conferences, I quickly realized that the programs that were really thriving were university-wide, and I immediately began working to expand the Cincinnati Honors

Program." Shipley also worked to make the program flexible to help students graduate with the Honors distinction. One example is the implementation of contracting courses for Honors credit, which allows students to participate in an additional project with the professor of a non-honors course to receive honors credit.

Shipley told us her experience as the Honors Program director at the University of Cincinnati was the "turning point" of her career. "I was noticed by the provost and the president during my time as Honors Program director. I was nominated as an American Council on Education fellow, which allowed me to work with a university president and learn the role of the president's position."

When asked about her favorite part of working in Honors, Shipley responded that Honors allowed her to "begin to understand the whole student. Seeing the development of the whole person was my favorite aspect of Honors. I could see the students' personal progress and their leadership progress, and it changed my perspective to focus on student life. Honors education is aligned not only with the academic side, but also with the personal side, and I could see a clear pathway for students. I also really enjoyed seeing the tremendous impact from staff members who work with Honors students."

Shipley values most the individualization of education in Honors. She appreciates that students in Honors have their own intellectual curiosity. She also talked about what distinguishes Honors education from other university coursework. "It is not that it [Honors education] is elitist. It rather serves both ends of the spectrum. We need opportunities for those who are already ahead. Honors provides a pathway not for elitism, but for balance."

Shipley sees Honors students as providing an example for their peers. "The Honors Program aligns perfectly with the university goals of promoting undergraduate research. I love to see the synergy between undergraduate research and Honors students. The quality example set in Honors is important for their peers. Honors students are ambassadors for others in all of their classes."

If Shipley could give any words of advice to current MSU Honors students, she would encourage them to "take advantage of the interest your professors have in you. Most professors are teaching Honors courses because they love students. It is a rare opportunity for you to have such an intense, individualized experience, so take advantage of it. Get to know the subject of the course through the professor's eyes; talk to your professors and get to know them." In addition, Shipley told us, "If I could implement one thing on campus—the one thing I wish for any student, Honors or not, is an international experience. There is no better time in life than now to study in a foreign culture."

When asked to tell us the best part of her transition to the role of MSU President, Shipley responded, "Knowing how to do the job. It is delightful to walk in and not be baffled, and it allows you to make progress quickly. I had my first six months mapped out before I arrived here. Also, another layer I did not anticipate was that I know Texas. I go to dinners here, and people are fixing the same meals my mother used to fix."

Brains and Brawn

Luke Allen- Cycling

Alexis Arrieta- Tennis

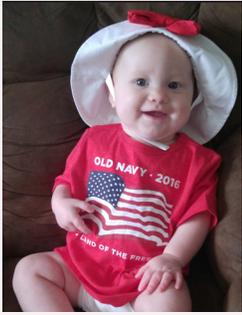
Lizzie Navarette- Soccer

Kassidy Oberhelman- Volleyball

Simon Ospina- Golf

Jennifer Sissel- Basketball

STAFF UPDATE



Cathy is looking forward to spending time with Tinley!

In addition to Watson becoming our new Honors Program Director, we have a few additional staff updates this year:

Honors Program Secretary Cathy Griffin is retiring in August of this year. She is a beloved member of the Honors staff, and we will miss her greatly. Students love stopping by to visit her, and we will all miss her jokes, her kind way of helping anyone who stops by the office, and her tireless efforts in working to keep the Honors Program running smoothly. Cathy plans to spend a lot of time snuggling with her great-niece Tinley (pictured)! Enjoy every moment of your retirement, Cathy—you deserve to kick your feet up and relax! We will miss you!

Juliana Felts will continue to serve the Honors Program. Her title will change to assistant director in fall 2016, and she is excited to begin yet another adventure in Honors. She is looking forward to Dr. Watson becoming director and to having a great team to help grow and advance the program. Let's continue making history in Honors!

