

# DEVELOPMENTS

a publication for donors and friends of Michigan State University



## Secchia Stadium: a tribute to a dedicated Spartan

When MSU's new softball facility is completed in 2011 its name will honor a long-time and significant advocate for Michigan State University. In recognition of a \$1 million gift from alumnus Ambassador Peter F. Secchia, the MSU Board of Trustees recently voted unanimously to approve the naming of the facility — Secchia Stadium.

"This is a truly meaningful gift from Peter and Joan Secchia, for it signifies the worthiness of all of our intercollegiate programs at MSU. We are so grateful for Peter's and his family's continued, outstanding leadership in support of the university," said MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon.

Chairman emeritus of Universal Forest Products and former ambassador to Italy, Peter Secchia ('62, Business) has been a steadfast champion for Michigan State University for nearly five decades.

As one of the people most responsible for helping MSU bring its College of Human Medicine to Grand Rapids, Ambassador Secchia provided the lead gift for the college's new headquarters there, now known as the Secchia Center. He holds a two-inch binder of facts, maps and letters that he compiled more than a decade ago to make the case for the initiative. Yet, college officials will attest that the binder does not do justice to his tireless devotion to the project, where his diplomacy

skills and commitment were essential to marry divergent partners.

His leadership and enthusiasm on behalf of Michigan State has routinely moved others to action. He served on the President's Campaign Cabinet for The Campaign for MSU. Together with his wife Joan, he has hosted dozens of university events and he has chaired several campus building projects.

For example, he co-chaired the fundraising effort to construct the Clara Bell Smith Student-Athlete Academic Support Center, the academic resource center created with a lead gift from Steve Smith in honor of his mother and utilized by MSU's student-athletes. He was quietly behind the scenes in establishing the popular and successful Steve Smith Golf Outings that support scholarships

and programs for Spartan student-athletes each year.

The stadium bearing the Secchia name will seat 1,100 at Old College Field and is scheduled to be completed for the 2011 season.

"We are so appreciative of Peter and Joan helping add another jewel to the wonderful Old College Field complex," said MSU Director of Athletics Mark Hollis.

"Peter has meant so much to the university and to the advancement of our intercollegiate athletics program."



Peter F. Secchia.



MSU's new softball facility will be named Secchia Stadium in recognition of a \$1 million gift from alumnus Ambassador Peter F. Secchia.

## Spartan Scholarship Challenge: A match for students and donors



Freshman Shanice Akoto received the William A. and Janice D. Simpson Spartan Scholarship to study in the Lyman Briggs College.

As a high achiever who loves science and has her eye on medical school, Columbus, Ohio resident Shanice Akota saw MSU as a perfect fit. But, as big sister to three younger siblings all being raised by a single mom, the last thing she wanted was to burden her family.

How she would afford MSU had remained a looming question until late in June when she learned she would receive the newly created William A. and Janice D. Simpson Spartan Scholarship, which preferences students in Lyman Briggs College.

Shanice is one of nearly two dozen MSU freshmen who were the first to receive scholarships as part of the Spartan Scholarship Challenge. Since its inception one year ago, the challenge has raised more than \$2 million

and has created 62 new endowed scholarships, helping undergraduate students with financial need.

Shanice has always set her sights high. She graduated from high school with honors; was the president of her school's National Honor Society and its orchestra; was active each year in drama, choir and Spanish Club; and also headed a charity organization to help children in Uganda. She was admitted to MSU's Lyman Briggs College and hopes to become fluent in Spanish through MSU's study abroad program.

"I really want to be successful at MSU and the scholarship definitely will help me accomplish my goals," said Shanice. "I hope I will be able to make a difference in the world."

To help donors stretch their dollars and their support for undergraduate scholarships, the Spartan

