

Spartan

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY ALUMNI MAGAZINE

Spring 2024

Battling
Great Lakes
Algae Bloom

Spartan
Athletes
Make The
Grade

Forces of Nature

When it comes to the future of our environment, these Spartans are using innovation and education to spark knowledge and action.



I
A M
A

SPARTAN OF INNOVATION.

We're committed to helping prepare tomorrow's leaders who will bring creative solutions to the big challenges facing society. I get excited every time I walk into my lab because we're engineering new ways to make electric motors more efficient. Through this research and my work with students, I'm part of a community that is empowering the next generation of thinkers and doers.

SHANELLE FOSTER
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR,
ELECTRICAL AND
COMPUTER ENGINEERING



SPARTANS WILL.
MSU.EDU/PARTOF

Spartan

Spring 2024

FEATURES



30 Forces of Nature

From research to education to innovation, meet the Spartans who are tackling the world's environmental challenges head-on.



44 Its Specialty is Winning

For 25 years, the Clara Bell Smith Center has been helping Spartan student athletes achieve victory—on and off the field.

SECTIONS

- 3 FROM THE PRESIDENT
- 5 LETTER FROM THE EDITOR
- 7 BENEATH THE PINES
- 22 SPARTAN STORIES
- 53 GREEN AND WHITE
- 55 CLASS NOTES
- 60 A SPARTAN LEGACY
- 64 FROM THESE SCENES

ON THE COVER Assistant Professor and Plant Breeder for International Programs at MSU, Cholani Weebadde is training the next generation of global hunger-fighters.
Photo by Aran Kessler and Jen Weaver



7 Instruction Innovation

Enhancing the student experience with new technology in the classroom.



YOU MADE
MARCH 12 THE
GREENEST DAY
OF THE YEAR

On Give Green Day, 7,073 Spartans raised \$1.55+ million to support students.

And now, every day, through every season of the year and in every single corner of our campus, your gifts are creating a brighter future for all.

And save the date for next year's Give Green Day: March 11, 2025!



Learn more about #GiveGreenDay and see a full breakdown of the results at givingday.msu.edu

Greetings, Spartans!

The warmth Amy and I have encountered from alums and friends of Michigan State University in our first whirlwind months on campus has been humbling and inspiring. In scores of encounters and events, already MSU's special relationship with the global Spartan family has made a wonderful impression!

As an educational leader, I count curiosity as an important attribute. Much of my attention in my first 100 days has focused on a listening and learning tour of the university through visits to 48 colleges and administrative units. I have met amazing faculty and staff members, dedicated leaders and bright and enthusiastic students. I have been struck by how many of our students come to us from multigenerational Spartan families, whether they come from Michigan or beyond—another testament to Spartans' enduring passion for this university.

We met many such families over spring graduation weekend when we congratulated more than 9,500 students on the attainment of their degrees. I reminded all our grads in our commencement ceremonies that they join a global family of degreed Spartan alums more than half a million strong and urged them to stay connected and engaged.

My favorite place on any campus is still the classroom. I love my interchanges with students and their professors and instructors, whose

professionalism is vital to Michigan State's mission and students' success. Attending our annual recognitions of MSU's exceptional teachers, mentors and faculty researchers has been a highlight of my experience here so far.

Such excellent teaching, learning, scholarship and research deserve equally capable facilities for Spartans to achieve their fullest success. State-of-the-art facilities are also a prerequisite for MSU to fulfill its potential as a leading global research institution and a passionately public university. We need to continue to assess our building needs as we move forward and, recently, helping break ground for vital upgrades and moving other projects forward gave me great encouragement that our means will match our aspirations.

Two recent building projects we launched, the Dairy Cattle Teaching and Research Center and expansion of our Plant Science Greenhouses, will support our research, teaching and partnerships in the plant and animal sciences with modern and capable facilities for many years to come. And a new biomedical research building in Detroit in collaboration with our partners at Henry Ford Health will add capacity and synergy to our joint research into cancer, neuroscience, immunology and infectious diseases, together with a focus on health inequities and disparities.



We are also excited about our new state-of-the-art Student Recreation and Wellness Center and our beautiful multicultural center, both currently under construction. The recreation facility will contribute to students' well-being and success, and the multicultural center will support our welcoming campus and foster cultural and intellectual curiosity and understanding.

People are the center of our university's mission of advancing knowledge and transforming lives, and I am excited by our plans to support all those we serve with world-class programs, facilities, research and outreach. Thanks to all our alums, donors and friends who provide the extra margin to make it all possible.

Go Green!

Kevin M. Guskiewicz, Ph.D.
(pronounced GUS-ka-wits)

PRESIDENT
PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF KINESIOLOGY

DERRICK L. TURNER



FIND YOUR PEOPLE

with MSU Alumni Clubs & Affinity Groups

Connect with a global network more than **520,000 strong** by finding an alumni club or affinity group. You'll build meaningful relationships, expand your professional network and give back to your community and future Spartans.

- Alumni clubs are Spartan communities that exist in most major metropolitan areas, where you can create lasting relationships and make a meaningful local impact.
- Affinity groups connect Spartans around the globe who share similar interests, aspirations, identities or experiences as a way to come together through a shared voice.

- There are over 100 regional clubs and 15 affinity groups around the globe. If a local option is not available near you, there are several ways to engage digitally.
- Events hosted in 2023 by alumni clubs and affinity groups included networking opportunities, game watches, service events, fundraisers, galas, game nights and more.

VIEW CLUB EVENTS



FIND YOUR CLUB



FROM THE EDITOR

Spartan

EDITOR

Tim Cerullo, '08

ART DIRECTOR & DESIGNER

Jen Weaver

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Ryan Loren

WRITERS

Eric Butterman
 Alex Dardas, '15
 David Silverberg
 Daniel P. Smith
 Russ White, '82, '01
 Justin Whitmore

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Samantha Brichta, '17
 Dalin Clark, '88
 Matt Davenport
 Deon Foster, '99
 Melanie Kauffman
 Melody Kindraka, '04
 Zoe Kissel, '18
 Sue Nichols, '84
 Pat Shellenbarger, '72
 Alex Tekip, '15, '21
 Dana Whyte, '24

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University Advancement
 MSU Alumni Office
 535 Chestnut Rd.,
 Room 300
 East Lansing, MI 48824
 517-355-8314
 alumni.msu.edu

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TO SUBMIT LETTERS

Email SpartanMagazine@msu.edu. Or send mail to: Editor, 535 Chestnut Rd., #300, East Lansing, MI. 48824. We reserve the right to select and edit letters for length and clarity.



Winter 2024 magazine content is available online at go.msu.edu/spartan-24-winter

KICKING 'EM OPEN

At the risk of sounding overly simplistic, what happens at Michigan State opens a lot of different doors for a lot of different people. Those folks don't have to be affiliated with the university to reap the benefits. And that's the beauty of this place that was founded as a school of, for and by the people—Spartans stand by it.

Whether it's a generations-old family farm in Michigan working to protect the Great Lakes and further the future of the industry, a chemical engineer on a mission to make manufacturing more efficient and sustainable, or an innovative

plant breeder training the next generation of global hunger fighters, it's inspiring to see the things we do and the people we work with touching lives around the world.

Of course, with it being spring, we're watching the next set of game changers move their tassels right about now. My congratulations and admiration go out to this latest class of graduates. It's always exciting to see a new cohort on their way to big things. To watch them walk across the stage and set off into the world to make an impact the Spartan way—the only way they know.

So, which doors will be opened next?

Tim Cerullo, '08
EDITOR, SPARTAN MAGAZINE

LITERARY LUMINARY

Thank you for the article on the great author and Spartan alum Tom McGuane. "Ninety-two in the Shade" remains among the classics of mid-20th century American literature, and one can see his influence on some of Jimmy Buffet's songs (as well as Buffet's influence on his later novels).

David Hanna, '84
HOBE SOUND, FL

THE SPARTAN SPIRIT

As the past editor of a national publication, I want to say "good job" with Spartan. I truly know what goes into each issue, and this magazine represents Michigan State well. Go Green!

Christopher Mundy, '96
CHICAGO, IL

Find something
new to love
about MSU!



New and archived stories, videos and audio
that'll jump off the screen and into your heart.

go.msu.edu/stories

Beneath^{the} Pines

News & Views from Campus



Instruction Innovation

MSU faculty are finding creative ways to integrate technology in the classroom to enhance the student experience. *(Read more, pg. 8-9)*

MATT MITCHELL

EXPERIMENTING WITH MOTION AND EMOTION

Augmented reality helps students in the New Media Laboratory class in the College of Arts & Letters explore the power of movement and expression.

In the class, students are tasked with producing a short performance in which they play both characters, recording their performance as one character, then the other character while wearing a motion-capture suit. Throughout the process, students learn cinematography, video editing, laying an audio track and digital creation on a small budget. They also explore movement and how it can convey a story.

“There is a lot to consider,” said Brad Willcuts, associate professor of musical theatre and choreography. “What story do you want to tell? How do you move like a completely different character? How do you interact with someone who isn’t there but still have it be seamless for the final production?”



A student in a motion-capture suit.



Exploring a different reality

Virtual education in real life. What happens when two classes come together via VR headset?

Twice a week, students in the courses Avatar Psychology and Understanding Virtual Reality Experiences join classes using a VR headset. Students have discussions, break out into small groups, create and move 3D objects and answer questions by teleporting to the front of the room, even changing their surroundings throughout class.

“I hope to introduce students to the future

of virtual education and how we can be in different places but still participate in experiential learning,” said Rabindra “Robby” Ratan, associate professor of media and information in the College of Communication Arts and Sciences.

Students also explore the psychological impacts of VR technology and the possibilities it presents in communication, business and society.



LEARNING AT YOUR OWN PACE

In the College of Engineering's Computer Aided Manufacturing Lab, QR codes are all over the place.

The QR codes, found in, on and around multiple pieces of equipment, connect students to a variety of online information, including equipment manuals, instructional videos, checklists and quizzes.

“The QR-coded checklists allow students to complete the lab experiments at their own pace. If a student is picking up on the information, they can go forward without waiting for an instructor in the room to sign off on items in the checklist,” said Sunil Kishore Chakrapani, assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering. “At the same time, instructors can dedicate more time on students who need the support.”

NICK SCHRADER

Making feedback more objective

Interior design faculty employ eye-tracking software in the evaluation of students' computerized 3D models.

The software creates heat maps indicating where the viewer's eyes stopped first and for how long—basically what captures their attention.

“There can be tension when providing feedback, especially if students perceive instructors are being overly harsh,” says Linda Nubani, director of the Interior Design Program in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. “The results unveil the subconscious thoughts and reactions of individuals to the design. We gain insights into how diverse perspectives perceive the work without a single word being spoken.”

MORE ON WEB | Learn more: go.msu.edu/eye-track



Before-and-after images show what grabs the attention of viewers using eye-tracking software.

Winning designs send students to New York Fashion Week

Following the theme of sustainability, participants in this year's MSU Spartan Fashion Design Collection Competition were tasked with using recycled MSU clothing provided by the Spartan Bookstore to create a unique look.

Rebecca Schuiling, director of the competition for the Apparel and Textile Design program, said the judges deemed the fashions made by seniors Abigail Jones and Whitney Howard as the most original and creative sustainable concept designs.

"It's a great feeling when you can repurpose something that was already produced and give it new life and meaning," Jones said.

As winners of the competition, Jones and Howard earned a VIP experience at February's New York Fashion Week where they received a behind-the-scenes look at the global fashion scene while gaining invaluable industry insights.

MORE ON WEB | Learn more: go.msu.edu/fashion



The winning designs by Abigail Jones (left) and Whitney Howard on display at the Spartan Bookstore in MSU's International Center.

Whitney Howard (left) and Abigail Jones in New York City.

COLLEGE OF ARTS & LETTERS



See how River spends his workday



Meet River, the new Spartan comfort dog

The Michigan State University Department of Police and Public Safety introduced its new comfort dog, River

River will work alongside Community Outreach Lieutenant Kim Parviainen and perform numerous duties, including attending events on campus, supporting students, faculty and staff and addressing wellness needs within the Spartan community.

River was named after the Red Cedar River, which runs through the heart of Michigan State University's campus. He completed his training program in December 2023 through the Paws with a Cause program based in Wayland, Michigan.

"We are excited to introduce River to our Spartan community," said Police Chief Chris Rozman. "Trained comfort dogs are proven to help with fostering dialogue between law enforcement and the community, supporting survivors during investigations, and decreasing anxiety in the workplace. River will be a great addition to our team."

MSU DEPARTMENT OF POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

The Panda Network



Study finds the iconic bears use their own form of social media—checking in with family, networking and scoping the dating scene.

A recent study shows pandas aren't the solitary beasts everyone previously thought.

Former Spartan Thomas Connor spent months hanging in the forests of China's Wolong Natural Nature Reserve for his Ph.D. from MSU's Center for Systems Integration and Sustainability where he discovered scent-marking trees through which pandas were exchanging information.