Dr. Hoffman Retires from MSU

DR. TOM HOFFMAN retired from MSU after 48 years. He is well-known and loved by all who worked with him or had him as a professor. He is most popular and famous among Honors students for his dramalogues, a teaching technique created and perfected by Hoffman. He appeared in the Honors Introductory Seminar most recently as various characters from the novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Ken Kesey. Honors students had the pleasure of meeting such characters as Randle McMurphy, Nurse Ratched, and Doctor Spivey. Hoffman is an incredible instructor, and he will be greatly missed at MSU.



Dr. Hoffman reads from a plaque given to him on behalf of the university at the retirement reception for him and Dr. Linda Hollabaugh in the second floor atrium of Prothro-Yeager Hall on April 18. Photo by Kayla White.

After his official retirement Aug. 31, Hoffman may retire to North Carolina, where a daughter and grandchildren reside.

"I plan to be active in the community of Wichita Falls after retirement," Hoffman said. "I won't know until September if I'm moving to North Carolina, so until then, I'm going to continue to be active with Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Backdoor Theatre, and Wichita Falls Theatre."

Betty Carroll, English instructor, was a student of Hoffman's some 25 years ago and spoke highly of his involvement with the school, in addition to his other interests.

"He's the epitome of what a true teacher is," Carroll said. "I try and bring a piece of him into the classroom every day. There isn't a teacher nearby that he hasn't touched, and people have called me asking for just one more opportunity to be in his classroom."

Hoffman began working at the school in 1968, after searching for a teaching job across the state. He first taught American drama and dramatic literature, but soon, his classes began to broaden, and more and more students came to his classes.

"We thought we would be here two years, and then here we are 48 years later," Hoffman said. "I love this school, and I especially love the caliber of students. I got the feeling that the school offers variety to those who want a good schooling experience."

Hoffman's participation in campus life is impressive; he served as adviser to the literary and visual arts magazine, *Voices*, for more than 25 years, he was a Board of Directors member for six years, and the President of the Texas Association of College Teachers from 1997 to 1999.

A class with Hoffman proved to be interesting, as he often literally brought characters to life by dressing up in costumes and proceeding to teach class. As his retirement nears, however, Hoffman shows some reluctance to leave.

"I love what I'm doing," he said, "you can't stop a teacher from being a teacher."

Story written by Lane Riggs and originally published in The Wichitan.

Research Highlights from Current Students



Dr. Jeremy Duff

The Tenth Annual Honors Program Symposium was held on Saturday, April 2, 2016. Following the annual tradition, the Honors Student Committee organized and implemented the event. Our faculty speakers this year were **Dr. Jeremy Duff** and **Dr. Jeff Stambaugh**, and they discussed the 2016 presidential platforms. The student presentations from April 2016 are as follows:



Brooke Benson

Alfred Kinsey: A Pioneer of Sex Research — **Brooke Benson**

Alfred Kinsey had a passion for gall wasp research with an emphasis on taxonomy and individualistic variation. As a Harvard graduate, he began his extensive studies at Indiana State University and invested 20 years of his career to his gall wasp research. In 1938, Kinsey took a different approach toward individuality. He started to collect histories of students' sexual lives, through surveys and interviews, to unveil the truth of sex in the 20th century. Kinsey and his team released two breakthrough volumes, known as the "Kinsey Reports" that reported the findings of their research. This included the notorious "Heterosexual-Homosexual Rating Scale." To progress their research, the Institute of Sex Research was founded in 1947. Kinsey's research on sexuality has continually influenced the Sexual Revolution, and his work has allowed for the hope that people would find understanding in their own sexuality.



