Advancement Update

Helping Faculty
The Jewish Studies Program board of advisors recently joined together to create a fund to support professional development activities for faculty associated with the Jewish Studies Program at MSU. The MSU Jewish Studies program depends on its core and affiliated faculty to establish and sustain the strength and reputation of the program. Faculty research, travel, development, and attendance at professional meetings are some of the key means by which faculty members keep abreast of their fields, undertake new learning, develop new expertise, make their work more well known to fellow professionals, and strengthen their work in the classroom and with individual students.

The board of advisors is committed to supporting Jewish Studies faculty in their research and professional development, and believe that this will in turn strengthen the curriculum and courses and student learning in Jewish Studies classes. Numerous members of the JSP advisory board made personal gifts totaling more than $90,000 in order to endow the fund providing support for Jewish Studies faculty in perpetuity.

Providing for Students
Mary Nolen grew up in Lansing, attending MSU events since she was a young girl. When she graduated from high school, she didn’t know what she wanted to study, so she waited several years before attending MSU. As a non-traditional student, she searched for a way to fit in until she found the College of Arts & Letters. She says, “Liberal arts gave me a lifelong interest in art, art history, and the humanities. Those times sitting with classmates and discussing philosophy, literature, or defending my ideas on what contributed to an historical event, helped shape my thoughts on how the world works. College gives you the opportunity to expand your world.”

Because of her experiences at MSU, Nolen created an endowed scholarship for the College of Arts & Letters through her estate plans. “I hope,” she said, “to give someone the chance to embrace what I feel college is about, and in doing so, learn the skills they will need to be a well rounded, articulate, thoughtful and interesting employee, parent and friend. And have the opportunity to do so in such a beautiful environment as MSU.”

Paying it Forward: Supporting Women’s Issues
As a part of their personal mission of “trying to make the world better than when we got here,” Karen “Kris” Newkirk and her husband, Bill Hazle, created the Hazle Newkirk Endowment for Gender Studies to provide scholarships for students pursuing a degree in or related to Women’s and Gender Studies.

Kris graduated from Michigan State University in 1975 with a B.A. in social work. Her husband, Bill, had no educational ties to MSU, but became an honorary Spartan over the years. After graduating from MSU, Kris worked in a variety of settings, including managing addiction treatment programs and developing programs for the treatment of addiction and for victims of domestic violence. She also provided counseling services to alcoholics, addicts and their families, troubled youth and women. Throughout her career she worked to help under-served populations. Bill’s career also focused on direct service, management, program direction and the establishment and use of telemedicine systems in the treatment of patients. His focus was working to better mental health care from within the industry.

Kris wrote the following when asked why she and Bill had decided to create the Hazle Newkirk Endowment for Gender Studies: “I have a lifelong interest in women’s issues, social justice and women’s empowerment. Bill also supports this. Also, I did not have a daughter, so I feel this is one way...
I can contribute to women in the generations to come, or toward global issues pertinent to women. Professionally, I have dedicated my life to the betterment of women’s mental health (Bill has made a huge contribution as a psychiatrist and addictionologist). Obviously, education was the key to my empowerment and the foundation of my ability to give back and serve. Just passing it on.”

Sold-Out CAL Mackinac Island Arts Weekend Creates Lifelong Memories  By Kathryn Palczewski

Professional Writing 2013

A College of Arts and Letters Tradition
This year’s 19th annual Arts Weekend, a collaboration between the College of Arts & Letters and Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island, continually reminded guests why they keep coming back for this special weekend year after year. Dean Karin Wurst says, “This well established collaboration is exemplary in making the arts visible to broader audiences in unexpected settings away from the MSU campus and more traditional art venues.”

Each year, Arts Weekend showcases the many talents of the College of Arts and Letters faculty, staff, students and alumni to patrons of the hotel. This year’s lineup included a performance of “Comfort Food” by the MSU Department of Theatre; multiple appearances by the MSU Accafellas; a tour of the Manoogian artwork collection by Alison Gass, Curator of Contemporary Art for the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum; and presentations and hands-on activity by the College’s Director of Academic Technology Scott Schopieray, and May graduates Tatum Walker and Brooke Hawkins of CAL’s Creativity Exploratory, and Kat Palczewski, social media and communications intern.

Timeless Beauty, Magical Moments
College of Arts & Letters Assistant Director of Alumni Relations Linda Conradi explains, “Arts Weekend is always a magical event because of the timeless Grand Hotel and historic beauty of Mackinac Island. This year’s programming, however, lent itself to some unique moments.”

At Saturday evening’s front porch reception, two CAL guests shared a moment that will make Arts Weekend forever a part of their lives. As the MSU Accafellas began singing Josh Turner’s “Will You Go With Me?,” a guest leaned over to her boyfriend, saying, “I love this song.” He turned to her, said, “I know,” and got down on one knee to propose. There were few dry eyes in the crowd.

Spartan Pride Celebrated on Mackinac Island
Spartan pride traveled from East Lansing to Mackinac Island, too, and was evident throughout the weekend in cheers of “Go Green! Go White!” as well as pop-up Accafella performances of the MSU Fight Song in local restaurants and on the shores of Lake Huron.

Executive Director of the MSU Alumni Association Scott Westerman, who attended Arts Weekend for the first time, says, “The best part of it was the quality time I got to spend with so many Spartans who love the arts. I think people come back year after year for Arts Weekend because of the consistent quality of the programming and of course, the beautiful surroundings.”