The trees are ripe with information, telling the sniffer who the animal is and if they've encountered them before. It also tells the marker's sex, an idea of how dominant and large the bear is and whether they're ready to mate.

"The discoveries in this study shed new light on how pandas use their habitat," said Jianguo "Jack" Liu, senior author of the article, Rachel Carson Chair in Sustainability and CSIS director. "Anything we can learn about how they live and what they need can ultimately help inform good conservation policies and maybe understand our own behavior a little more."

MORE ON WEB | Learn more: go.msu.edu/panda-social



“ *The discoveries in this study shed new light on how pandas use their habitat. Anything we can learn about how they live and what they need can ultimately help inform good conservation policies and maybe understand our own behavior a little more.*

Jianguo “Jack” Liu,
Rachel Carson Chair in Sustainability and Director, Center for Systems Integration and Sustainability

A smarter way to serve

Surveying 950 U.S. counties, MSU researchers are finding out if mental health and substance abuse disorder services are widely available to people interacting with the criminal justice system.

"Most counties offer only a tiny fraction of the community services that are necessary to keep people out of jail," said C.S. Mott Endowed Professor of Public Health Jennifer Johnson. "We're hoping that by publishing this article, county administrators will look at the list of services that they don't yet offer and try to make them happen."



CRACKING THE CODE TO A HEALTHIER POTATO CHIP

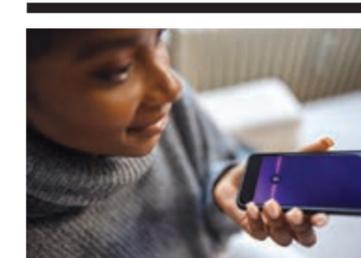
In a breakthrough for the snack food industry, a team of scientists led by MSU professors Jiming Jiang and David Douches has discovered a key genetic mechanism behind the darkening and potential health concerns associated with cold-stored potatoes.

The low temperatures required for preserving potatoes triggers a process called cold-induced sweetening (CIS) which converts starches to sugars. Processing tubers loaded with sugars results in darkened fries and chips and generates acrylamide, a carcinogenic compound formed during high-temperature processing.

Douches, the lead of the MSU Potato Breeding and Genetics Program, has put into practice a technique developed by Jiang to stop CIS through gene editing. The work could have implications for other processed starchy foods and could offer greater flexibility in storage and transportation, potentially reducing food waste and costs.

"This discovery represents a significant advancement in our understanding of potato development and its implications for food quality and health," said Jiang. "It has the potential to affect every single bag of potato chips around the world."

MORE ON WEB | Learn more: go.msu.edu/chips



BREAKING BARRIERS OF VOICE-ACTIVATED AI

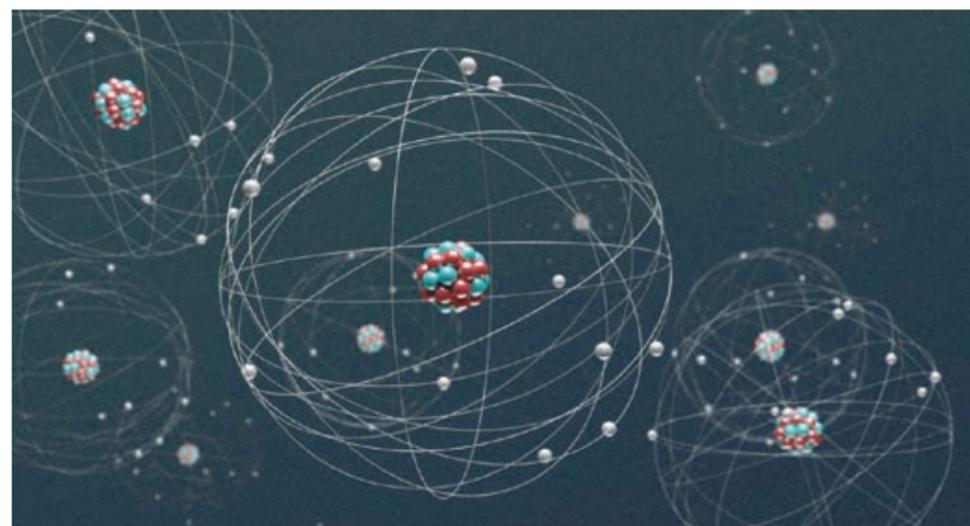
The millions who stutter "are getting left behind as the rest of us find this great convenience of being able to talk to our cars and our house ... and they can't," said J. Scott Yarus, Department of Communicative Sciences and Disorders professor and director of the Spartan Stuttering Laboratory.

A multidisciplinary team of researchers is tackling the problem with the development of a prototype app, called HeardAI, that is designed to recognize stuttered speech and could one day interface with existing voice systems such as Siri and Alexa.

GETTY IMAGES



WHAT IS AN ISOTOPE?



FRIB creates 5 new isotopes

Spartans lead an international team in paving the way to new discoveries

“ *I like to draw the analogy of taking a journey. We’ve been looking forward to going somewhere we’ve never been before, and this is the first step. We’ve left home and we’re starting to explore.*

Bradley Sherrill
University Distinguished Professor in MSU’s College of Natural Science

An international research team working at the Facility for Rare Isotope Beams (FRIB) has brought the stars closer to Earth with the creation of five new isotopes—known as thulium-182, thulium-183, ytterbium-186, ytterbium-187 and lutetium-190.

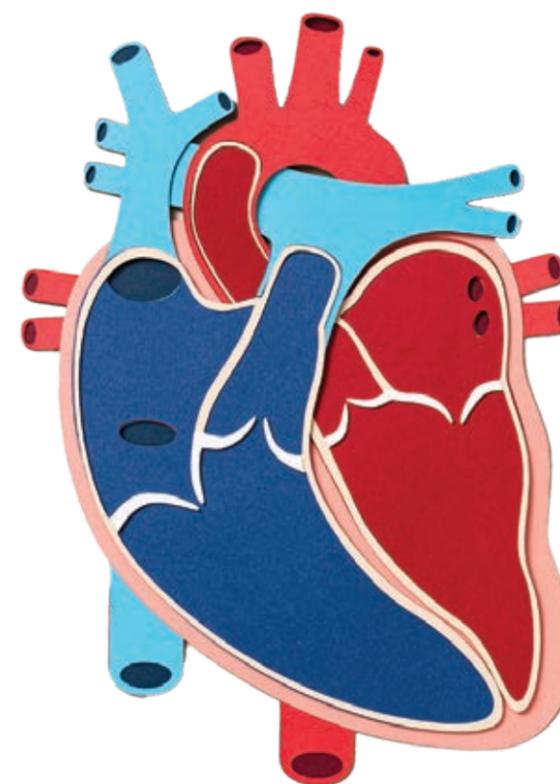
With researchers now knowing how to make these new isotopes, they can start making them in greater quantities to conduct experiments that were never possible before. The researchers are also eager to follow the path they’ve forged to make more new isotopes that are even more like what are found in the stars.

“This is probably the first time these isotopes have existed on the surface of the Earth,” said Bradley Sherrill, University Distinguished Professor in MSU’s College of Natural Science and head of the Advanced Rare Isotope Separator department at FRIB.

“I like to draw the analogy of taking a journey. We’ve been looking forward to going somewhere we’ve never been before, and this is the first step. We’ve left home and we’re starting to explore.”

STAR PLANNERS

The FRIB Project team received the U.S. Department of Energy’s Secretary of Energy Achievement Award, which recognizes outstanding achievements of individuals and teams who have gone above and beyond in fulfilling the DOE’s mission and serving the nation. The Secretary of Energy Achievement Award represents the DOE’s highest form of employee achievement recognition.



HEART TO HEART

Improved synthetic human mini heart models will help researchers find cardiovascular disease solutions

Recent advancements in stem-cell technologies and bioengineering are guiding MSU researchers to the forefront of the fight against cardiovascular disease. Thanks to the development of patented synthetic human-like hearts first created at MSU, researchers can study human heart development and congenital heart disease on highly accurate microscopic models.

MORE ON WEB | Learn more: go.msu.edu/mini-heart



MSU / GETTY IMAGES

MSU HITS RESEARCH MILESTONE

MSU had an exceptional year for research volume in 2023, breaking previous records by achieving \$844 million in total research and development expenditures. The increase of \$84.8 million over the 2022 total of \$759 million brings the university closer to its goal of reaching \$1 billion in annual research expenditures by 2030.

ONE NIGHT 2 CHAMPIONS



#3

Forest Akers West Golf Course ranking on GolfPass.com's Top 25 Best Public College Courses.



On the ice

In front of a packed house the men's ice hockey team made history ... again.

Freshman Patrick Geary's 5-4 overtime goal against rival Michigan delivered pandemonium and the Spartans' first-ever Big Ten Tournament title in late March.

"I was excited, especially to do it at home," said Head Coach Adam Nightingale. "You could argue that might have been the biggest game at Munn ... I mean, that crowd was awesome. It was awesome last week, and it's been awesome all year. For them to stick with us and believe in us, we had to earn it. I think that's what makes it even more special."

Earlier, MSU made history by winning the program's first-ever Big Ten regular-season crown. The team's last regular-season title came in the CCHA in 2001 with the last postseason championship in 2006. The Big Ten established its own men's ice hockey circuit starting in the 2013-14 season.

Michigan State ended its season in the NCAA Regional finals, concluding with a 25-10-3 overall record in the second year under Nightingale.

MSU ATHLETICS



In the gym

Michigan State gymnastics needed every point to reach its goal.

The top-seeded Spartans won their first-ever Big Ten Championship in a tension-filled session that came down to the final routine at a sold-out Jenison Field House.

MSU had its fourth highest score of the season, finishing with 197.600—just enough to slip past Minnesota (197.500), Michigan (197.225) and Ohio State (197.050).

Junior Skyla Schulte became the first

MSU gymnast to win the all-around title at the BIG Championships with a score of 39.600. She also earned a share of the floor title, the first for MSU since 2017.

MSU head coach Mike Rowe collected the Big Ten Coach of the Year award for the third-straight year.

The Spartans also have won back-to-back regular-season titles.

MSU ATHLETICS

“ Being able to be a part of a history-making program is insane. I talked a lot before that the pressure we have coming into this is a privilege. Just being out here, I'm grateful to be here ... I always knew that Michigan State felt like home.

Skyla Schulte
MSU junior

MORE ON **WEB** | Learn more: go.msu.edu/mat-champs



CELEBRATING MOZART

Artists from the College of Music paid tribute to one of the greatest composers of all time, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, during the 14th annual Happy Birthday, Mozart! concert at Fairchild Theatre.

Born Jan. 27, 1756, Mozart wrote and excelled in every musical genre of his time, and he left the world with such an expansive catalog of music that helps MSU artists make this annual concert unique each year.

MSU Theatre presents sensory-friendly musical

The MSU Department of Theatre's Sense-Ability Ensemble held public performances of its latest production in March at the Arena Theatre in the MSU Auditorium Building.

Artistic Director Dionne O'Dell, a Department of Theatre faculty member who specializes in children's theatre and theatre for audiences that are neurodiverse, adapted the critically acclaimed children's book "What if Wilhelmina" by Joseph Belisle into a musical for the ensemble.

The Sense-Ability Ensemble is comprised of Spartan students who are driven by the belief that theater should be inclusive and accessible to everyone. Through their work, they aim to highlight the power of diversity and ability while providing theater access for all.

"While this show is appropriate for all audiences, it was created from the ground up for audiences that are neurodiverse," said O'Dell. "I believe there is a big difference between 'you are welcome here' and 'this was created specifically for you.'"