Shayla Eaklor

Fad Diets: Sacrificing Quality for Convenience — **Shayla Eaklor**

The objective of this research paper is to inform people of the dangers associated with popular diets, commonly known as fad diets. Fad diets are typically short term diets with the main objective being to lose weight. Due to the overwhelming obsession with body image and speed in today's society, diets that promise fast weight loss are enticing, especially to women considering the extra strain placed on their appearance. Additionally, promoters of said diets seduce women with success stories, celebrity endorsement, and dieting myths. Naturally, the average person is intrigued and tries out the diet. However, these diets are unhealthy and hard to stick to because most are highly restrictive and depend on ketosis. Ketosis occurs when the body is in a starved state and is unhealthy if it is utilized as a way to burn off those extra pounds. In addition, it is not an effective way of weight loss because once the dieter returns to their normal eating habits, the body will prepare for another state of starvation and deposit fat faster than before. This is only *one* of the *many* unhealthy, impractical designs in most fad diets. There are plenty of other healthy, effective forms of weight loss that not only allow one to lose weight but also allow them to get fit and keep the weight off. In truth, there is no healthy way to lose weight "fast" and keep the weight off.

The Metaphorical Ape: A Crisis of Identity and Belonging in Franz Kafka's A Report to an Academy — **Jonathan Henderson**

Written in 1917, Franz Kafka's *A Report to an Academy* is a short story about Red Peter (Rotpeter in some versions), an ape who is taken from the Gold Coast and brought by force to live among humans. Through sheer force of will and the uncanny ability for learning and application uncommon among his kind, Red Peter begins to show characteristics and abilities normally reserved for humans, which culminates in his advancement to something completely different. Kafka is often labeled an absurdist for his wild and outrageous stories, which often seem to lead nowhere at all, or are so removed from reality they are hardly believable. However, in *A Report to an Academy*, like many of his other works, one has to search for the deeper purpose in his art and do away with assumptions of the absurd. This presentation will explore the veiled purpose and the myriad meanings in this story by exploring issues of identity and community in this and other works of Franz Kafka and emphasize these issues' importance today.

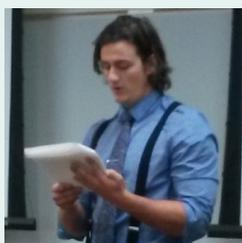
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Lindsey Johnson

You Can Keep It — Lindsey Johnson

The aim of my research was to uncover what has happened to the insured since The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has been enacted. I specifically want to take a critical look at President Obama's quote, "If you like your health plan, you can keep your health plan." I hope to uncover how true his claims were. To uncover the truth of President Obama's claim, I've gone over literature to find out different stories of previously insured individuals being forced to change their health plans or even losing their health plans and what happened to force the change. By reviewing the literature, I've discovered that a lot of employers can be credited for individuals losing their health plans as they drop spousal coverage. And by going over insurance companies' pages, I noticed that there are not many plans that were offered before ACA had been enacted that are available now. In fact, there are not any. The requirements on insurance companies to change their coverage have resulted in a complete revision of available health coverage. If employers providing coverage are changing who will receive coverage under them and insurance companies are no longer offering the plans they did prior to ACA, then President Obama's quote is not true. Individuals who liked their health plan did not get to keep it. In fact, very few people kept their health plans.



Cody O'Donnell

Mitochondria's Endosymbiotic Origin and Research Implications — Cody O'Donnell

This paper reviews mitochondria endosymbiosis and the lineage of mitochondria to determine their closest living relative. Mitochondria derived from symbiotic alpha-proteobacteria that became dependent on a host cell. Genomes sequencing of the primitive mitochondria, *Reclinomonas americana*, were used to determine *Rickettsia prowazekii* as the closest mitochondria relative. This discovery helps to understand the lineage of mitochondria origin and reveals information controversial to the serial endosymbiotic theory. Research into the genomes of mitochondria's closest relative provide insight into their origin, as well as offers medical benefits as many are pathogen causing intercellular parasites including *Rickettsia prowazekii*.