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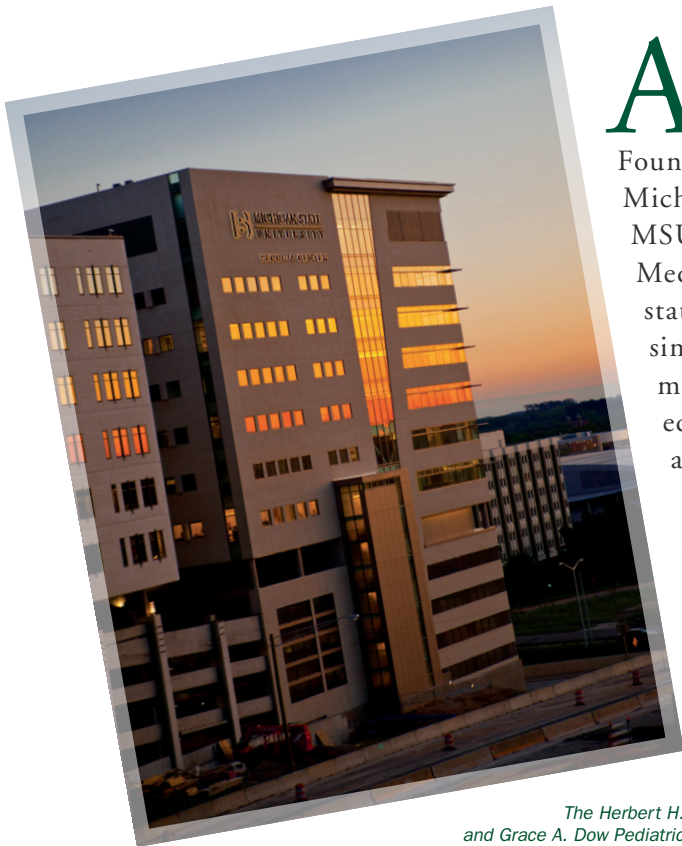


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# Dow Foundation names MSU College of Human Medicine Pediatric Simulation Center



The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Pediatric Simulation Center within the MSU College of Human Medicine's new headquarters, Secchia Center, will incorporate cutting-edge technology.

A \$1 million gift from the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation of Midland, Michigan, will enable the MSU College of Human Medicine to create a state-of-the-art pediatric simulation center using the most advanced medical education technology available.

"Our contribution goes beyond a monetary gift," said Margaret Ann Riecker, president, the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation. "Our foundation's support will empower MSU to provide the most advanced innovative pediatric medical education

to future physicians who will ultimately care for our babies and young children in Michigan."

Medical simulation is an advancing field of medical training that incorporates computerized full-body physiological "manikins" in addition to simulated patients, the more familiar role-playing actors who are trained to replicate medical conditions and the behaviors of patients.

The gift from the foundation will establish and name the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation Pediatric Simulation Center and create the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation Endowed Fund for Pediatric Training to support programming within the center.

"Because pediatric training is one of the most challenging areas in medicine, the establishment of this core asset allows MSU to deliver the

highest quality medical education across the state of Michigan," said Marsha D. Rappley, M.D., dean of the college.

MSU College of Human Medicine is poised to set the standard for medical trainee simulation opportunities that cover the life span of patients. The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation Pediatric Simulation Center will join the Harry A. and Margaret D. Towsley Foundation Geriatric Simulation Center in the college's new headquarters at the Secchia Center in Grand Rapids. In addition, the college will have a surgical simulation suite equipped by Skytron.

For more information on making a gift to the College of Human Medicine, contact Senior Director of Development Susan Lane at (616) 234-2614 or by e-mail at [lanes@msu.edu](mailto:lanes@msu.edu).

## Idema Atrium celebrated

Friends and family of Bea and the late Bill Idema recently enjoyed an informal hors d'oeuvres reception to celebrate the dedication of the Bill and Bea Idema Atrium at the Secchia Center, the new home of the MSU College of Human Medicine. President Lou Anna K. Simon presented Bea Idema with an MSU memento following a special unveiling by MSU CHM students of the name atrium plate in the Idema's honor.



At the dedication event, MSU College of Human Medicine students unveiled the atrium's name plate honoring lead donors Bea and the late Bill Idema.

President Lou Anna K. Simon presented Bea Idema with a memento.

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To remember MSU as a charitable beneficiary in your will, personal trust or retirement plan, it is important to do so accurately. The correct reference is: Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan and the federal tax identification number 38-6005984. To explore how you might remember MSU, please contact the Office of Gift Planning at (800) 432-4678 or (517) 884-1000. If your estate/retirement plan includes MSU as a beneficiary, we encourage you to contact us to accurately record your intent and include you in the appropriate donor recognition group.

## Spartan Scholarship Challenge

Continued from page 1



Freshman Jordan Desrochers was the recipient of the Jake and Maxine Ferris Spartan Scholarship which preferences students in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

This means that instead of providing the usual minimum of \$30,000 required to create a named scholarship, donors are able to create an endowed scholarship for as little as \$20,000 (payable over five years). Gifts of up to \$1 million can be matched; conversely—as every gift is important—a university-wide Spartan Scholarship has been created to match gifts of less than \$20,000.

Freshman Jordan Desrochers will never forget the moment she learned she was to receive the Jake and Maxine Ferris Spartan Scholarship which preferences students in

the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the Honors College. "Given the competitiveness for scholarships, it was something I just couldn't believe," she said. "My sister was with me when I opened the award letter and she said my face just went blank."

For Jordan, who graduated at the top of her class at Sault Area High School, the assistance provided will lower the amount of her student loans and lessen the need for her to work during the school year.