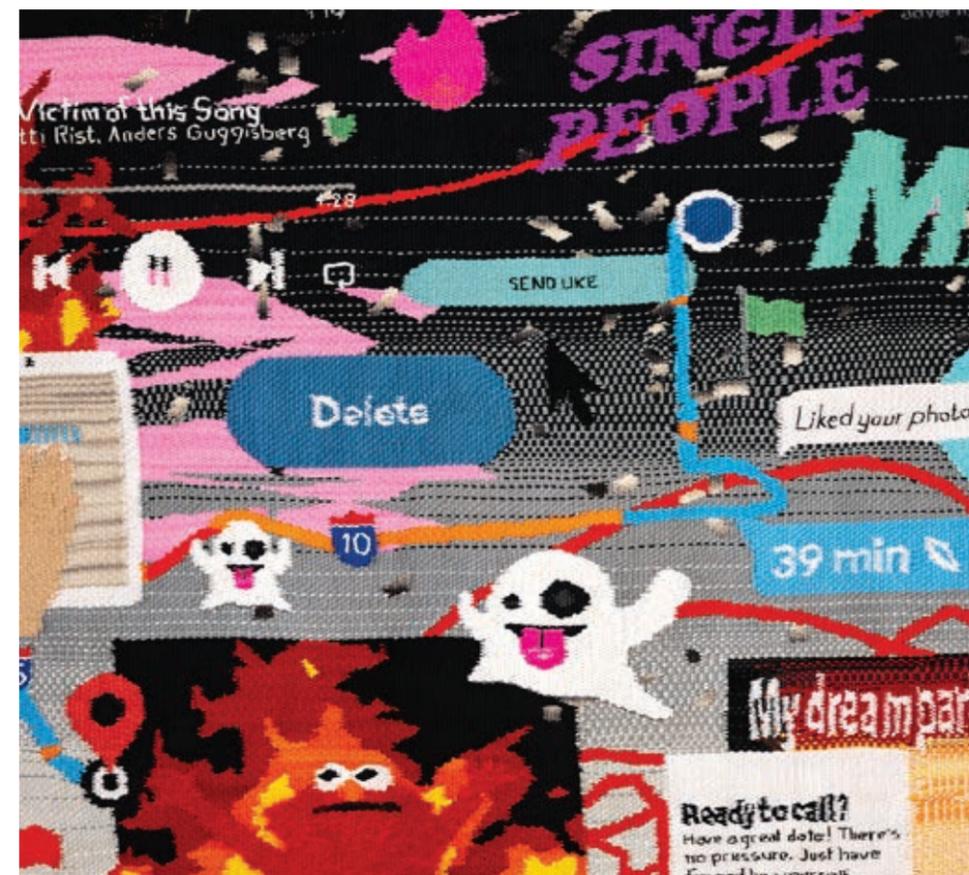


MORE ON WEB | Learn more: go.msu.edu/sense-ability

MSU DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE/RAYMOND BLACK PHOTOGRAPHY

KAYLA MATTES

Kayla Mattes: **DOOMSCROLLING** is on view until Aug. 18, 2024.



Doomscrolling

MSU Broad Art Museum exhibition explores relationship with digital culture.

How often do you catch yourself going down an internet rabbit hole?

California-based artist Kayla Mattes explores the ephemeral concepts that keep us stuck to the web: memes, gifs, TikToks, apps and the quest for information to our most burning questions. Through a playful and humorous—yet critical—lens, the exhibition presents different musings using handmade weaving to unravel our addiction and explore our relationship with digital culture.

Through Mattes' work, weaving invites us to slow down and look closely—actions

that feel counterintuitive to the hurried pace of the internet and our lives.

Moments of humor are embedded in her tapestries, which help us respond to pressing existential questions about technology and the current state of the world. The artist asks us to stop doomscrolling, look closely and rethink the way the digital sphere shapes our daily life.

MORE ON WEB | Learn more: go.msu.edu/doomscrolling

Give Green Day goes big

When the clock struck midnight, Gillian Croteau wasted no time.

Gillian, a current student and president of the MSU Cheer and Stunt team, made the very first gift for the university's eighth annual Give Green Day. Because the team is fully self-funded, Gillian and her teammates strategized in advance.

"After winning our first National Championship title in program history last year," she said, "it was really important to us to raise enough money this year to have the opportunity to compete at nationals again."

Gillian was one 7,073 donors who raised a combined \$1,550,749—the second highest amount in Give Green Day history.

Gifts came from as close by as East Lansing, to every U.S. state, to places as far away as Indonesia and Nigeria.



But it was MSU dad Colin McKenzie who earned the "Distance Challenge" award for making a gift all the way from Australia. "It's important, as a parent of the current generation," he said, "to do what we can to support the university so that this, and generations of students to come, have such an opportunity."

MORE ON WEB | Learn more: go.msu.edu/big-ggd



Joan Secchia, '64

Spartan tennis receives historic \$10 million gift

"As a tennis enthusiast and a longtime Spartan, I am thrilled to make this commitment in support of both the men's and women's tennis programs at MSU," said alumna Joan Secchia, '64, following her pledge of \$10 million.

The most immediate applications of Secchia's gift include significant

improvements to the Spartan tennis facilities, including new outdoor courts and enhanced spectator seating.

"Today is a momentous occasion for the Spartan tennis programs," said men's tennis coach Harry Jadun. "Our goal is to compete for championships, and Joan's gift will allow us to do just that."



Campus Recognizes Sexual Assault Awareness Month

April's student-led effort, *It's On Us Week*, fosters a culture of support, empowerment and awareness.

In recognition of April being Sexual Assault Awareness Month, Michigan State University's student-led It's On Us planning committee welcomed Kimberly Corban, a nationally recognized advocate for survivors of sexual assault, as the keynote speaker for this year's Spring Week of Action.

The Spring Week of Action aims to raise awareness about sexual assault, connect community members with campus resources and amplify prevention efforts within the MSU community.

Corban's keynote address was a highlight of the week, offering insight into her empowering journey as a survivor and the critical importance of advocacy and support. Corban also spent time with MSU students and staff, and toured the MSU Center for Survivors.

"The Center for Survivors they have crafted on campus is hands-down the best survivor-centered environment I have ever visited," Corban said in a blog post on her website following the event. "No detail was overlooked in the creation of this space."

Throughout the week, students, staff and faculty participated in a series of inclusive events designed to reaffirm the collective commitment to combating campus sexual assault. Engaging activities like making tie-dye tote bags and decorating self-care journals complemented informative sessions such as the Student Activism Symposium.

"The committee has planned a week of fun, low-stress activities that we're hoping will draw the community into a conversation about what is being done on campus to prevent sexual violence and how they can get involved," said Jodie Goodman, prevention specialist with the Prevention, Outreach and Education Department and chair of the It's On Us planning committee.

Each year, the MSU It's On Us Week of Action represents a united effort to foster a culture of support, empowerment and awareness. All members of the MSU community are encouraged to participate and spread the word within their networks.



ABOUT IT'S ON US:

It's On Us is a national movement that encourages everyone to play a role in ending sexual assault on college campuses. Through education, awareness and empowerment, It's On Us strives to create safer environments for all students.

The Intentional Tourist

Growing up, traveling changed her life. Now, Megan Grant, '16, leads a woman-centric travel company that's determined to make a positive impact—on the traveler and the destination. BY RYAN LOREN

Megan Grant was just 15 years old when she traveled on her own for the first time.

While globe-trotting vacations were common growing up, Grant's solo summer in the Caribbean proved one of the most powerful and transformative experiences of her life.

She followed that trip with another, backpacking Europe for three months after graduating from MSU in 2016 with a degree in communications. Again, she braved the journey solo, deflecting questions from concerned friends and relatives about a woman traveling alone.

Grant knew that others struggled to relate, but those formative years were important.

"Travel, for me, has only further expanded my understanding of not only myself but other cultures, the world around me and everything else," Grant said. "I'm a much more compassionate person today because of the amount I've traveled."

"And I think that can be true about anybody who chooses to explore the world with an open mind."

Grant determined to do more than just proselytize on the benefits of a well-traveled soul. In early 2021, she launched Cherish Tours LLC,



Megan Grant
College of Communication Arts and Sciences, '16

a woman-centric travel agency focused on making a positive impact on both individual travelers and the destinations they visit.

The venture is a combination of Grant's lifetime devotion to travel and her natural inclination toward planning and organization, which she describes as her superpower.

For a time, that power led her to the business hospitality industry. Her early career dutifully checked the boxes for both travel and logistics, but her role in event and conference coordination was more unfulfilling than expected.

"Conferences are in-and-out, and you don't really appreciate the places

“There’s something powerful about bringing women from different walks of life, different ages, different communities, all of these people together in a space where they can be their most authentic self.”

that you're in. You go to a conference center, you stay in the hotel and you don't get anything about the culture," she said. "Travel in that world was not the enjoyable kind. It was work travel. I was burning out on it."

When the industry was crippled by the pandemic, Grant was given the kick she needed to pursue her own vision. She credits MSU for giving her the skills and confidence she needed to become an entrepreneur.

"MSU gave me my ability to problem solve and to love learning," Grant said. "I don't shy away from having to learn something new."

Cherish hosted its first tour in 2021 with eight more the following two years and nine planned for 2024. Destinations have included Costa



Alaska

Rica, Panama, Denmark, Iceland, Turkey and Tanzania, along with domestic tours in Alaska and Utah.

Grant's goal is to create experiences that empower women. "There's something powerful about bringing women from different walks of life, different ages, different communities, all of these people together in a space where they can be their most authentic self," Grant said.

The tours themselves continue that mission through the support of local, women-owned businesses at each destination.

"There are studies that prove when you give a woman a dollar, the effect it spreads in her community is much greater than when you give it to a man," Grant said. "I believe in the ripple effect of that. The empowerment of not only one person, but many. Supporting women and their dreams creates positive things in the world."



Faroe Islands

Personally, Grant has visited 40 countries with no plans to slow down.

"I always hope to learn more and more as I continue to travel," she said. "I hope the women who come on my trips have that same learning experience—a better understanding of themselves and where their comfort zones can be expanded, as well as the cultural beauty of our world and seeing the beauty in people's differences."

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MEGAN GRANT

Grateful for the Grass

After 30 years in the field, Major League Baseball's first female head groundskeeper, Heather Nabozny, '93, knows where following your passion can take you. BY RUSS WHITE, '82, '01

Heather Nabozny learned to love grass at a young age. While growing up in Milford, Michigan, Nabozny worked alongside her dad at a lawn care company. That love eventually led her to East Lansing and MSU's renowned turfgrass program.

"It gave me the fundamentals and building blocks for everything I've done," she said. "They've stood behind me and supported me all along."

While at MSU, Nabozny interned with the Spartan Athletics' grounds team. With the help of her adviser, she connected with the Toronto Blue Jays and began her career at the organization's spring training complex in Dunedin, Florida. After spending time with the West Michigan Whitecaps, a minor league team based near Grand Rapids, she became the first female head groundskeeper in Major League Baseball (MLB) history ahead of the 1999 season. And, to top it off, it happened to be a job with her favorite team.

"I grew up in Michigan and have always loved the Tigers," said Nabozny. "I don't know of another groundskeeper in the Major Leagues who is working in their home state.

That's very special. Being a female, I felt a responsibility and was focused on doing the job right and well so no one could say 'See what happens when you hire a woman?'"

She hopes she can be an inspiration to other women—an encouraging reminder that they can pursue interests even if they are nontraditional ones. "Women are doing so much these days," she said. "There really isn't anything they can't do."

On the field, Nabozny says there are a lot of boxes to check. After all, a big-league job is a major responsibility. "The field has to play well. It has to be safe," she said. "It also has to be protected from the weather, people and events."

Because when the Tigers go on the road, it doesn't mean the stadium goes dark. Quite the opposite.

"Concerts, soccer games, high school and college baseball games, corporate batting practices. I think we even had a kickball game last year," said Nabozny. "There's a balance between too many events and baseball. But in this work, no news is good news. We know we've succeeded when no one even notices we're there."

Nabozny advises those who might want to follow in her footsteps that MLB groundskeeping is about a

65-hour-a-week commitment with almost no days off once the season starts. "It's more than just dragging the infield in the fifth inning."

Here's a basic rundown: The grass in Comerica Park is mowed every day, even when the Tigers are away. A typical game day finds Heather's team arriving at the park beginning at 7 a.m. for a 7 p.m. game. Two team members start mowing the infield first thing. And five more come in at 10 to start cleaning the bullpens, raking the infield and preparing the mound and plate. Nabozny's assistant mows the outfield.