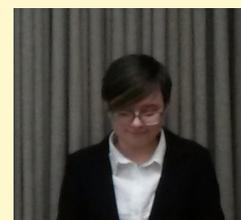


Suprena Poleon

Stimuli-responsive Nanoparticles for Targeting the Tumor Microenvironment — Suprena Poleon

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In recent years, the gross number of tumor incidents have prompted scientists to explore the field of nanomedicine. The nanoparticle design has provided nanomedicine with a strategy to potentially overcome the heterogeneity problem of solid tumors. The nanoparticles are stimuli-responsive and target the microenvironment of the tumor through active and passive targeting mechanisms. The engineering of the nanoparticles allows for them to only become activated by the low pH and low O₂ of the tumor tissues. They navigate the body's vascular system at normal physiological processes, then dock at the tumor sites, and finally are activated by the microenvironment of the tumor. This ability has the potential to assist in accelerated drug release at the target site, enhanced cellular binding and internalization, improved drug diffusion, and tumor penetration. The enhanced design and capabilities of these engineered nanoparticles allow for the potential eradication of tumors, and possibly the evasion of invasive surgery and some of the physiological side effects of tumor drugs.



Alicia Ward

Art on Paper: Exhibit Research — Alicia Ward

The Wichita Falls Museum of Art's upcoming museum exhibit, proposed and co-curated by Dr. Todd Giles, Assistant Professor of English, is an exploration of the connection between Post-WWII avant-garde lithographic art and broadside poetry of the same era. Artists represented in the exhibition will include Robert Rauschenberg, Jackson Pollock, Jim Dine, Lee Krasner and others; poets will include, among others, Philip Whalen, Gregory Corso, Frank O'Hara, Gary Snyder, and Denise Levertov. I've been hired to assist Giles in his research into the background of the artists and their works. My research will attempt to contextualize those artists and poets, and one of my tasks is to help write the labels for the art and broadside poetry displayed in the exhibit. This presentation will be over the information collected so far and the process of preparing museum labels. The exhibit will open in Fall 2016.

Partners in the Parks

“Partners in the Parks projects at national parks across the country offer unique opportunities for collegiate honors students and faculty to visit areas of the American landscape noted for their beauty, significance and lasting value. Our first project, at Bryce Canyon National Park, was organized in 2007 as a 2016 Centennial Initiative Program with Cedar Breaks National Monument as the sponsoring park unit. Since then we have sponsored 55 projects at 37 different parks for over 500 student participants. Seminars led by university faculty and park personnel will include historical, scientific, cultural, and other important areas unique to a given park. Projects... also take advantage of exciting recreational opportunities in the parks to broaden participant’s understanding of the overall value of national parks to our country and its citizens.”- *description from the NCHC website: nchchonors.org/partners-in-the-parks/*

For the first time, students in the Redwine Honors Program participated in the national program Partners in the Park: Outdoor Experiential Education for Students. This program is sponsored by the National Collegiate Honors Council, and Redwine Honors students Camille Khan and Brooke Benson were awarded scholarships from the Honors Program to attend. Here are some snapshots of their experiences:

Honors student **CAMILLE KHAN** traveled to Harper’s Ferry National Park. This was her first hiking/backpacking trip, and she also went white water rafting for the first time. Camille described to us how she was exposed to the culture as well as the history surrounding the area, and she also learned information about the National Park Service, which celebrates its 100th birthday this year! When asked to describe her experience, Camille replied, “One of the best parts of my trip were the bonds I fostered with the people in this group. There were 11 students, two supervisors, as well as many guests who helped enhance the experience. It was pretty amazing to form such tight bonds for only spending a week with these people. The weather was pretty awful for a few days, but that did not stop us from continuing our hike. We all had a great time and shared many laughs. I was also given the first ‘trail name.’ Trail names are used to identify people while they are hiking the trails. The trail name I was presented with was ‘Little Shiver’ because on our first night on the trail, I could not stop shivering because of the rain and cold weather. I kept having to stand by a fire so that I wouldn’t get sick. That experience may seem bad, but it was one of the best nights of the trip. It was awesome to learn about where various people came from as well as the type of programs they come from. I continue to talk to numerous people from this group! I am so thankful for the opportunity the Honors Program gave me to go on this trip. It was an experience that I will never forget! Thank you so much!”