"It was so exciting to be picked out from a crowd," said Jordan, who plans to study dietetics. "There isn't a lot of money out there right now and I can't thank the donors enough."

"It was so exciting to be picked out from a crowd," said Jordan, who plans to study dietetics. "There isn't a lot of money out there right now and I can't thank the donors enough."

To learn more visit [www.givingto.msu.edu/ssc](http://www.givingto.msu.edu/ssc), contact Director of Development for University Scholarships and Fellowships Jennifer Bertram at (517) 432-7332 or speak with a development officer in your college or unit.

**Pledge by December 31, 2010 to qualify for the match.**

## Schafer gift promotes athletic and scholarly achievement

Thousands of Spartans routinely show their support for Spartan men's basketball—packing Final Four pep rallies, peppering the MSU community with “We love Izzo” signs and contributing to improvements at Breslin Center. Yet one fan's commitment still astonished Head Coach Tom Izzo.

Chuck Schafer (MBA, '73) recently established a future gift by naming the Michigan State men's basketball program as a substantial beneficiary of his estate. For Coach Izzo, whose recent declaration that he was “a Spartan for life” put an end to speculation on his constancy at MSU, Chuck's gift is strong validation for allegiance to Michigan State.

“In its own way, Chuck's gift says why I made the decision. Because there are people here who care,” Izzo said. “His gift will help give us the ability to do things in a first-class way. It will definitely make a difference in making Michigan State basketball a top-notch program, one that graduates people with a top-notch education. I am so appreciative of the trust Chuck has put in Michigan State.”

When received, Chuck's bequest will fund an endowment to support the men's basketball program by providing scholarships for student-athletes, something both men hope will raise awareness about the academic quality of the program.

“I had parents who were very focused on education and, to me, providing scholarships means just that: it is scholarship,” Chuck said.

“You want kids to be very good athletes but also to understand the importance of their education.”

A lifelong Michigan resident, Chuck entered MSU's MBA program in accounting following his undergraduate education at Albion College. He credits his Michigan State education with solidifying the course of his life, leading to his successful career as an owner of a regional public accounting and financial services firm, Rehmann Robson. “I don't believe I would be standing where I am today if not for going to MSU,” he said.

While Chuck deliberated long and hard on the legacy he wanted to leave one day, supporting men's basketball student-athletes at MSU resonated with him on many levels.

“I played basketball for 50 years,” Chuck said. “The bottom line is that I am a basketball fan and a true lover of Michigan State. More than all of that, I am a fan of education.”

“Chuck's contribution and leadership in supporting our program takes the concept of being a Spartan for life to an entirely new level,” said MSU Director of Athletics Mark Hollis. “External support of this magnitude is critical to our success and we cannot thank him enough. We are sincerely grateful.”

*For more information on making a gift to intercollegiate athletics, call the Spartan Fund at (517) 432-4610 or visit [www.msuspartans.com/spartanfund](http://www.msuspartans.com/spartanfund).*



Head Coach Tom Izzo and Chuck Schafer on center court at Breslin Center.

## First W.K. Kellogg Professor in food, society and sustainability appointed

Dr. Richard Foster, a national expert in food sustainability and former vice president for programs at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, has been named W.K. Kellogg Professor in Food, Society and Sustainability at Michigan State University. Funded by a \$3.4 million grant from the W.K. Kellogg Food, Society and Sustainability program, the position is housed in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR) and includes an appointment in MSU Extension.

“We have called on Rick Foster many times to provide insight into major issues, and his perspective has contributed tremendously to the success of the college, so I am excited to have him join our faculty,” said Jeffrey D. Armstrong, dean of the MSU College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. “Under his leadership, we will help the MSU community embrace sustainability and establish Michigan's future development principles for growth that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.”

Since stepping into his new position, Foster has been chosen to direct the new Institute for Greening Michigan, where he will be

responsible for directing MSU Extension's educational efforts in community and economic development, natural resources and stewardship, food systems and resource allocation.

Foster has been recognized for his work by honors that include the National FFA Honorary American Farmer Degree, an honorary doctorate from the University of Maryland-Eastern Shore, the Kellogg Fellows Leadership Alliance Spirit of Leadership Award and the CANR Honorary Alumnus Award.

His work has been instrumental in enabling MSU CANR to undertake a range of land-grant efforts. His advice and support have made possible the Student Organic Farm; the Land Policy Institute; the W.K. Kellogg Chair in Agriculture, Food and Community Ethics; the Great Lakes Leadership Academy; a new Food and Fitness program and many other initiatives at MSU.