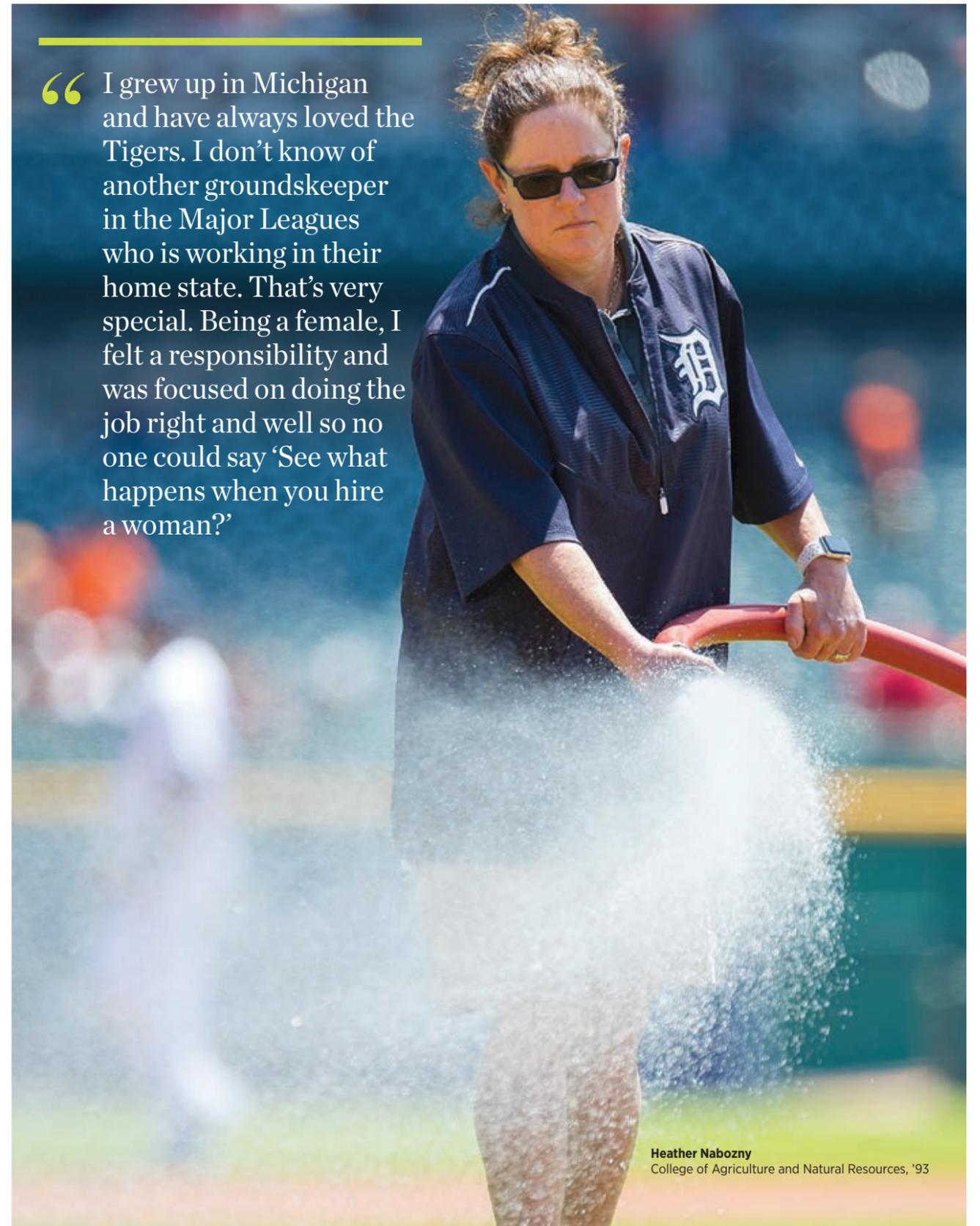
While Comerica Park is equipped with an irrigation system that provides the bulk of the watering, she likes it when Mother Nature does the job for them. Water from irrigation systems can contain bicarbonates that can be harmful to the soil.

"We like when it rains," she said. "Just not on game days."

But even when it does, Nabozny can look back on an enriching career filled with unique experiences, groundbreaking moments and meaningful collaboration.

"I'm grateful for this job and that I got into this field, which I've been in for over 30 years," she said. "My staff is amazing—like a family. And I get to work in my home state for a Major League team."

“I grew up in Michigan and have always loved the Tigers. I don't know of another groundskeeper in the Major Leagues who is working in their home state. That's very special. Being a female, I felt a responsibility and was focused on doing the job right and well so no one could say 'See what happens when you hire a woman?'"



Heather Nabozny
College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, '93

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALLISON FARRAND/DETROIT TIGERS



A Spartan Sports Hero You Might Not Know

Through his nonprofit, Therapeutic Adventures, Mark Andrews, '78, is helping people with disabilities experience and connect with the outdoors via the world of adaptive sports. BY ERIC BUTTERMAN

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MARK ANDREWS

From the football field to track and field, Michigan State is home to no shortage of sports greats. In 1978, one of those heroes—Earvin Johnson—was laying the groundwork for what would become a legendary hoops career, and Mark Andrews is one of the many Spartans quick to recall being part of those Magic days.

Of course, Andrews (though he'd probably be quick to deflect it) is a sports hero himself.

In 1981, he founded Therapeutic Adventures, a nonprofit educational organization that helps people with physical and developmental disabilities learn to ski, kayak, fly fish and more.

At the time, these types of programs were scarce. But Andrews, an avid hockey player since his youth, constantly looked to expand inclusive sports offerings.

"When people see they can do something that they didn't know they could do, it opens them up to all sorts of possibilities," he said. "It's also just giving the feeling so many of us get from these activities. Everyone deserves to ski if they want to, feeling like they are flying on snow, or being out on the water enjoying the peacefulness of fishing. Where it's possible, we want to make it happen."

And there are many ways to make it happen. Take skiing, for example.

"There's two-track skiing where you stand on two skis for people who have the core strength to keep their balance, such as many blind skiers. In that situation, you would also



use a guiding technique," he said. "There's three-track for individuals who have the loss of a limb, which uses two forearm crutches with ski tips. There's four-track skiing which has two hand-held outriggers for someone with cerebral palsy or traumatic brain injury. There are also two types of sit skis, which can be for a paraplegic or a double amputee, or someone who primarily uses a wheelchair."

Partnership is the key to making the programs at Therapeutic Adventures a reality. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Andrews successfully applied for a grant from the Dave Matthews Band, allowing whole families to enjoy the outdoors. "They couldn't wait to get out there," he said. "Many of them expressed that they needed this during that time."

Andrews credits Michigan State with helping to build the path to his career. "I have fond memories learning in kinesiology class. The biggest influence was

my student teaching placement working with populations that had intellectual disabilities," he said. "The experience helped me to have a better understanding and better visualize how I could help."

For Andrews, he feels this work has been more than a career. It's his calling.

"You can go your whole life searching for why you're here, and I found it early on," he said. "The experiences have been incredible. One of the earlier campers and I are going skiing soon. It's been decades and we became great friends."

Andrews may never have sunk a hook shot to win an NBA Finals game like Magic Johnson, but he has helped get many hooked on sports for a lifetime when maybe they once looked at that athletic endeavor and thought, "Not in my lifetime."

"It's been a gift to do these programs," Andrews said. "And it's changed my life. It's hard to imagine stopping."

Picking Her Place

The daughter of migrant workers, Dayana Villagran, '21, earned an MSU engineering degree and a position with General Motors thanks to a blend of grit and grace. BY DANIEL P. SMITH

With the sun creeping over the Michigan landscape, Dayana

Villagran remembers climbing a ladder to pick apples. The work familiar. The field anonymous.

Sunrise to sunset.

Seven days a week.

As autumn advanced and the weather turned more brutish and bitter, Villagran's fingers often froze as she tugged on one cold apple after another. In those moments, she followed her father's guidance and smacked her hands on the ladder—a crude, yet effective remedy when the objective is to collect as many apples as possible.

"You feel instant pain, but it kind of numbs your hands to the point where you can't feel anything," Villagran said.

Such work shaped Villagran, the daughter of Mexican-born migrant workers who spent winters, springs and early summers in Florida picking oranges, tomatoes, watermelon, eggplant and other produce before following seasonal crops northward and landing in Michigan each fall.

The sixth of nine children, Villagran understood the practical purpose of the work, but she



Dayana Villagran
College of Engineering, '21



“Every time I wanted to give up, I’d recall moments in the burning heat of Florida or numbing cold in Michigan and reminded myself failure wasn’t an option.”

envisioned a different long-term reality for herself and her family.

"I just knew I had to go to college," Villagran said. "I was always told education is power and you can make a difference and be heard when you're educated."

Villagran arrived at Michigan State in 2017 as an MSU College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) Scholar, a longstanding residential program designed to help migrant and seasonal farmworker students transition to college life. CAMP provided Villagran with an immediate support system and community as she adjusted to unfamiliar terrain.

Beyond CAMP, Villagran found additional support and mentorship through three initiatives: the Cornerstone Engineering and Residential Experience (CoRe), Supporting Excellent Engineers and Women in Engineering. Those thoughtful initiatives, combined with Villagran's determined and diligent spirit, propelled her to a degree in mechanical engineering, a major she chose because of the discipline's problem-solving energy and its professional prospects.

"Every time I wanted to give up, I'd recall moments in the burning heat of Florida or numbing cold in Michigan and reminded myself failure wasn't an option," Villagran said.

After three separate summer internships with General Motors, Villagran began working as a full-time mechanical engineer in the automotive giant's body shop in January 2022. She continues

“I know there are others like me questioning what they can accomplish. I hope I can show them what's possible with a strong work ethic and dedication.”



serving as the shop's subject matter expert on conveyers, overseeing new installations and upgrades to ensure efficient operations. The work is varied, and the opportunity at a large, established company is enticing.

"Someday, I hope to hold a leadership position and have some impact on a global scale within the company," Villagran said.

Her journey from migrant work to Big Ten engineering graduate to General Motors is an inspiring tale, and one Villagran has shared with members of CoRe as well as General Motors Latino Network.

"I know there are others like me questioning what they can

accomplish," Villagran said. "I hope I can show them what's possible with a strong work ethic and dedication."

Laboring in the field, Villagran didn't think much about her surroundings or the bigger picture. She slammed her hands against the ladder because survival required movement.

MSU, however, showed Villagran a clear path to social mobility and empowered personal growth. Her perseverance, meanwhile, unlocked the stability she craved.

"Remembering the things I went through drives me still," Villagran said. "It was a tough road to get here, but I know what hard work and focus can create."

An aerial photograph of a dense, vibrant green forest. A winding river or stream flows through the center of the forest, reflecting the sky. Soft, white mist or smoke drifts through the trees, creating a dreamy atmosphere. The overall scene is bright and natural.

Forces of Nature

Meet the Spartans using cutting-edge education and innovation to put the environment, and the future, first.





Farming for the Future

Spartan family partners with MSU researchers to protect the Great Lakes.

BY JUSTIN WHITMORE



For nearly 160 years, six generations of Isley family farmers have cultivated and preserved farmland in Michigan's Lenawee County.

Sunrise Farms, now a 1,100-acre corn and soybean farm, is operated by Jim and Laurie Isley and their youngest son, Jake. Jim and Jake make up the fifth and sixth generations of Isley farmers on the land in the River Raisin Watershed, located about 25 miles from the shores of western Lake Erie.

Jim and Laurie Isley met at MSU, where Laurie earned a degree in agricultural education and Jim majored in animal science. Laurie also grew up on a farm, raising pigs and crops, and after they were married in 1979, they established their own farm near Jim's parents.

The family takes pride in its stewardship of the land, implementing sustainable practices like no-till and strip-till systems,

cover crops, buffers, filter strips and water retention structures to keep nutrients on the farm. They also keep their eyes on the future to help ensure another 150 years of environmentally safe and productive farmland. Their efforts led to recognition by the American Soybean Association as the 2021 Northeast Regional winner of the Conservation Legacy Award.

This Spartan farming family made natural partners for MSU Researcher Ehsan Ghane, associate professor and MSU Extension specialist in the Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering.

"We met at MSU. Our son, Jake, went to MSU. We have a longstanding and close relationship with the university and that made us excited and comfortable participating in this partnership with Dr. Ghane," Jim said.

“

IT'S IMPORTANT TO ME, IF MY CHILDREN WANT TO FARM, THAT I PUT THEM IN THE POSITION WHERE THEY ARE FINANCIALLY ABLE TO DO SO, BUT ALSO HAVE THE LAND TO PASS ALONG TO THEM THAT IS IN BETTER SHAPE THAN WHEN I STARTED.

Jim Isley, '79
Co-owner, Sunrise Farms

“FARMING IS A GOOD TEACHER. FARMING IS IN MY BLOOD. I GREW UP WITH IT AND I LOVE IT. THE BIGGEST DRAW FOR ME IS TO SEE HOW THINGS GROW AND DEVELOP OVER TIME. FARMING IS A GOOD TEACHER OF PATIENCE AND RESILIENCE, THINGS I VALUE, AND IT REALLY GIVES PERSPECTIVE ON THE IMPACT I HAVE ON HELPING A CROP BE SUCCESSFUL, WORKING WITH OUR CREATION AND BEING GOOD STEWARDS OF OUR LAND.

Jake Isley, '12
Farmer, Sunrise Farms



ANOTHER TOOL IN OUR CONSERVATION TOOLBOX

Ghane's research examines the effectiveness of two types of water management systems: controlled drainage and saturated buffers. His work explores implementation methods for these systems and measures their effectiveness at keeping nutrients in fields—and out of surrounding waterways.

Supported by partnerships with the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), Conservation Districts, the Michigan Soybean Committee and Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), Ghane is developing practices he hopes will assist Michigan farmers in abiding by what he calls, “the golden rule of drainage—drain only what is necessary for crop production and not a drop more.”

Ghane's “Edge-of-Field” research project began in 2018 on three farms in the River Raisin Watershed, investigating the effectiveness of conservation drainage practices. The Isleys are one of the farm families in the region hosting this vital research.

“We want to show how effective these practices are and show farmers how beneficial they are, so we can encourage people to implement them. We eventually want farmers to adopt these practices voluntarily to improve water quality and crop yield,” Ghane said.

Laurie said MSU's emphasis on on-field research and allowing Michigan farmers to participate in a solutions-based approach is what drew the Isleys to the project.



Top: MSU doctoral student Babak Dialameh works with the MSU Extension Drainage Research Team to monitor the efficacy of various drainage techniques in reducing nutrient runoff.

Bottom: MSU research assistant Samantha Smith gathers data from an ongoing research partnership with Sunrise Farms.