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With Jeff Marion, author of *Leave No Trace*



White water rafting



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Honors student **BROOKE BENSON** traveled to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. Brooke explained to us that the idea of what she imagined Hawaii to be like was not an accurate vision of the place. She shared a description of some of the hikes they went on as part of the learning experience: "I have a picture of this big crater from our first hike of the trip. When we arrived we thought we would just be hiking on the trails that go around it, but when our park ranger showed up, he informed us that we would be walking into and on the crater. We also hiked down to a beach that took us about 10 miles to get down to. This was on our overnight hike. We were the only ones camping on that beach because not many people wanted to hike the 10 miles out in the sun, with no shade, on lava terrain. Once we arrived, I realized the long hike was worth it to be at that beach. I have been to Mexico five times and to Belize once, but nothing compared to having a paradise beach all to yourself, and the snorkeling was the best I have ever done. We did have a park ranger hike down and back up with us. We also saw an active crater where the gases were lit up because it's reflecting the light of the lava. They have an overlook available, and every night, we would go and see the lava for just a few minutes (because it was so cold at that spot). One night that we went, the lava had actually risen higher than all the previous nights and we got to see some lava shooting up a bit."

Brooke shared her favorite part of the trip with us as well: "It was amazing to actually see Hawaii for myself, and it was really neat that I got to have that experience with 12 other people that I had never met before. I loved learning about each of their lives and colleges. I loved how culture was involved with everything we talked about and everywhere we went. My absolute favorite thing about the whole trip was that we didn't get a typical 'tourist' experience. I feel like we got to experience what Hawaii truly is and much about the culture and legends. I never thought I would be able to say that I backpacked all across Hawaii National Park. Thanks for helping me go on this trip! It was so much fun, and the best trip I have ever been on in my life."

Honors Fun Facts from 2016

103 total students in the Honors Program

75 students from Texas
1 student from Florida
1 student from Illinois
2 students from Oklahoma
1 student from Virginia
1 student from Washington

22 International Students:
1 from Antigua
2 from Germany
3 from Dominica
5 from Grenada
1 from Gambia
1 from Italy
1 from St. Lucia

1 from Lebanon
1 from Mexico
1 from The Netherlands
3 from Nigeria
1 from Pakistan
1 from Sri Lanka



Featured Alumnus

Our featured alumnus this year is **ROGER DISEKER**. He graduated with his Bachelor of Arts from MSU as a double major in english and political science with a minor in economics in 1989. He and his wife, Jane Elizabeth Diseker, both graduated from the University of Virginia Law in 1993. Roger is also the “extraordinarily proud father” of Jack Diseker (Oklahoma University National Honors Program 2020) and Grace Diseker (Nolan Catholic High-Forth Worth 2018). Roger was

involved with the MSU Honors Program from 1985 through 1989, and he shared some of his best memories with us:

“Then, the Honors Program focused on introductory courses for freshmen and sophomores, and then moved toward directed research during upper-class years. I was involved as a student in the program all four years, and served as the student representative on the Honors Program Advisory Committee my junior and senior years at Midwestern State.

I have many fond memories from the Honors Program. There were many dedicated and talented professors who taught our lower level classes. Just as important to me were the great friends I had in those classes. One of my fondest memories was being present when one of my friends (Dr. Robert Patterson) fell head over heels in love with another friend (Dr. Debbie Cook–Patterson). We were in Dr. Mike Flavin’s freshman political science class. Dr. Flavin was discussing governmental authority to regulate harmful behavior. In his inimitable way, Dr. Flavin was encouraging us to truly think about the limits of governmental authority by irritating and goading us. The class readily agreed with Dr. Flavin that pornography was a “bad” thing or, in Dr. Flavin’s words, “a societal ill that should be subject to governmental regulation.” Having laid the trap for his eager freshmen, Dr. Flavin then countered that overeating sweets was also bad, so chocolate should be similarly regulated.

