David D. Anderson, Ph.D., English, 1960, and Distinguished Professor Emeritus from the Department of Writing, Rhetoric and American Culture, received the 2009 Ohioana Library Association’s The Ohioana Career Award, the oldest and most prestigious of the awards given by the association. The Ohioana Career Award has been presented each year since 1942 to a native Ohioan for his or her outstanding professional accomplishments in the arts and humanities.

Past recipients include Arthur Schlesinger, Toni Morrison, Robert Stone, Eileen Heckart, John Glenn, Burgess Meredith, Lillian Gish, World War I ace Eddie Rickenbacker, Willard Kiplinger (Kiplinger’s Magazine), Lowell Thomas, Norman Vincent Peale, Milton Caniff, and Joe E. Brown, to name a few.

Anderson is a native of Lorain, Ohio, a town best known for its factories and mills, but which should be celebrated for its outstanding and influential writers. He received his BS degree in 1951 and MA degree in 1953 from Bowling Green State University, and earned his Ph.D. from Michigan State University in 1960. He was awarded the MSU Book Manuscript Award for his critical biography on fellow Lorain resident Sherwood Anderson in 1961.

He began teaching English in 1953 at the General Motors Institute in Flint, Michigan and joined the English faculty at Michigan State in 1956. In 1957 he moved to the university’s Department of American Thought and Language from which he retired in 1993 as distinguished professor emeritus. David is also a veteran of World War II and the Korean Conflict and is listed in Who’s Who in the World and Who’s Who in America.

In 1971, Anderson founded the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature and is currently its executive director. He is the author or editor of 35 books and more than 300 published articles, essays, short stories and poems, and has been the editor of numerous journals including MidAmerica, Midwestern Miscellany, SSML Newsletter and University College Quarterly.

Anderson has chaired the Modern American Literature of the Modern Language Association, was a Fulbright Professor of American Literature at the University of Karachi, and has been an American delegate to the International Federation for Modern Languages and Literature. He has lectured throughout Europe, Asia, and Australia, and has presented more than a hundred papers to scholarly organizations.

In 2009, Anderson made a tribute to his beloved wife of 53 years that is a gift to us all. He established the Patricia A. Anderson Library Endowment for Children’s Books at the MSU Libraries to honor Pat’s full and vibrant life, and especially her lifelong love of books. Peter Berg, head of the Libraries’ Special Collections, noted that the endowment will allow the division to acquire important children’s books that have influenced generations of young American readers and complement the Libraries’ strong Nineteenth Century American Schoolbook Collection.

Professor Michael Koppisch of the Department of French, Classics and Italian is the 2010 recipient of the Paul Varg Alumni Award for Faculty. The Varg Award was created by the College of Arts and Letters Alumni Association board of directors in 1989, and is given each year to a professor or associate professor in the College who has provided the highest quality of education for students at MSU. Nominations originate from students and are supported by department chairs. The winner is then chosen by the alumni board.

This honor recognizes Dr. Koppisch’s excellence in teaching that intellectually challenges students and instills in them a desire for continuing inquiry and growth beyond their university experience. It reflects his reputation in his field and his service to the College, the University and the community.

Congratulations to all of the finalists for the excellent work that resulted in their nominations.
Dean Rehberger Receives ‘Digging into Data’ Award

Dean Rehberger, Associate Professor of Writing, Rhetoric and American Cultures and director of MATRIX, has been awarded a “Digging Into Data” Award by the National Endowment for the Humanities. A high-profile award in the Digital Humanities, the honor speaks to both the fine work that MATRIX has done in the past as well as its much-deserved international reputation.

“While the ‘Digging Into Data Challenge’ signifies interactive, international scholarship of a distinctive kind, the bigger picture is that the initiative is a reflection of the emergence of a ‘new digital class’ composed of humanists as well as scientists and engineers,” NEH chairman said. “Divisions continue between scientific logic and cultural reasoning, but math-based technology can now be utilized as readily by the linguistically oriented as by the scientifically inclined.”

For this project, Rehberger and his co-awardees Peter Bajcsy, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, NSF, and Peter Ainsworth, University of Sheffield, JISC, will pursue research using advanced computational techniques to explore humanities themes related to the authorship of large collections of cultural heritage materials, namely 15th century manuscripts, 17th and 18th century maps, and 19th and 20th century quilts. The Alliance for American Quilts is also a key participant.

Pollack awarded 2009 Salo Baron Prize

The Baron Book prize for 2009 was awarded to Benjamin Pollock, Assistant Professor, Department of Religious Studies and core faculty member of MSU’s Jewish Studies Program, for “Franz Rosenzweig and the Systematic Task of Philosophy,” published by Cambridge University Press. The Baron Book Prize ($5,000) is awarded annually to the author of an outstanding first book in Jewish studies.

Cedric Tai, BFA, 2007, Receives $25,000 Kresge Artist Fellowship

The Kresge Foundation awarded Cedric Tai, BFA, 2007, with one of 18 inaugural Kresge Artist Fellowships, each with an unrestricted stipend of $25,000. The Fellowships are the first of their kind to be devoted exclusively to artists in the tri-county Detroit area (Wayne, Oakland and Macomb) and represent the foundation’s unwavering support for artists living and working in its hometown. Detroit’s College for Creative Studies administers the fellowships. Fellows are also offered customized professional development opportunities provided by ArtServe Michigan.

Tai, an artist and educator, was born in Detroit in 1985, and received his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio Art in 2007 and teaching certification from MSU in 2008. He has a studio practice in the Russell Industrial Center in Detroit, and volunteers as an educator at Detroit’s Museum of Contemporary Art. He works actively to promote the Detroit arts community. While his work varies from painting on Plexiglas to ceramics and installation, his pieces are always engaging and material-specific, often producing numerous works in order to understand what exactly it is that fascinates him about the material itself.