The Isley Family



“MSU has always been a leader in providing unbiased information tailored to the farm and the farmer, and adapting big-picture research into more specific issues,” Laurie said. “MSU does a great job making the science something farmers can understand and use, which is a key to the land-grant role. We know not every farmer can adopt every new technique, but every farmer can do something in the way of conservation. Research like Dr. Ghane's provides proof that these techniques will be effective.”

PART OF COMMUNITIES THEY CARE ABOUT

MSU collaborates with local farmers through the River Raisin Watershed Council, Michigan Farm Bureau, MSU Extension and other organizations aimed at reducing environmental impact and water quality issues in the region. Ghane and his research team recently received a \$1.2 million grant extension from MDARD, enabling their work to continue.

According to Michigan Farm Bureau Conservation and Regulatory Specialist Laura Campbell, the drainage techniques Ghane and his team are implementing have already proven effective in managing nitrate losses on fields draining into the Mississippi River. Putting these techniques to work in the Western Lake Erie Basin will provide insight into whether the same will hold true for phosphorus losses into Lake Erie.

“Phosphorus management is a crucial step forward for the protection of the Western Lake Erie basin,” said Campbell. “Michigan farmers are invested in making sure they do the best they can to protect water quality in their own watershed.”

Campbell said research of this magnitude and scope requires stakeholder engagement, and MSU plays a key role in collaborating and communicating research processes and findings to ensure the information is available—and applicable—to farms and fields statewide.

FARMING IS A GOOD TEACHER

Jake Isley knew from an early age he wanted to work on the farm with his parents. He and his wife LeeAnn represent the future of the family operation, and participating in Ghane's research provides foundational data to keep Sunrise Farms moving forward.

Jake sees agriculture as a complex puzzle that his family spends every day trying to solve—not only for his own farm, but also working with his peers.

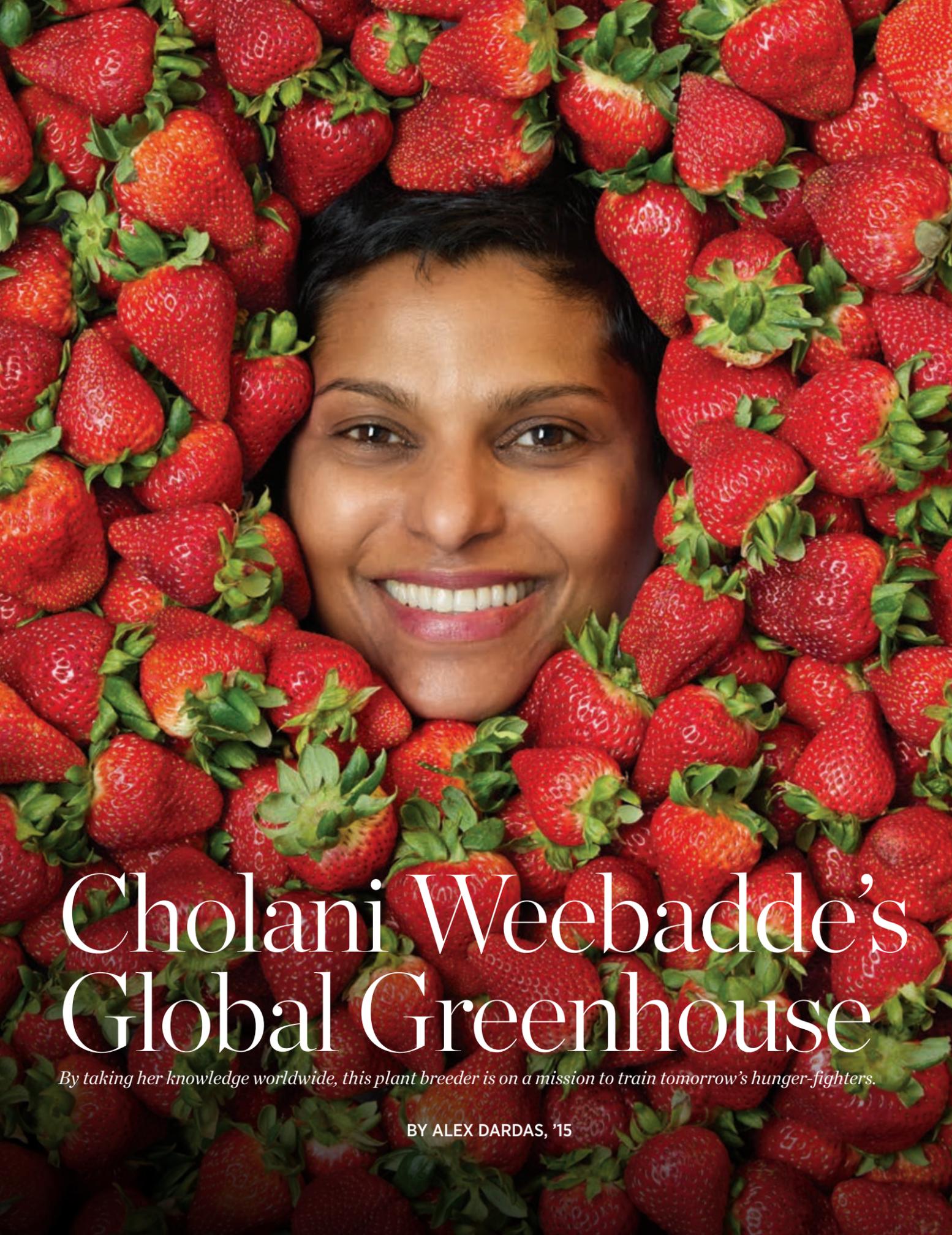
“There is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to agriculture and conservation practices,” Jake Isley said. “We want to continue to make progress and improvements in our system to be the best stewards of our land, lakes and water quality, but also find ways to support other farms developing systems tailored to their needs. Agriculture plays an important part in protecting the Great Lakes in Michigan, and Michigan farmers want to do what's best for the soil and water.”



ALGAL BLOOM IN LAKE ERIE

Overgrowth of algae colonies in Lake Erie produces toxins that can endanger human and animal health, pollute coastlines for residents and harm the communities that rely on Lake Erie for tourism. Nutrient runoff from agricultural operations, wastewater treatment plants and residential sources has led to the development of annual algal blooms.

LAUREN WOOD



Cholani Weebadde's Global Greenhouse

By taking her knowledge worldwide, this plant breeder is on a mission to train tomorrow's hunger-fighters.

BY ALEX DARDAS, '15



Where do you see yourself 25 years from now?

Presented with this question in the final year of her doctoral program, Dr. Cholani Weebadde knew her answer: "I want to train the next generation of plant breeders as hunger fighters."

Fast forward 20 years, now an associate professor and plant breeding—for International Programs at MSU, Weebadde—whose research focuses on strawberry breeding is putting that plan into action by launching the Global Plant Breeding (GPB) online masters program to teach students worldwide in the latest tools and technologies in plant breeding so they can fight hunger in their home countries.

Weebadde's focus on capacity-building is motivated by an ever-ticking clock: experts estimate that global food production must double by 2050 to feed a growing global population. And to meet this goal, plant breeders need to efficiently develop climate-resistant crops that can be sustainably grown. Tackling this challenge will require building global knowledge networks, and Weebadde believes that MSU is uniquely positioned to lead.

“MSU HAS A GLOBAL NAME, WITH GLOBALLY RESPECTED LEADERS IN AGRICULTURE. SO, WHEN I THINK, 'WHY MSU?' IT'S BECAUSE OF THE AMAZING GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE NETWORK WE HAVE BUILT AND THE GLOBALLY RELEVANT TRAINING PROGRAMS WE OFFER HERE. THOSE TWO TOGETHER CAN HELP FEED A HUNGRY WORLD.”

Cholani Weebadde, '05, Ph.D.
Associate professor, plant breeder for International Programs, Michigan State University

ARAN KESSLER

BRIDGING A GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE GAP

Originally from Sri Lanka, Weebadde came to MSU in 2000 as a graduate student in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR).

Weebadde's journey to starting the GPB program began with an informal parking lot meeting with Dr. Karim Maredia, the director of International Programs at CANR. When he described the impact of MSU's international agriculture program, Weebadde was surprised—and impressed.

"I did not know the extent of MSU's impact internationally," she said. "We continued to talk all the way into the building and by the time we got to the elevator Karim said, 'would you like to work with me?'"

In the early days of their collaboration, Maredia asked about her 25-year plan, and she realized that to become a hunger fighter, she would need to look beyond the borders of MSU, Michigan and the US. So, she began traveling and meeting with students and scholars across the world. She observed a sharp divide between traditional plant breeders and researchers like herself, who are trained to use the latest biotechnology methods. Without an understanding of modern technology and tools and hands-on experience, these plant breeders are at a significant disadvantage, hindering their ability to increase efficient food production worldwide.

"And then Covid happened"

During the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, Weebadde was unable to host in-person training programs at MSU or abroad, which led her to consider developing an online course that would allow her to train students without traveling. She first offered Plant Breeding 2 Fight Hunger as an online course in the summer of 2021. The response was immediate.

"In the first year, I had 102 participants from 21 countries," she said, "with some seeking online degree programs in plant breeding which encouraged me to develop the GPB online masters program."



LEVERAGING A RENOWNED REPUTATION

Weebadde quickly realized the urgent need to connect more plant breeders with the skills required to meet the demands of the future. At MSU, while she has a full-time teaching appointment, she has been maintaining a research program in strawberry breeding to provide hands-on training to graduate and undergraduate students.

She plans to launch the GPB program in January 2025 and is determined to acquire funding to establish an endowment for the program to support students through scholarships.

"My idea in this program is to deliver cutting-edge knowledge through online courses while connecting

research institutions on the ground to our knowledge network. This way we can provide a more holistic view of how to get better varieties to farmers faster," she said. Her goal for the GPB is to train at least 100 plant breeders in the next five years, who can use their new skills to transform food production in their home countries.

Reflecting on that "where do you see yourself in 25 years" question today, Weebadde's answer hasn't changed: She still wants to educate and inspire hunger fighters. However, in 2004, she didn't have a way to accomplish her goal. With the creation of the GPB online masters program, she has found her path.

"Five more years from now would be 25 years from when I was first asked that question by Karim," she said. "Let's hope I can achieve my dream."

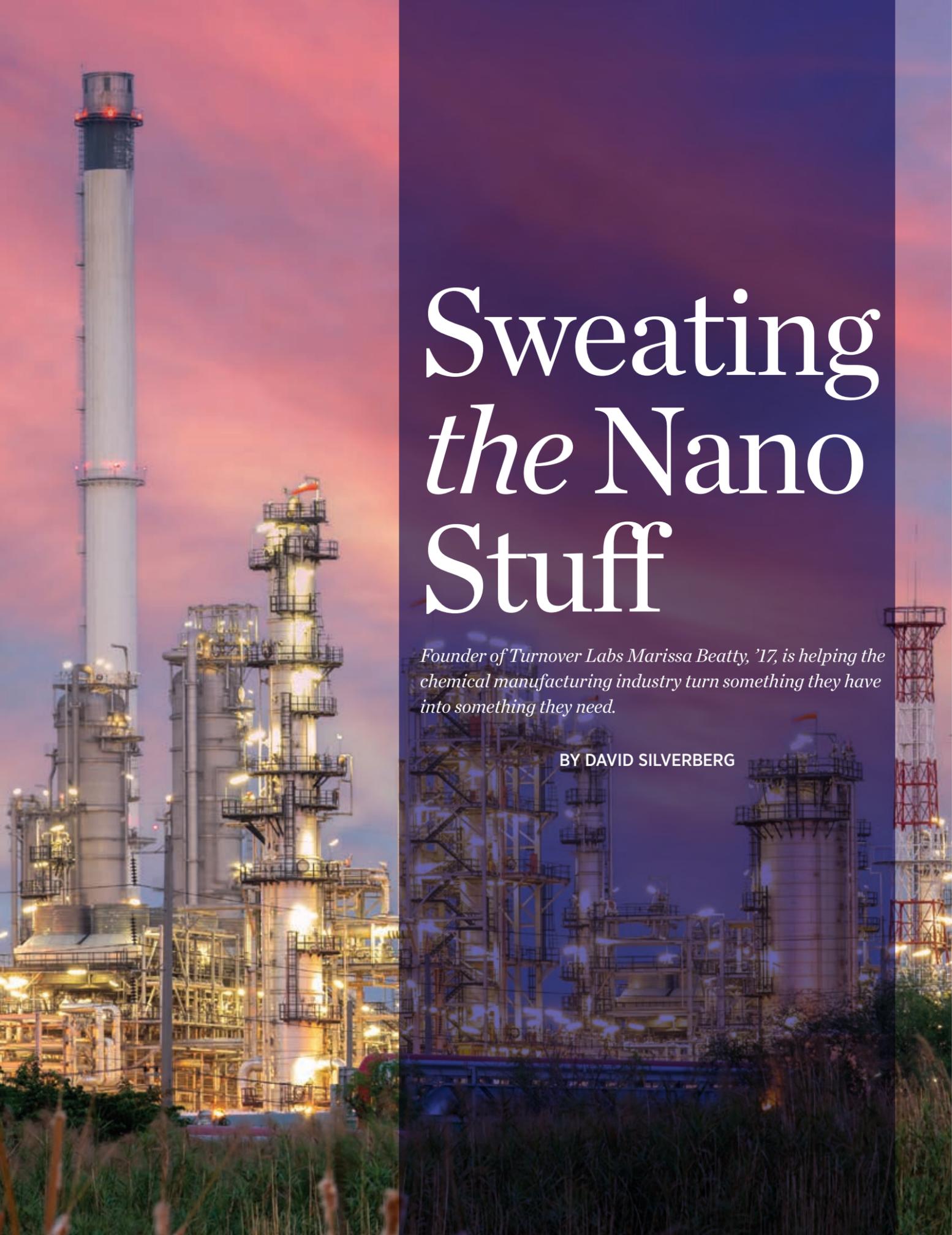
ARAN KESSLER

MSU'S GLOBAL PLANT BREEDING PROGRAM

This fully online, 30-credit fast-track master's program teaches students worldwide how to breed resilient plant varieties efficiently to feed people in their home countries.