After some brief general debate, Debbie Cook settled the issue when she raised her hand and said, ‘Dr. Flavin, you can’t compare sex with *chocolate*.’ The class simply broke into laughter. As I was giggling, I caught Rob Patterson’s expression. He was staring at Debbie with enormous puppy dog eyes. I swear I could hear angels singing and playing harps in the background as that boy simply fell madly in love with that girl. And because good things happen to good people, they are living happily ever after with their two amazing kids in Florida.

I had many other great experiences in the Honors Program (many of which sound like “humble brags” now). My honors thesis I wrote under Dr. Flavin won a prize at the Alpha Chi Omega national convention in New Orleans and was published in its periodical, *The Recorder*. Being in the Honors Program led me to joining the MSU College Bowl team that finished second in our region in 1989, losing to Rice in the finals (but we crushed the University of Texas team along the way). I fondly remember Dr. Jeff Campbell kicking off a class on American Life and Literature by walking in with an old ‘school issue’ 45 RPM record player, opening it on his desk, and playing John Mellancamp’s ‘Little Pink Houses’ to start the discussion of the role of the American Dream in current literature.

MSU was deeply important to me. I think my time there is summed up in that story about how ‘true love’ sprang from a Socratic discussion about the limits of

governmental authority that was broken up by the edict that ‘You can’t compare sex and *chocolate*!’ First, it’s simply a funny and happy story, and all stories are important. Second, it sums up my college experience at MSU – great teachers and friends.”

When asked what his favorite Honors course was, Roger replied, “Jim Hoggard’s two semesters of Freshman Rhetoric and Composition. ‘Cluttered writing is a reflection of cluttered thinking’ is what I believe he used to preach to us. I have tried to pass that on to my two children while helping with homework. I also try to teach it to young lawyers at my firm. I confess that I am not as gifted a teacher as Professor Hoggard, but fortunately, my children are much smarter and better students than I was.”

Roger also explained how the Honors Program prepared him for leaving MSU. He said, “First, the Program helped me actually leave. Dr. Ernest Dover was my pre-law advisor. When I told him I was applying only to the University of Texas School of Law, he looked over his glasses at me and said, ‘The world doesn’t end at the Red River’ and handed me a stack of law school catalogs. I ended up at the University of Virginia School of Law and had an amazing three years that ended with my wife and I graduating on a Sunday, getting married on Tuesday, and arriving in Texas on Saturday. The world may not end at the Red River, but the pull of home can be strong.”

Roger summed up his comments by adding, “I think I’ve probably bored your readers enough. I will add that I am eternally grateful to the extraordinary faculty at Midwestern State (both in and out of the Honors Program) for guiding me on an educational path that I started at Hirschi High and ended at a mythical “Top Ten” national law school (University of Virginia, ‘93). Midwestern was, to me, a great place. While it saddened me to realize while I was writing this that most of the professors with whom I studied are retired, and some even deceased, I proudly display my diploma in my office and talk up the school at every chance.

My only regret from four years at MSU was never being able to find a way into the bell tower of the Hardin Building. I had no business getting up there, but that did not stop me (and some unnamed co-conspirators) from trying.”

Brown Bag Events Transformed to RED Talks

Honors students voted to rename the Honors Brown Bag events we plan each semester. The original events were always planned at noon, and the name “Brown Bag” was chosen because it was understood students could bring along a “brown bag” lunch to the events. As students’ schedules became more hectic each year, the program staff began organizing the events at a variety of times in order to accommodate everyone’s busy lives. However, the old name stuck, and the events have been Brown Bags ever since. Students voted in fall 2015 to change that, and the new name RED Talks was adopted as a play on the *Redwine* Honors Program and the famous TED Talks. The “RED” stands for Redwine Educational Discussion. The Honors Program staff continues to plan 5-7 events per semester, and students choose at least one to attend. Some of our most recent popular events are Game Night with Dr. Michael Vandehey, lectures on various topics such as Relaxation Techniques with Dr. Pamela Midgett and How Language Shapes Our Thoughts by Dr. Dave Rankin, and Trivia Night hosted by Honors Program alumnus Clint Wagoner.