Prior to joining the Kellogg Foundation in 1991, Foster worked in international development activities in Africa and Central America and was instrumental in establishing the School of Agriculture for the Humid Tropical Region (EARTH University) in Costa Rica.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation supports children, families and communities as they strengthen and create conditions that propel vulnerable children to achieve success as individuals and as contributors to the larger community and society.

The College of Agriculture and Natural Resources is the founding college of Michigan State University. Together with the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station (MAES) and Michigan State University Extension (MSUE), it serves the people of Michigan through research, education and outreach that engage citizens in enhancing economic development and exploring sustainable solutions to issues in agriculture, food systems, biotechnology, the environment and human and community development.



W.K. Kellogg Professor Rick Foster

## Spalding scholarships reflect love of MSU, family and putting others first

The son of two loyal alumni, David (Dave) Spalding ('67, Engineering) grew up wearing, seeing and being Spartan green. As a testament to his parents and for all MSU has meant to his family, Dave recently funded the Charles and Mary Jane Spalding Expendable Engineering Scholarships in their honor and became a member of MSU's Theophilus C. Abbot donor society. The scholarships he created have already helped many engineering students, a high priority for Dave.

This year, ten students were selected to receive the scholarships, including Mairin Chesney, a sophomore mechanical engineering student from Brighton, Michigan. "The Spalding Scholarship is making such a difference in my time at Michigan State University. It has significantly eased the financial burden on me and my family," she said, noting that the assistance has enabled her to more fully experience college life and specifically provided the financial flexibility for her to participate in the Society of Women Engineers. "I am so grateful to Mr. Spalding for his generosity."

"Engineering was tough," recalls Dave, an alumnus of the mechanical engineering program. "I was glad to earn that degree. The social experience I gained at MSU taught me how to respect all people and to stay well-rounded. Now that I am in a position to do some charitable contributing, I wanted to help others gain what I did."

Dave credits his parents with not only leading him to MSU, but also for instilling in him the value of the dollar, treating people fairly and working hard. Dave developed a simple but meaningful approach to living that has guided not only his success in business but also his style toward management, family and everyday life.

"I always felt here at the company that family is number one, then spiritual needs, community is next, and if those three are in balance the company will greatly benefit," he said.

Dave's family includes Betsy—his wife of nearly 40 years—and three children who he is proud to say are all college-educated. The company is one Dave built from the ground up. Literally up, that is, because his business develops, produces and distributes roofing products.

Dave started out working for Uniroyal in a division for industrial roofing. An entrepreneur at heart, he purchased the rights to their unique waterproofing membrane formula. American Hydrotech, the company he built on that product, boasts its headquarters in downtown Chicago, but his business acumen has led to branches and associated businesses all over the world. They sell their products to construction firms and work directly with such well-known clients as Pei Cobb Freed & Partners, Gehry Partners, LLP and Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP.

Dave's affection for green goes far beyond his Spartan allegiance. He is currently involved in providing "green" garden roofing systems and employs several MSU crop and soil sciences alumni who are heading up this environmentally progressive approach. Another testament to Dave: 50 percent of his employees have been with him for upwards of 25 years.

After MSU, Dave completed an MBA at Western Michigan University. He believes his education was key in preparing him for his future. "You have to be well-prepared for when opportunity presents itself or you might miss it. When opportunity and preparation cross, you are very fortunate. I have been fortunate in my life."

For more information on giving to the College of Engineering, contact Senior Director of Development Stephen Bates at (517) 355-8339.



Dave Spalding (center) and his mother, Mary Jane Spalding (center, right), recently attended an award dinner for College of Engineering students who received scholarships from a fund Dave established in honor of both of his parents.

## Music leadership council sounds support

The College of Music's annual Showcase Series will shine a little brighter this year thanks to the members of the college's National Leadership Council, who are sponsoring three of the four concerts that make up the series (Collage IV, Home for the Holidays, and A Jazzy Little Christmas). The series highlights the diverse talents and vast repertoire of the college's faculty and students. The world of philanthropy is not new to this distinguished and generous volunteer group, whose members have collec-

tively provided nearly \$8.75 million to Michigan State University (\$5.6 million to the College of Music) in addition to sharing their expertise and guidance. For more information on making a gift to the College of Music or sponsoring a performance, contact Director of Development Rebecca Surian at (517) 353-9872.

For more information about College of Music events, visit [www.music.msu.edu](http://www.music.msu.edu).



Shown here, back row (l to r): Howard Gourwitz, Dean James Forger, Clare Mackey, Cecil Mackey, Jack Withrow, Craig Murray, Merritt Lutz, Roy Simon, Byron Cook and Tom Cobb; front row (l to r): Ken Beall, Dottie Withrow, Dolores Cook and Joanne Church. Not Pictured: William David Brohn and Ruth Charles.