MORE ON WEB | Learn more: go.msu.edu/plant-program





Sweating *the* Nano Stuff

Founder of Turnover Labs Marissa Beatty, '17, is helping the chemical manufacturing industry turn something they have into something they need.

BY DAVID SILVERBERG



When Marissa Beatty, '17, looks back at what she gained from her education at MSU, where she studied chemical engineering, she recalls how critical her work was in helping communities far from home. Her research was focused on developing electrochemical sensors as a way to ensure rural farmers

in India weren't exposed to harmful nerve agents in fertilizer.

"I see an engineer as being a liaison between the public and the cutting edge of science," Beatty says. "We're building solutions that go into the public space. And I was just really inspired by that."

Today, she's applying her engineering experience to a thornier problem that will benefit an entire sector this time around: In 2022, Beatty founded Turnover Labs, which seeks to shift the chemical industry away from its reliance on petroleum-based chemical building blocks by providing carbon-neutral alternatives born out of CO₂ and renewable electricity.

Normal chemical processes run off of heat, which usually comes from a carbon-positive process of burning natural gas. Beatty explains that Turnover's reliance on renewable electricity ensures they take CO₂ runoff and convert it into those building blocks many manufacturers rely on.

"What our customers gain from using our system isn't just that they're more sustainable, but they're more resilient to when there are shocks in the petroleum market," Beatty says. "Rather than having to transport methane or oil or coal vast distances because they're not geographically co-located with where those resources are, you can build a chemical plant anywhere and you don't have to worry about like, 'Oh, this pipeline went down and suddenly we can't get what we need.' It eliminates the supply chain risk when you take something that you already have on site and turn it into the things you need."

A REAL WORKHORSE

This kind of system would develop electrolyzers—an established chemical technology that uses electricity to drive chemical reactions rather than heat—that have a 500% increase in their lifetime and a 40% improvement in energy efficiency compared to conventional electrolyzers.

Funded at first with a \$100,000 grant from a New York City

fellowship, and then backed by climate-focused investors, Turnover Labs is still fine-tuning its prototype but has already attracted impressive media attention: Beatty was named to the 2024 Forbes 30 Under 30 list.

The New York entrepreneur says what's critical to building these systems is focusing on their durability and longevity. "We want to increase their ability to operate in harsh conditions like those that would be seen at a chemical manufacturing plant," Beatty notes. "A good comparison is that we're trying to make more of a tractor rather than a Lamborghini."

Raised in metro Detroit, Beatty told friends and family since elementary school that she was going to be an environmental biologist. But blame it on her bloodline—both her parents were engineers at Ford—to steer her on a different path.

When she was at MSU studying chemical engineering, she was immediately drawn to every nuance of her studies. "I really liked the chemical side of things because I tend to think about things in a physical sense," Beatty says. "And I found reactions in molecules at the nano scale were really easy for me to envision."

A PATH TO THE FUTURE

Soon after wrapping up her studies at Columbia University, where she earned an M.S. and a Ph.D. in chemical engineering, she participated in the Activate fellowship program in New York, which aims to help scientists commercialize their research. She began expanding on an idea she had worked on during her years at Columbia, where building energy-efficient electrolyzers was a top-burner priority.

"Founding a startup made sense for me," Beatty says. "I could go and I could try to convince some larger company to take a risk on this R&D project that may or may not work, or I could just go start a company and run the R&D and find people who also believe that this thing should exist. To me, that's a much faster way to get that system built."

What she finds fulfilling about getting Turnover Labs off the ground is how it can help encourage an entire industry to become more sustainable—and more efficient—at developing chemicals.

"Having results in the lab that show massive improvements rather than marginal, which is how the industry is kind of carried along, is really exciting because you think, 'Wow. We don't even have to convince them of sustainability alone. This is just a better way to make chemicals.'"



WELCOME HOME
Spartans

HOMECOMING 2024

Save the Date

PARADE
FRIDAY, OCT. 18

GAME DAY
SATURDAY, OCT. 19





The entrance to the Clara Bell Smith Center. For 25 years, the Smith Center has been helping Spartan student athletes achieve their dreams—on and off the field.

Its Specialty Is Winning



Todd Edwards, executive director of student-athlete support services

When the Clara Bell Smith Student-Athlete Academic Center opened in September 1998, it was a novel idea. Touted by Spartan household names Kirk Gibson and Peter Secchia, and backed by a \$2.5 million gift from legendary Spartan basketball guard Steve Smith—then the largest by a professional athlete to a university—the first-of-its-kind center was built to bring academic and athletic excellence together. Today, 25 years later, it's regarded as a hub of education, support and community for all MSU student-athletes.

From scheduling, to media demands, to performance both in the game and in the classroom, the collegiate student athlete experience carries a lot of weight.

"All students go through it—college is a lot of pressure," said Smith. "And with student-athletes, there's a whole different set of pressures."

The burden on college athletes can be relentless. The Smith Center offers a place to find support in almost every aspect of college life.

"It started out with a primary focus on improving academic performance and graduation rate," said Todd Edwards. "Since then, we've grown well beyond academics in terms of career development, personal development and community service."

Edwards, who has worked with Spartan athletes for the past 20 years, became executive director of student-athlete support services in 2017. Before that, Jim Pignataro served in the position for the majority of the center's 25 years when he took over for Roger Grooters in 2002.



Track and field athlete Haley Guerrant



Football defensive back Caleb Gash



WELCOME HOME

Walking into the Clara Bell Smith Center, visitors are greeted by the hall of fame—a two-story photographic canvas featuring Michigan State’s 68 First Team Academic All-American Athletes (34 since the center opened). Its impact and mission are immediately clear—this place takes the student part of student-athlete seriously.

Each semester, the 31,000-square-foot Smith Center welcomes 650 to 700 Spartan athletes from every sport. It houses a 210-seat auditorium, two study halls, two computer labs, classrooms, meeting areas, private tutoring spaces and a lounge. It has been known to sway recruits and quickly becomes a favorite hangout for its like-minded patrons.

“We have our athletic complexes in different places all over campus,” said Edwards. “But we only have one Student-Athlete Support Services Center. This is the only facility where on any given day, any of our athletes from any of our sports might encounter any athlete from any other sport. It’s very much a community builder.”

Spartan athletes embrace that community. They come together at the Smith Center for service projects, including annual food and toy drives and trick or treating events. And the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, comprised of two representatives from each sport, meets regularly to organize and sponsor many of the center’s events.

ONCE A SPARTAN, ALWAYS A SPARTAN

The Smith Center also was one of the first of its kind to serve former athletes returning to complete their degrees thanks to the George Webster Scholarship Fund. “Over the last 15 years, in addition to all the traditional students that have graduated, we’ve graduated nearly 50 former athletes from 10 different sports,” Edwards said.

As for Smith, he’s proud to look back on all that has happened in 25 years. “I think about when my mom’s building first opened,” said Smith, “and all the kids that got a chance to graduate and then graduated with flying honors. I think of the confidence the network has instilled—getting students on the right path so they can go out in the world doing something they believe in.”

Smith calls it his mom’s building because that’s who he named it after. A fitting tribute to a woman who valued Steve’s accomplishments in the classroom as much as—maybe more than—what he did on the court.

“I’ll see people in the airport, in my daily life, and they’ll say, ‘thank you,’” said Smith. “To hear how much it helped them—that right there makes me extremely proud.

“And it keeps my mom’s name alive for a long, long time. That’s something special.”

READ ON TO FIND OUT WHAT THE SMITH CENTER MEANS TO SPARTAN ATHLETES.

CHASE STANTON

MSU ATHLETICS

Brett (Williams) Kramer '12

COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION ARTS AND SCIENCES
SOFTBALL, 2009-12



“It felt like a catered experience toward my academic journey.”

Brett (Williams) Kramer dreamed of attending a Big Ten university. As a highly decorated high school softball player out of Indiana with an impressive academic résumé, Kramer certainly had options.

When she made her recruiting visit to Michigan State, the choice was clear. To this day, Kramer calls her decision to become a Spartan one of the best of her life.

“From day one, I stepped on campus and felt like I was part of a family,” she said. “I took pride in wearing Spartans across my chest. It’s something I feel very grateful to be a part of because there is so much legacy at Michigan State.”

The Smith Center loomed large in the recruiting process and was a point of emphasis for former MSU head softball coach Jacquie Joseph. That aligned perfectly with the experience Kramer and her family were seeking.

“It was important that we had academic support and that we were truly the student part of the student-athlete,” said Kramer. “It’s already hard managing an academic schedule in college. It’s even harder when you’re a full-time student-athlete trying to be the best you can be on the field.”

At MSU, Kramer earned Academic All-Big Ten honors for three straight seasons. She was Academic All-District and a Big Ten Distinguished Scholar as a junior—a season she also excelled with the bat, finishing First-Team All-Big Ten while ranking among the nation’s best in home runs and slugging percentage.

While Kramer was an accomplished student before coming to East Lansing, she never took for granted the academic resources provided by the Smith Center.

“It felt like a catered experience toward my academic journey,” she said. “I can’t think of a single student athlete that hasn’t gone through ups and downs in their careers both athletically and academically, but there were people who always kept your best interests in mind and were also your cheerleaders—even when you didn’t always believe in yourself.”

Brett (Williams) Kramer, '12, is the director of Kicking the Stigma for the Indianapolis Colts, where she leads an initiative to raise awareness around mental health disorders and illnesses.



Javon Ringer '15

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE
FOOTBALL, 2005-08

“There is no Plan A and Plan B, there’s Plan A and Plan A.”

For Javon Ringer, it ended in an instant. Injuries had plagued Ringer since being selected by the Tennessee Titans in the fifth round of the 2009 National Football League draft. But midway through his fourth season, a major knee injury ended his professional career.

Ringer never made it back on the field, but he did make it to the stage. He returned to MSU in 2015 to earn his sociology degree. All along the way, the Clara Bell Smith Center was the perfect partner for success.

“They want every player to get a chance at the NFL, and they put that same energy into academics,” said Ringer. “There is no Plan A and Plan B, there’s Plan A and Plan A. They go hand in hand with each other.”

Ringer had big athletic goals at MSU. He was a consensus All-American and earned First Team Big Ten honors in 2008 along with being a finalist for the Doak Walker Award given to the nation’s top running back. He ranks first in Spartan history in all-purpose yards and second in rushing yards.

The Smith Center also helped Ringer set and achieve significant academic goals.

“Coming out of high school, I had a pride issue. I didn’t like asking for help. I always wanted to do things on my own,” he said. “And when I struggled with certain things, I would try to hide it. But going to the Smith Center truly helped me get past my stubbornness and not feel shame in asking for help.”

“And once you do ask for help—man, they’re able to supply you with so much of it.”

Ringer believes the impact of the Smith Center can never be overstated.

“Not everybody is going to make it to the NFL and even those who do, you never know when your career will end. I’m an example of that,” said Ringer. “But everybody can get an education and the Smith Center helps you get there. You can’t miss with that.”

Javon Ringer, '15, works in recruiting and mentoring for MSU Football. He was a 2023 inductee into the Michigan State Athletics Hall of Fame.



Meredith Morris '20, '22

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
VOLLEYBALL, 2017-20

“

It was an open space where I could go and be myself.

Meredith Norris stepped into the unknown. Norris graduated a semester early from Corunna High School and, soon after turning 17, she started at Michigan State midway through the school year.

“That was a unique experience,” she said. “I came from a small rural school, so I wasn’t really sure what college was like.”

To ease the transition, Norris leaned on her teammates and coaches. She also had Mandy Chandler.

Chandler is the director of academic services at the Smith Center with nearly two decades of experience guiding student-athletes at MSU.

“I developed a long-lasting relationship with the people who worked there,” said Norris. “Mandy was like my second mom. I was there almost every single day, venting about life, volleyball and academics. It was an open space where I could go and be myself.”

Norris became a three-time Academic All-Big Ten honoree and two-time Big Ten Distinguished Scholar. The Smith Center was her home away from home—equal parts a quiet place to study, a source of motivation and a sense of community.