Kate McAlpine, CAL Professional Writing Grad, Raps on Complexities of Rare Isotope Research

Search for Kate McAlpine on YouTube or at msu.edu, and you’ll see a featured video that talks about physicists and the making of a rap video. The rapper, McAlpine, was a Professional Writing major in the College of Arts and Letters, and was featured on NPR and various other national news venues two years ago because of the rap video she made when the Hadron Collider was about to go online. An outstanding student, Kate has stayed in touch with Professional Writing faculty and students, and has been generous in speaking with PW students about her choices and career.
Jessica Hagen receives Fulbright Scholarship

Jessica Hagen, a graduate student in German from Gaines, Michigan, received an English teaching assistantship for Germany as one of nine Michigan State University students awarded Fulbright scholarships for the 2010-11 academic year. Sponsored by the United States Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education, Fulbright awards are granted to 1,600 U.S. citizens for use in more than 155 countries annually.

Jeffrey T. Grabill
Wins “Reflections Journal’s” Outstanding Book Award for Civic Scholarship

MSU College of Arts and Letters
Professor Jeffrey T. Grabill has been awarded the “Outstanding Book Award for Civic Scholarship” by “Reflections: A Journal of Writing, Service-Learning, and Community Literacy.” Grabill’s book, “Writing Community Change: Designing Technologies for Citizen Action” was chosen from a very competitive field of nominations by a prestigious panel of scholars, including Ellen Cushman, Tom Deans, Paula Mathieu, and Adrian Wurr. As part of the award, “Reflections” donated $100 to a community-based organization of Grabill’s choice as well as a free full-page ad for his book in “Reflections.”

The “Reflections” Civic Scholarship Outstanding Book Award is presented annually to the author(s) or editor(s) of a book published in the past two years whose work engages public and/or disciplinary conversations about civic engagement in issues of writing, rhetoric, and literacy in innovative, compelling, and challenging ways. The goal of the award is to recognize scholarship that:

- provides a research model that bridges academic and community systems and practices of knowledge production;
- exhibits a writing style designed to speak to audiences within and potentially beyond the specific fields of rhetoric and composition;
- demonstrates a methodological framework that theorizes ways to create inclusive, ethical, and reciprocal relationships within communities;
- promotes public discussion about the nature of civic responsibility both inside and outside of the academy.

The “Reflections” award selection committee felt that Grabill’s book “offered an important intervention into how technology can serve not only community engagement, but community political and economic development.”

Jeff Grabill is a Professor of Rhetoric and Professional Writing and Co-Director of the Writing in Digital Environments (WIDE) Research Center at Michigan State University. He is interested in the knowledge work of citizens, users, workers, and students within organizational contexts.

“Reflections,” a peer-reviewed journal, provides a forum for scholarship on writing, service-learning and community literacy. The journal publishes a lively collection of essays, empirical studies, interviews and reviews in a format that brings together emerging scholars and leaders in the fields of community-based writing and civic engagement.
Dr. Danny Mendez Receives Dominican Educators Award

Dr. Danny Mendez, core faculty member of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, and core faculty member of CLACS and Global Studies in Arts & Humanities at MSU, has been awarded a prestigious teaching award, Dominican Educators of Excellence in Higher Education for 2009 by the Universidad UNAPEC, Dominican Republic/Dominican Studies Association/Asociacion de Estudios Dominicanos. The award is in recognition of his dedication to the study, teaching and dissemination of Dominican Studies.

Professor Contreras Receives MLA Prize Honorable Mention

Sheila Marie Contreras, Associate Professor of WRAC and Director of Chicano/Latino Studies, has received honorable mention in the Modern Language Association of America’s seventh annual MLA Prize for United States Latina and Latino and Chicana and Chicano Literary and Cultural Studies. Contreras’ book, “Blood Lines: Myth, Indigenism, and Chicana/o Literature,” was published by the University of Texas Press.

Joseph Francese Appointed by PMLA to Three-Year Term

Joseph Francese, Italian faculty professor at MSU, has been appointed to a three-year term to the Advisory committee of PMLA, the journal of the Modern Language Association of America.

CAL Alum Emily Brozovic Wins National Silver Addy

Graphic artist and College of Arts and Letters alumna Emily Brozovic, BFA ’05, received a 2009 National Silver ADDY award in Washington, D.C., for designing the MSU College of Education’s 2007-2008 annual report. Brozovic designed the report while Communications Manager Nicole Geary, ’03, wrote and edited the content. The pair, along with Millbrook Printing of Grand Ledge, also earned awards for their work at the regional and local levels of the ADDY competition. In the Lansing-area competition, the publication received a Gold ADDY – the highest designation – and was named Best of Show among all printed materials submitted to the local club, Mid-Michigan Creative Alliance. The annual report also received an Award of Distinction from the Communicator Awards, a creative competition by the International Academy of the Visual Arts. Brozovic currently works for Virtual University Design And Technology (VU-DAT) at MSU as an eProducer.

President Obama Names CAL Alum Pat Geoghegan Acting Pay Czar

The Obama administration named College of Arts and Letters alum Patricia Geoghegan acting U.S. “pay czar,” as Kenneth Feinberg marked his last day in the post. Ms. Geoghegan, has worked with Mr. Feinberg for roughly a year, joining the office of the special master for compensation in August 2009, according to the Treasury. Her focus will be on overseeing pay practices at the four firms still under the office’s jurisdiction for accepting “extraordinary” taxpayer assistance. Geoghegan is a graduate of Michigan State University, Yale Law School and the NYU LLM in Taxation Program.