## Council of Graduate Students champions fellowship endowment

MSU competes with top-notch research universities across the nation, including MIT, Stanford and Harvard, for the best graduate students. Recognizing that fellowship endowments give MSU an edge in recruiting, the Council of Graduate Students (COGS) recently passed a referendum to establish a \$125,000 endowment to benefit graduate and professional students in any discipline.

Stefan Fletcher, a law student in MSU's College of Law and the current president of COGS, along with last year's executive board officers, worked diligently to ensure that the COGS membership understood the importance of private support and the purpose of graduate student-focused endowments that provide fellowship awards. COGS is an authorized student government body on campus representing all of MSU's graduate/professional students.

"I think when COGS members voted unanimously to approve the funding for this endowment, they saw the importance of continual support of their fellow graduate and professional students," Fletcher said. "I hope this initial gift encourages other proponents of graduate education and leadership to support the significant contributions graduate students make during their time at MSU."

Endowed fellowships not only help MSU attract and retain the best and most creative graduate students, but also reward and recognize graduate students for scholarship and leadership in their respective academic disciplines,

noted Dean of the Graduate School Karen Klomprens.

"This endowment is a terrific example of graduate students wisely investing some of their resources to continue to support future graduate students," Klomprens said. "I'm proud of this COGS effort!"

Fletcher says current COGS Executive Board members are committed to working with the University Scholarship and Fellowship Development staff to help raise awareness and funds to grow the COGS endowment fund.

For more information on making a gift to the Graduate School at MSU, contact Assistant Director of Development for University Scholarships and Fellowships Maura Benton at (517) 353-0007, or by e-mail at [bentonm@grd.msu.edu](mailto:bentonm@grd.msu.edu).



MSU's Council of Graduate Students executive board led the effort to create an endowed fellowship for graduate students. In appreciation, Dean of the Graduate School Karen Klomprens presented a memento to COGS President Stefan Fletcher (center).

## Returning a 50-year-old favor

Dr. Arnie Pals grew up in a tiny farming community and attended a small Christian school and then a small Christian college. So when he enrolled at the MSU College of Veterinary Medicine in 1959, he was entering a whole new world.

One day, a fellow student noticed Arnie had great grades and asked if he ever had applied for a scholarship. "I said, 'No—what's a scholarship?'" Arnie recalled.

As often occurred with kids from rural farming communities, Arnie had assumed he had to work his way through school. Arnie received encouragement to apply for a scholarship and in turn received help that covered tuition for three years. "It really, really helped me out, because my family didn't have money to spend. It helped me graduate from college with little or no debt," he said.

The experience has motivated him to help others ever since. Throughout his career as a veterinarian in private practice and while on the MSU faculty, he has gone out of his way to mentor, sponsor and guide young people.

Recently, he and his wife Joanne added substantially to that legacy of generosity with an endowed fund named the Pals Family Scholarship. The name recognizes that the entire Pals family "has been blessed by the veterinary profession," as Arnie puts it. His son William ('97, CVM) and daughters Carol ('91, Business) and Sarah also support the endowment.

Arnie says another motivation has been watching many parents struggle to pay tuition and he hopes establishing this endowment will encourage others to do the same.

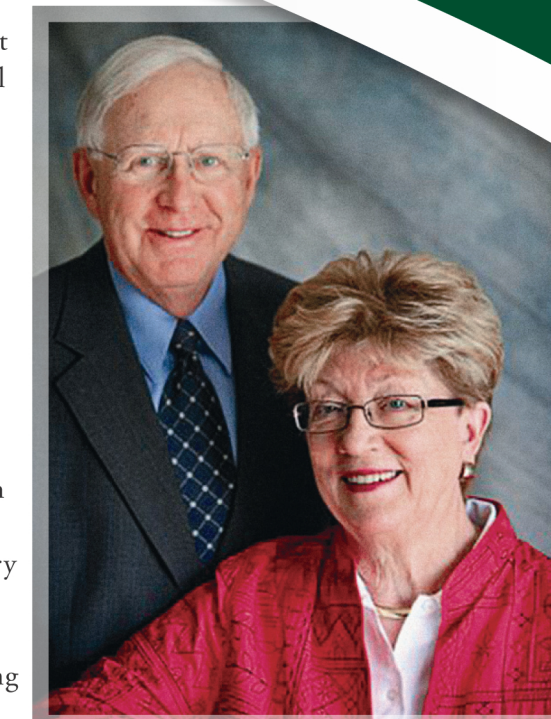
"Some people are sitting back, thinking about it, but don't do anything about it," he said. "And I just want to

show them that it is not that hard. And you will never miss the money."