It was no surprise that Norris found herself back at the Smith Center as a graduate assistant after earning her bachelor’s in kinesiology. While pursuing her master’s, Norris worked in a variety of roles and discovered her passion. Today, Norris is the Tutorial Coordinator and Academic Coordinator for Women’s Volleyball, Men’s Cross Country and Women’s Cross Country.

Years ago, the Smith Center helped Norris find her place. Now she strives to do the same for other student-athletes.

“Whether they need a place to do homework or just want to hang out, my door is always open,” said Norris. “I’m happy to help with whatever they need and wherever they’re at in both their academic journey and their personal journey as a student-athlete at Michigan State.”

Meredith Norris, '20, M.S. '22, is the tutorial coordinator at MSU’s Clara Bell Smith Center, working closely with the Women’s Volleyball and Men’s and Women’s Cross Country teams.

50+
Countries represented
by Spartan athletes

MSU ATHLETICS



Laura (Heyboer)
Heethuis
 '13 COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
 WOMEN'S SOCCER, 2008-11

3RD
 Highest student-athlete graduation rate among public institutions



The Smith Center opened up opportunities to build relationships.

When Laura (Heyboer) Heethuis made herself eligible for the 2012 Women's Professional Soccer Draft, she wasn't sure what to expect. There was no spectacle, no party surrounded by family and friends. Instead, the Spartans' all-time leading scorer tucked away into a private study room on the first floor of the Smith Center, finishing an assignment for one of her senior classes.

Watching the draft from her laptop, Heethuis spotted her name on the screen. She was drafted with the first pick in the fourth and final round—one of just 23 collegiate players selected that year.

It might seem a strange place to celebrate, but the Smith Center was more than just an educational resource for Heethuis. "It was a place that truly felt like home for me. A place I felt like I could go to," she said. "The best thing about that place was the growth that happened there."

That growth started and ended in the relationships she established at the Smith Center. Through classes, tutoring and advisors, Heethuis developed an indispensable network.

"I utilized every bit of the center and it was the best thing that could've happened for me," she said.

"The Smith Center opened up opportunities to build relationships and really figure out where I was being led and what I liked."

Heethuis joined MSU's Hall of Fame in 2022. She was an All-American three years in a row, four-time First Team All-Big Ten and the 2008 Big Ten Freshman of the Year. But, for Heethuis, the top honor was being named First Team Academic All-American as a senior.

"There are so many hours you pour into your sport, but sometimes people forget what it takes to get the job done in the classroom," she said. "I knew soccer wasn't going to be my forever job. I had to put in the work academically to know I was setting myself up for success in the future."

Laura (Heyboer) Heethuis, '13, is a sales professional with BSN Sports in Portage, Mich. She played two years of professional soccer and spent seven as head women's soccer coach at Waynesburg University in Pennsylvania.

Adam
Nightingale
 '05

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE
 ICE HOCKEY, 2003-05



You have to wear a lot of different hats.

Adam Nightingale came to MSU from Lake Superior State in 2002 to play his last two years of college hockey. As a transfer student, rules of the era required him to sit out for a season. Right away, Nightingale had plenty of time to get acquainted with the Smith Center.

"It's an unbelievable setup," he said. "Coming from a smaller school, there's two things that really stood out: you're around like-minded people that are driven to be great in their sport and driven to be great in the classroom. But what really makes it special is the people that work there."

These days, Nightingale interacts with the Smith Center in a different way: as Spartan hockey's head coach.

Following the 2023-24 season, Nightingale's second overseeing the team, he was voted Big Ten Coach of the Year and named a finalist for the Penrose National Coach of the Year. The Spartans won both the Big Ten Regular Season and Tournament championships and returned

to the NCAA Tournament for the first time since 2012.

Also of note, this year's team recorded the highest cumulative grade point average in program history.

"I'm just thankful to have this space where the guys can be around other student athletes that are motivated by their goals and dreams," said Nightingale.

Before landing back at MSU, Nightingale's career took him everywhere from professional hockey to teaching economics. He knows what it takes to make it in sports and beyond. "You have to wear a lot of different hats," he said. "Understanding that, even if you make it, if you're looking for hockey to make you happy, it's going to fall short. You've got to have substance to your life. Doing things the right way, paying attention and being respectful—those are things that you can carry with you."

Adam Nightingale, '05, is head coach of the MSU men's ice hockey team.



MSU ATHLETICS

SPARTAN LOYALTY

Each year, thousands of gifts from thousands of Spartans and friends—just like you—make a powerful difference in support for MSU’s hardworking students.

GIVE BY JUNE 30, 2024
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Annual giving recognition levels include all monetary donations and matching gifts received during the fiscal year, July 1-June 30.

CHECK OUT YOUR ANNUAL GIVING AND LIFETIME SUPPORT AT go.msu.edu/msu-giving

Green & White

Spartans Connect and Inspire



WE’VE BEEN TRAINING FOR THIS

Two athletes receive care inside the athletic training room in 1927. These days, MSU trainers are still taping ankles and giving Spartan athletes the most complete care, but it’s safe to say the facilities look a little different. Since 1962, Michigan State’s top-tier athletic training program has seen eight Spartan trainers inducted into the National Athletic Trainers’ Association’s Hall of Fame.

DERRICK L. TURNER

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES AND HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS



Spreading the Love

When the Spartan community grows, Spartan spirit thrives.

It's been an eventful spring. One filled with new traditions, like MSU Football's Spring Showcase, and celebrated customs that bring the Spartan spirit to life.

In April, several Spartans Serve projects kicked off the season with national impact. From neighborhood beautification projects in Flint, to volunteering at the San Antonio Food Bank, to cleaning up trails around Chollas Lake in San Diego, Spartans like you continue to expand our outreach to your local communities. Since 2013, nearly 20,000 Spartans have put their time and energy into over 1,300 service projects. To get involved in-person or remotely, visit <https://serve.msu.edu>.

Also in April, we hosted alumni volunteer leaders from across the country back to campus for the Alumni Volunteer Leader Summit. The three-day event is an annual opportunity for our alumni communities and

volunteer leaders to gather, share ideas and reconnect with campus. This year's summit also provided the opportunity to meet with President Guskiewicz and our 2024 Homecoming Grand Marshal (stay tuned for an announcement soon).

Of course, a major congratulations goes out to the real stars of the spring—the more than 9,500 Spartans who graduated this semester. Year after year, each class of Spartan graduates amaze me with their achievements and outlooks on the future. The class of 2024 is no different.

As they walked across the stage, they joined this family we call alums. So, as we head into summer, we offer those graduates an enthusiastic welcome to our community. It truly is a special group.

Nick McLaren, '99

ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT OF ALUMNI



2024 ALUMNI VOLUNTEER LEADER SUMMIT

Class Notes

News from Spartans Around the World



1960s

H. DAVID MOEHRING, M.D., '60 (College of Natural Science), has written and published "For Patriots Dream," his personal memoirs of a childhood during WWII, making the dean's list and falling in love at Michigan State in the 1950s, and his experience as a combat surgeon in Vietnam, a transformational part of the last century.

VERN SCHOOLEY, '61 (College of Engineering), was reelected to the Ball/Hunt/Schooley American Inn of Court in Long Beach, Calif. He also was recognized as the 1980 founding president with nearly 50 years in service mentoring newly admitted attorneys on civility and professionalism in the practice of law.

DIANE (VAJDA) PHELPS, '66 (College of Social Science), recently published her fifth book "Needle in a Haystack:

How Clyde W. Tombaugh Found an Awesome New World," a children's STEM title about how Pluto was discovered.

DR. RITCH K. EICH, M.ED. '68 (College of Education), published the article "The Trader Joe's Way (to Success)" in the international Journal of Values-Based Leadership. Co-authored with his wife, Joan T. Cummings Eich, '69, the case study is being used by many international colleges and universities.

JOAN T. CUMMINGS EICH, M.ED. '69 (College of Education), published the article "The Trader Joe's Way (to Success)" in the international Journal of Values-Based Leadership. Co-authored with her husband, Dr. Ritch K. Eich, '68, the case study is being used by many international colleges and universities.

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DERRICK L. TURNER

1970s

EDWIN L. DEMERLY, '70 (College of Arts & Letters), was the 2024 recipient of the National College English Association's most prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award for his years of excellence in teaching (primarily at Henry Ford College in Dearborn), and for his service to the state and national levels of this organization.

DAN CERULLO, '74 (College of Communication Arts and Sciences), has retired after a four-decade career in advertising. He lent his award-winning writing and creative direction talents to several Detroit agencies.

DR. LEE UPTON, '78 (College of Communication Arts and Sciences), published her debut novel, "Tabitha, Get Up," with Sagging Meniscus Press. She is writer-in-residence and Emerita Francis A. March Professor of English at Lafayette College in Easton, Penn.

1980s

JUDITH E. WINTER, '80 (College of Communication Arts and Sciences), premiered her award-winning documentary film "Camp RicStar" at the Cinequest Film Festival on March 8 in San Jose, Calif. Winter served as the executive producer on the

film which received the festival's coveted Kaiser Permanente Thrive Award for being the most life-affirming film at Cinequest 2024.

THOMAS J. MARTINELLI, '83, J.D. '89, M.S. '99 (College of Arts & Letters, College of Law, College of Social Science), recently published "Deterring Unconstitutional Policing." The book provides a template of expectations for next generation officers based on Martinelli's research and experience as a Detroit police officer, Internal Affairs prosecutor and eventual defense lawyer.

EDWARD ABOUFADEL, '86 (College of Natural Science, Honors College), is the inaugural recipient of the T. Christine Stevens Award for Leadership Development from the Mathematical Association of America. This award recognizes significant, sustained work to develop leadership within the mathematical sciences, across the full range of professional activities.

STEVEN WILCOX, MBA '87 (Eli Broad College of Business), recently joined Calder Capital, LLC in Grand Rapids, Mich. as a mergers and acquisitions adviser.

1990s

SCOTT DEVRIES, '90, M.S. '95 (Both in College of Engineering), has joined Spalding DeDecker as a senior project manager. DeVries has received multiple industry awards including Michigan Society of Professional Engineers Capital Area Chapter Engineer of the Year, and Michigan Water Environmental Association's Young Professional of the Year.

DR. STEPHEN MERAW, '91 (College of Natural Science), was installed as President of the American Academy of Periodontology in December 2023.

CHRISTOPHER THUMA, '91 (James Madison College), was recently named special assistant to the president and principal deputy legal adviser to the National Security Council.

MARK BUNCE, M.M. '93 (College of Music), has been named director of the Oneida Area Civic Chorale in Oneida, N.Y. The chorale recently traveled to Ireland and Scotland to perform a tour of American Music.

DERRICK L. TURNER



BOB HOFFMAN, '93 (College of Social Science), was named one of the Volunteers of the Year at the 2023 Governor's Service Awards in November. The award recognizes those who go above and beyond in their commitment to volunteerism, service or philanthropy.

CHRISTOPHER MUNDY, '96 (College of Social Science), has published the memoir, "Forty Acres: A Legacy of Love and Loss." The book, which Mundy co-authored with his sister, is a compilation of stories, essays and poems that illuminate the family's lessons, loves and losses over the past 50 years.

PETER VOTRUBA-DRZAL, '96 (College of Engineering), will become vice president of global sustainability at PPG Industries.

DR. ELIZABETH GIL, M.ED. '97, PH.D. '17 (Both in College of Education), was selected as an Honorable Mention for the 2024 American Educational Research Association Social Justice Teaching Award for the Leadership for Social Justice Special Interest Group.

SEPIDEH B. ROWLAND, J.D. '98 (College of Law), was recently honored by the American Bankers Association with the 2023 Distinguished Service

Award for Financial Crimes. Rowland is a senior managing director with FTI Consulting.

ANTHONY YOUN, M.D. '98 (College of Human Medicine), released his latest book, "Younger for Life," in January 2024. Dr. Youn is the most followed plastic surgeon on TikTok and YouTube and hosts the popular podcast, "The Holistic Plastic Surgeon Show."

BILL BURKE, '99 (College of Communication Arts and Sciences), recently released his debut book, "Victory Outside The Arena." The book inspires athletes who struggle to figure out who they are after their playing career ends. Burke was the quarterback

for MSU football from 1995-99 under Head Coach Nick Saban.

JENNIFER COOLEY, '99 (College of Arts & Letters), was named director of museum education and community engagement of the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts in December 2023.

2000s

MEGAN LOPP MATHIAS, '00 (Eli Broad College of Business, College of Social Science), has joined Hinshaw & Culbertson as a partner in the firm's Commercial Transactions practice in Chicago. Mathias focuses her practice on minority and women-owned

companies and executives, advising clients on a broad range of legal matters.

KATE COSGROVE, '01 (College of Arts & Letters), illustrated the book "A Day With No Words" written by Tiffany Hammond. The book reached No. 1 on the NY Times Children's Picture Books List in May 2023.