A few new types of RED Talks were organized in Spring 2016. Dr. Magaly Rincon-Zachary hosted an event titled “Festival of Ideas.” Student who attended were split into groups and given a “problem” to solve. They then had to come up with a plan to figure out a solution to the scenario. This first session’s topic involved creating a sustainable plan to allow for life on Mars.

Students also elected to host a fundraiser event for one of their fellow Honors students. Caleb Nichols, a management major in the Honors Program, is in need of a heart transplant. Students opted to host a “Heart Party” for Caleb to help raise funds for his medical costs. Honors students, faculty, and staff came out to support Caleb at this RED Talk. Caleb was able to share an update on his condition (he is currently medically stable), and students played a variety of games, enjoyed snacks, and had a good time visiting with Honors faculty. More than \$400 was raised for Caleb at the event.



MSU Alumni Association Outstanding Honors Program Students

<i>Cody Cole</i>1994	<i>Jeffrey (Mark) Fleming</i>2001	<i>Liam Guthrie</i>2010
<i>Chandra Rodgers</i>1994	<i>Nyian Farrell</i>2002	<i>Ashley Gravelle</i> 2011
<i>Melissa Miller</i>1995	<i>Shonna Diggs</i>2003	<i>Kyle Christian</i>2012
<i>Paul (Andrew) Fleming</i>1995	<i>Adam McMahan</i>2004	<i>Kistel Hazel</i>2013
<i>Jamie Benefield</i>1996	<i>Marie Ibarra</i>2005	<i>Emily Baudot</i>2014
<i>Jason Lawrence</i>1997	<i>Laura Rachael Kair</i>2006	<i>Joseph Hadwal</i>2015
<i>Paul Mussachio</i>1998	<i>Erin Kathleen Short</i>2007	<i>Megan Piehler</i>2016
<i>Danielle Roney</i>1999	<i>Jonathan Abel</i>2008	
<i>Jennifer Veitenheimer</i>2000	<i>Chelsea Humphrey</i>2009	

Making History with Honors Activities

Honors students voted to make changes to the activity requirements in the Honors Program this year. In the past students were required to attend one event in each of the following categories: athletic, fine art, lecture, multicultural, and they were required to attend two Honors Brown Bags.

The Honors Student Committee proposed a tiered/point system for tracking student activities beginning in Fall 2015. This system assigns points to each event, with fewer points being given to consecutive events within the same category. The events for each category are weighted as depicted in the chart below:

Honors Requirements Point Distribution					
	Fine Art	Athletic	Multicultural	Lecture	Honors
1st Event	5	5	5	5	5
2nd Event	3	3	3	3	3
3rd Event	2	2	2	2	2

Students need to acquire at least 25 points each semester, in addition to attending one RED Talk (formerly Brown Bag) per semester. Points may be acquired through attending one of each activity or any combination of activities with a maximum of 3 per category. In addition to the new distribution system, students added an honors event category. Students love the flexibility of the new system as they are allowed to choose what events they wish to participate in, and the additional honors event requirement has increased student involvement in the honors program.

HONORS STUDENT COMMITTEE OFFICERS SPRING 2016

Travis Baumann, Chair
Lindsey Johnson, Vice Chair
Andrea Mendoza Lespron, Senator
Beth Russell, Secretary
Luke Saunders, Treasurer

DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

SEND US AN E-MAIL!

We would love to hear from more alumni at Honors@mwsu.edu! We hope many of you will continue to keep in touch with us, and we look forward to sharing your stories in the future.