After his MSU graduation, Arnie served in the Army Veterinary Corps and then entered private practice in Grand Rapids. He joined the CVM faculty in the Center for Laboratory Animal Resources from 1968-1972. He led the effort to train veterinary technicians, serving as the program's first coordinator—something he considers a career highlight. He returned to private practice and retired from the Clarke Animal Hospital near Spring Lake where he and Joanne still reside. Joanne worked in psychiatric nursing for several years.

The couple stays active in their community and looks for ways to stay connected with students. As Arnie says when people ask for his philosophy of practice: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

For more information on making a gift to the College of Veterinary Medicine, contact Senior Director of Development Susan Halloran at (517) 432-4898 or by e-mail at [hallor17@cvm.msu.edu](mailto:hallor17@cvm.msu.edu).



Dr. Arnie and Joanne Pals have a legacy of helping students.

## Taking Shape: Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum

The lower level profile of the iconic Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum can now be seen on the MSU campus and a search to name the art museum director is well underway. The building, designed by world-renowned architect Zaha Hadid, is anticipated to bring international attention to the art museum, MSU and the state of Michigan. The facility is named in honor of alumnus Eli Broad who, with his wife Edythe, provided the lead gift for the building as well as for acquisitions, exhibitions and operations. Near what will soon be the study collection of the art museum, some of the university planning team involved with bringing the project to completion are pictured here from left: Bill Latta, acting associate vice president for University Advancement; Mark Terman, Director of Principal Gifts; Linda Stanford, associate provost for Academic Services; Dan Bollman, design administrator for Physical Plant; and also Kevin Waldman, project director, Barton Malow Company.

Approximately \$7 million is needed to complete art museum fundraising toward the \$40 million goal. Attractive significant gift naming opportunities still are available for special features as well as garden, exhibit, administrative and educational spaces. To learn more about the project, including a live Web cast of the construction site, visit [broadmuseum.msu.edu](http://broadmuseum.msu.edu). For more information about giving to the art museum, contact Bridget Paff, director of Development for the College of Arts and Letters and the art museum at (517) 353-4725.



## Finding yourself in a sea of green

*“At times I feel the hugeness of the university and its way of life closes down on me and I wonder who I am and where I am going.”*

A student contributed that pensive line to the 1969 MSU Yearbook. It could have been from the journal of Stephen DeBoer ('71, '73, CANR) who as a sophomore that year, like many sophomores in any year, was floundering. As the first in his family to attend college, paying for school through a combination of scholarships and work, and indeed, unsure of who he was or where he was going, he considered “packing it up and leaving.”



Pamela and Stephen DeBoer

Then, as often happens, one person took an interest in him. Professor Fred Bakker-Arkema in Agricultural Engineering suggested that Stephen was well suited for a student position in the department. A whole new world opened up. Suddenly, instead of one person in a sea of thousands, Stephen was connected with fellow students and the faculty in a small department. And the computer simulations that Dr. Bakker-Arkema involved him in, turned out to be his calling. “I started working on things that were breakthrough technology,” Stephen recalled. “I found my niche and my studies became much more relevant. But without that group in Ag. Engineering, I never would have finished school and went on to the career I’ve had.”

Recently, Stephen, together with his wife Pamela, decided it was the right time to give back to the department that had changed the course of his life, creating the DeBoer Family Scholarship/Fellowship fund and at the same time joining the Jonathan L. Snyder donor society. This endowment will allow the department to identify and offer the same opportunities that existed for Stephen when he was a student. “I never envisioned myself where I am now,” Stephen said. “But MSU opened a lot of doors for me. I feel very blessed in that and I am blessed to have the opportunity to give back.”

After completing both his B.A. and master’s degrees, and starting a doctorate at MSU, Stephen left for an assignment at the

W.K. Kellogg Company. He never came back to complete the doctorate, but he never had cause for regret on the matter. He enjoyed a fulfilling career at Kellogg, first in food technology, later engineering and then as vice president of Research and Development. “I loved my work so much,” he said. “Anytime I started to get a little bit bored, something new came up.”

He had been the very first agricultural engineer the company had ever hired. But, by the time he retired in 2004, there were 60 such specialists, many of them fellow Spartans whom Stephen himself had hired. He ended his long tenure there as the vice president of Operations. He credits his successful career to what he learned at MSU.

“The important thing I walked away from my MSU education with was not a lot of technical knowledge, but a logical way to approach problems and solve them,” he said.

Over the years, Stephen has stayed in touch with his former mentor, Dr. Bakker-Arkema, and has served on MSU advisory boards. He makes a point to return to campus at least once a year to enjoy the campus beauty and reflect on the place that left such an impression on the shape of his life.

*For more information on making a gift to the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, contact Assistant Director of Development Jeremy Wittrock at (517) 353-4749.*

## RCAH endowment expands the Center for Poetry’s reach

When the pain is too great or the love is too deep, we don’t turn to “American Idol” or “Jon and Kate Plus Eight” to soothe our souls.

“People dust off books, or go to the Internet, to find the voices of the women and men who lived centuries before us, leaving us the accumulated lyrical wisdom of millennia,” according to Andrew and Telaina Eriksen who recently funded an endowment to support the Center for Poetry in MSU’s Residential College in the Arts and Humanities.

“People rely on poems to realize and celebrate that we too will survive and perhaps even create something from the pleasure and pain that are a daily part of our humanity,” Telaina said.

Andrew ('90, Business) and Telaina ('90, CAS) believe in the power of poetry and were inspired by the ability of the center’s director and founder, Anita Skeen, to bring out the very best in every poet—from novice to professional.

Andrew and Telaina’s support for the center will help

bring poets to campus to share their wisdom and work through experiential learning at low or no-cost to students and the public.

The Eriksens believe the endowment will enhance the center’s efforts to educate MSU students and community members in the craft, history and enjoyment of poetry. They hope in the future that the funding will allow the center to partner with other educational institutions, such as public schools, to foster more readers.

Andrew is a business alumnus who works for Auto-Owners Insurance. In addition to her journalism degree from MSU, Telaina received her master’s of fine arts in creative writing from Antioch University-Los Angeles and is a published poet and essayist.

The couple is fond of the perspective of Wallace Stevens, a mid-twentieth Century poet, on the function of a poet. Stevens wrote that the imaginations of poets “become light in the minds of others.”

“The ‘light in the minds of others’ will not die in this abbreviated, texting, Facebooking world,” Telaina said. “The light will live on because it will be carried on in places like the RCAH Center for Poetry.”

*For more information on making a gift to the RCAH Center for Poetry, contact Special Gifts Director Karen Wenk at (517) 884-1084 or by e-mail at [wenk@msu.edu](mailto:wenk@msu.edu).*



Telaina and Andrew Eriksen (right), pictured here with Residential College in the Arts and Humanities Dean Stephen L. Esquith and Professor Anita Skeen, believe in the power of poetry.

## DONOR PROFILE

## Bill Mechanic: A Spartan in Hollywood

A truck selling maps to the “homes of the stars” parks on his corner. He has held the reigns for some of the biggest box office hits the world has ever seen. And just last spring, his expertise was tapped to co-produce the biggest annual party known to Hollywood: the Academy Awards Ceremony, more popularly known as the Oscars.

Few movie makers can lay claim to more success than Bill Mechanic ('73 CAL), chairman and CEO of Pandemonium Films. As the former 20th Century Fox studio boss, he brought the beleaguered company from doormat to number one in worldwide box-office gross, ushering in such awarding winning hits as *Titanic*, *Braveheart*, *Boys Don't Cry* and scores of other commercially successful and critically acclaimed films. Prior to joining Fox, he was a leading executive at Walt Disney Studios, responsible for melding the movie giant to also hold the top spot in international video distribution.

Yet, it was an MSU journalism class that started it all. The class carried a requirement of getting something published. As an English major, Bill shied away from hard news, focusing instead on something that interested him. He dutifully submitted a movie review to *The State News*, and was dumbfounded when the film critic called to say: “You're better than me. How'd you like to take over?” The outgoing critic was none other than Jack Epps ('72, CAL) who would go on to partner with the late MSU Professor Jim Cash in writing the script for the runaway hit *Top Gun* among others.

Bill supplied the student newspaper's movie reviews for nearly two years, garnering praise

and hate mail alike from fellow Spartans. He vividly recalls a lambasting in English class from a professor who took issue with Bill's scorn for fake Russian accents. Bill developed a tougher skin, but he didn't change his opinion on accents. His resilience has served him well.

“When you are running a studio, you have to do things that are unpopular,” Bill said. “If you are concerned with what people think of you, you are already a step behind.”

The essential confidence he gained at MSU led to graduate school at the University of Southern California and on to studio direction.

“Coming from Michigan, Hollywood is such a far off place, not just geographically but conceptually,” Bill recalls. “I didn't think for quite a while that I could make a living in movies.”

Bill, who met his wife Carol at MSU, has truly been a Spartan for life. A Detroit native, he funded MSU scholarships for students from Southeast Michigan, hosted MSU receptions in his home and has supported the MSU film studies program. “You don't know it when you are there, but MSU and the campus is a great place to grow up,” Bill said. “I believe you should always give back to where you got it.”

Bill recently provided a keynote address and critiqued a film project for students in the Michigan Creative Film Alliance, a film training initiative for promising students from Wayne State University, the University of Michigan and Michigan State. “I thought I came from the same place as them, with dreams—even secretly hidden dreams—that you could do something substantial,” Bill said. MSU Professor Bob Albers heralded Bill's



Alumnus Bill Mechanic, at the MSU green carpet pre-screening of his animated movie *Coraline*.

counsel to the students as “unflinching and valuable.”

In 2009, Bill's company produced the well-received stop-motion animation film *Coraline* which chronicled a little girl and her parents' move from Michigan and enjoyed a “green carpet” pre-release showing in East Lansing. One of the main characters, Coraline's father, sported a Michigan State sweatshirt thanks to Bill's attention to fine points. Early in the project, the costume designers had inadvertently knitted a miniature shirt that highlighted another Michigan-based university and were astonished when Bill insisted it be changed despite the costs involved. “People do pay attention to details,” he said. And this was a detail Bill could never have let slide.

Spartans should watch for potentially more MSU details showing up on the big screen, as Bill has several projects being produced in Michigan to take advantage of the state's new positioning as a filmmaking center.

## MSU Greenline: The voice of the MSU Annual Fund

Growing up in Livonia, sophomore communication student Chris Ruemenapp was so green his friends dubbed him “Sparty.” Today, he is sometimes called “a walking billboard for MSU” as he proudly represents the university in MSU Greenline, the new name for the MSU Annual Fund's contact program where Chris is employed.

The new name was, in fact, Chris's idea. He submitted it in a contest that was part of a branding initiative to better showcase the success of the Annual Fund in connecting with MSU alumni and friends who, in turn, provide essential advocacy and support for Michigan State.

“I have such a passion for Michigan State,” Chris said. “Coming to work makes me feel

unbelievably good and I am so glad I am already leaving a legacy for students who will come after me.”

Along with the new name, a revamped Web site displays Web cams of the calling room so that alumni and friends can see the students and their energy first-hand as well as leave encouragement and feedback via social media links. Go to: [www.givingto.msu.edu/greenline](http://www.givingto.msu.edu/greenline).

“The alumni and friends we contact are the heart beat of the university,” according to student Ian Rogers, MSU Greenline's web design and public relations manager, who dedicated his summer to this initiative.

The numbers alone are staggering. The Greenline's calling program is the largest in the Big Ten, with over 200 students employed each semester working in 83 calling stations in which 10,000-15,000 phone calls are attempted each shift. The result is personal conversations with thousands of Spartans each year, many of whom would otherwise have no direct contact with MSU. From these alumni and friends, the students have secured more than \$4 million from over 50,000 donors this year alone.



New this year, the Greenline piloted a student envoy program in which students like Chris go on the road

to conduct face-to-face meetings with alumni. The students connect with them as members of the Spartan family and learn more about their accomplishments since graduation.

It is no secret that MSU Greenline is a great place to work on campus. At any given time, nearly 500 applications await consideration. The select few who are chosen have affection for their university that is second-to-none.

The student callers work Monday through Friday evenings and on Sundays, throughout the year. Each fall, MSU Greenline is charged with reaching out to alumni on behalf of the College Campaign in order to meet the goals of each of MSU's colleges and units. Come spring, they call on behalf of the Essential Edge Campaign to help secure unrestricted funds for the university.

So when you hear MSU Greenline is on the phone, take the opportunity to talk with one of these students because they certainly look forward to speaking with you!



MSU Greenline Student callers pictured around Annual Fund Assistant Director Frank Tramble (center, left) who heads the program.



Traverse City's Opera House, now managed in partnership with MSU's Wharton Center, was the venue for the 2010 President's Reception in Northern Michigan.

## MSU's President in Northern Michigan

MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon held a reception in Northern Michigan that drew hundreds of alumni, donors and friends to the City Opera House in Traverse City in July. A unique management agreement between MSU's Wharton Center for Performing Arts and the City Opera House is a symbol of MSU's expanding commitment throughout Northwest Michigan. Guests enjoyed an appetizer

buffet, entertainment from the MSU College of Music and fine wine from Spartan vintners in the region. An informal dinner was also hosted the night before by Joe and Ann Hollis at their home overlooking beautiful Lake Charlevoix.



Brownie and Susan Flanders and Clinton Deering were happy to see Sparty.



Hosts Joe and Ann Hollis received a memento from MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon.



There was no mistaking the Hollis home as guests were greeted with plenty of Spartan green.



Among the guests at the City Opera House reception were Walt and Doris Kutchins.



Rob and Sherry DeLonge (left) connected with Janet and Terry Sandborn.



MSU students India Ramsey and Gerald Parker assisted with the festivities.



Carl and Mary Liedholm paused to try out one of the vintage sofas at the City Opera House.