MARLO (BODZIK) MCKENZIE, '01 (College of Communication Arts and Sciences), co-directed the recently released documentary "Carol Doda Topless at the Condor," which tells the story of America's first topless dancer.

KELLY RANKIN-GOMEZ, '01 (College of Social Science), was recently promoted to Lead Recruiting Business Partner/Data Tech Liaison of the Michigan Public

Health Institute in Okemos, Mich.

PAMELA L. EDDY, PH.D. '02 (College of Education), recently received the Association for the Study of Higher Education Mentoring Award.

SHAD HANSELMAN, '02 (College of Arts & Letters), was named vice president for institutional advancement at Saint Martin's University in Lacey, Wash. In this role he serves as the chief development officer and head of alumni and consistent engagement for the institution.

JASON MILES, '03 (College of Social Science), was recently named vice president and U.S. commercial officer of the Joint Commission in Oakbrook Terrace, Ill.

MICHAEL WILDER, '03 (James Madison College), has been elected the 2024 board of directors chair at Littler, the world's largest employment and labor law practice.

DR. DAVID DIMITRIE, '05 (College of Natural Science), has joined the Detroit Zoological Society as the director of conservation.

ABIGAIL URISH, '05 (College of Natural Science), M.D. '12 (College of Human Medicine), was elected President of the Colorado Academy of Family Physicians.

JENNIFER MCINTOSH, D.O. '07 (College of Osteopathic Medicine), was a co-author on a paper recently published in the journal Science Advances. The paper detailed a study of an emerging theory for what causes

preeclampsia, which occurs in one of 10 pregnancies. McIntosh is an associate professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

LINDSAY BRYAN-PODVIN, '08 (College of Social Sciences), recently appeared on CNN Central News to provide expert insight on the emotional toll of financial scams. She highlighted the misconception that only seniors fall prey to scams and stressed the importance of empathy and understanding in combating financial exploitation.

BRENDA FRIEDMAN, '08 (College of Social Science), has been elevated to partner at Kogut & Wilson, LLC. Friedman joined the Chicago firm as an associate in 2020.

LESLIE J. ANDERSON, '09 (College of Arts & Letters), will release her debut novel "The Unmothers" in August 2024. The novel, published by Penguin Random House (Quirk Books), also was recently awarded an Individual Excellence Award in Fiction from the Ohio Arts Council.

BRIAN STONE, '09 (Eli Broad College of Business), of the law firm Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP, has been elected to partnership. Stone is based in Detroit and operates in the firm's Real Estate practice group.

2010s

MIKE PURCELL, '10 (Eli Broad College of Business), was named partner at GBQ, a top 100 tax, accounting and consulting firm.

AUDRY PALLAS, '11 (James Madison College), recently was named a South Carolina state finalist for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

DERRICK L. TURNER



NICHOLAS S. KLINE, '14 (Eli Broad College of Business), was recently named a principal of Gallagher, Flintoff & Klein, PLC, Lansing, Mich.

MITCHELL W. BILD, '17 (James Madison College), a trial lawyer at the Chicago law firm of Corboy & Demetrio, was selected to the 2024 Illinois Rising Stars list by Super Lawyers.

CAITLIN E. VANDER MEULEN, '18 (College of Arts & Letters), published her debut memoir in April under her pen name Cait West. "Rift: A Memoir of Breaking Away from Christian Patriarchy" began as her creative writing thesis and was given a Publishers Weekly Starred Review.

SHELBI NAHWILET MEISSNER, PH.D. '19 (College of Arts & Letters), an Indigenous scholar, has set up the Indigenous Futures Lab at the University of Maryland. The lab's goal is to preserve and revive Indigenous languages and cultural resources. Meissner, of Luiseño and Cupeño descent, has been aware of the threatened Luiseño language since childhood.

2020s

CLARK JOSLIN, '23 (College of Arts & Letters), was named volleyball assistant coach at Central Michigan University in July 2023. Joslin was a four-year member of the MSU men's club volleyball team, where he received multiple conference and national honors.

DERRICK L. TURNER / MSU



MSU ALUMNI ADVISORY BOARD



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Honoring the life of Bob Burgess

BY AARYN RICHARD

Robert “Bob” Burgess, a distinguished 1966 Michigan State University alum, esteemed business leader and dedicated philanthropist, passed away Tuesday, April 2, 2024. He was 79.

“I am saddened by the passing of Bob Burgess and my prayers are with Georgia and the Burgess family,” said MSU President Kevin M. Guskiewicz. “I know he was a humble, compassionate and kind man who dedicated his life to creating opportunities for young people. We are proud of Bob’s fierce advocacy of entrepreneurship education at Michigan State. He embodied what it means to be a true Spartan.”

Bob’s philanthropic generosity across campus has equipped Spartans with practical skills and tools, preparing them for entrepreneurial and creative problem-solving opportunities after graduation. He foresaw the dynamic, ever-changing business and social landscapes students would experience and knew it was imperative to arm them with an entrepreneurial mindset. Bob knew investments in support structures would have a profound impact.

“Bob Burgess’s remarkable life was one of service to his community,” said Judy Whipple, interim dean of the Eli Broad College of Business. “His dedication to Spartan Nation was unmatched. His generosity and work on MSU’s campus has, and will, continue to have an enormous impact on student success for generations to come.”

In 2005, the Broad College established the Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, which Bob contributed to help launch. A decade later, he made an additional, significant gift that fully established his namesake, the Burgess Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation. The Institute has grown into one of the leading national undergraduate entrepreneurship education programs in the country.

“Bob Burgess was one of the most humble and caring people I have ever met,” said Laurel Ofstein, faculty director at the Burgess Institute. “I will miss Bob’s presence, but we will continue to walk the path he envisioned for what the Institute could become.”

Bob’s generosity and interests did not stop at philanthropic giving. He was a remarkable mentor and friend who viewed mentorship as a sacred act of service and an essential element of student success. He wanted to ensure the Burgess Institute’s programming and team valued mentorship



“

THE SCHOOL OF PACKAGING RECOGNIZES BOB’S ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT. WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE BURGESS INSTITUTE. BOB’S PACKAGING SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENT STANDS AS A REMEMBRANCE OF HIS TIME AS A STUDENT IN OUR PROGRAM AND AN INCREDIBLE GIFT OF GENEROSITY FOR STUDENTS NOW AND IN THE FUTURE.

Matt Daum
Director of MSU’s School of Packaging
Assistant dean of corporate relations and strategy for the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

as foundational to their mission. Today, the Burgess Institute enlists the help of countless alums and friends—experts in their fields and industries—to act as coaches and mentors for Spartan student entrepreneurs.

“I met Bob in the mid-’90s when I joined the Eli Broad College of Business,” said Helen Dashney, director of the Dashney Women’s Leadership Accelerator and faculty member within the college. “Bob’s personal mentorship and friendship are the gifts I will forever cherish the most.”

Continuing this remarkable legacy, the entire Burgess Family will remain supporters of the Institute, ensuring that Bob’s vision for entrepreneurship and student empowerment will persist and flourish at MSU.

Bob also gifted his time, expertise and service on boards of directors associated with the university, including serving as president of the Broad College Alumni Advisory Board and the Broad College Capital Campaign Board. He was also the chair of the MSU Research Foundation’s board of directors and offered wisdom to support

the ongoing growth of entrepreneurship as a point of excellence at MSU.

Bob’s life was rich in personal joys, especially those shared with his family and friends. An avid outdoorsman, he relished fishing, hunting and exploring the wilds of far-flung destinations. His love for music, leisurely walks with his dog Dewars, and the occasional fine scotch, reflected the breadth of his interests and the depth of his character.

The enduring love story with his wife, Georgia, began at Michigan State, blossoming into 57 years of marriage. Together, they raised three sons, Michael, Brian and Kevin, who gave them seven beloved grandchildren: George, Aiden, Sophia, Ellie, Reagan, Connor and Elliot. Bob is also lovingly remembered by his brother, Don, and a vast circle of friends and colleagues.

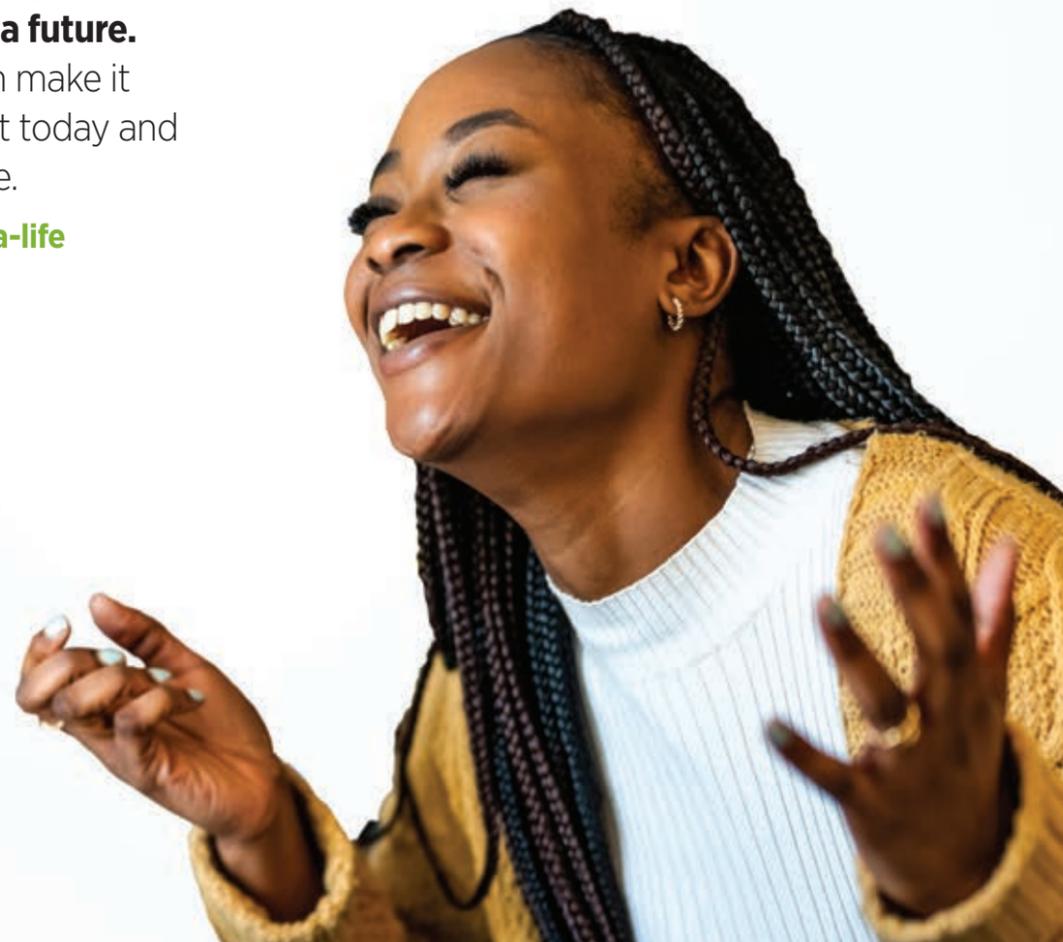
Bob Burgess lived a life marked by ambition, compassion and dedication to making a difference. His legacy will continue to inspire and influence—a testament to a life well-lived and a future forever brightened by his contributions.

Give a scholarship, change a life

Scholarships are crucial to ensuring affordability. Each one can transform a future.

Your generosity can make it happen. Make a gift today and forever change a life.

go.msu.edu/change-a-life



Spartan Nation NIL

MSU Leads the Way in Supporting Student Athletes Through Innovative Partnership

Every Spartan, past and present, is part of something bigger.

Over the years, the concept Spartan nation has come to represent community, resilience, and loyalty beyond student-athletes on the field. Today, it interlaces threads of experiences, cultures and connections.

As a community, Spartans have made a defining impact across the globe. The introduction of Spartan Nation NIL continues that tradition.

Committed to transforming MSU Athletics, Spartan Nation NIL gives fans the opportunity to become part of the team through direct support to the university's student-athletes.

Michigan State football coach Jonathan Smith put it simply during a minute-and-a-half video introducing the organization: "This is a way for everybody to be part of the team."

Spartan donor Greg Williams, CEO

of insurance brokerage Acrisure, founded Spartan Nation NIL in the wake of national legislation giving student-athletes control over their name, image and likeness rights.

Contributions are turned directly to empowering student-athletes through endorsement deals, social media campaigns and other activities that positively impact the community.

"Right now, you have an opportunity—especially in women's sports—to be cutting edge, to be first, to be a pioneer," said MSU volleyball head coach Leah Johnson.

Michigan State has become an early leader in the Name, Image and Likeness landscape, honoring and promoting its student-athletes and their NIL achievements. Innovation in that space is critical to driving advantages and prosperity for all Spartans both on and off the field.

"NIL, five years ago, wasn't a thing," said Williams. "It's table stakes. It's about the ability to compete."

For more information on NIL at MSU, visit msuspartans.com/feature/NIL and to learn more about the new partnership, go to spartynil.com.

MORE ON WEB | Learn more: www.spartynil.com



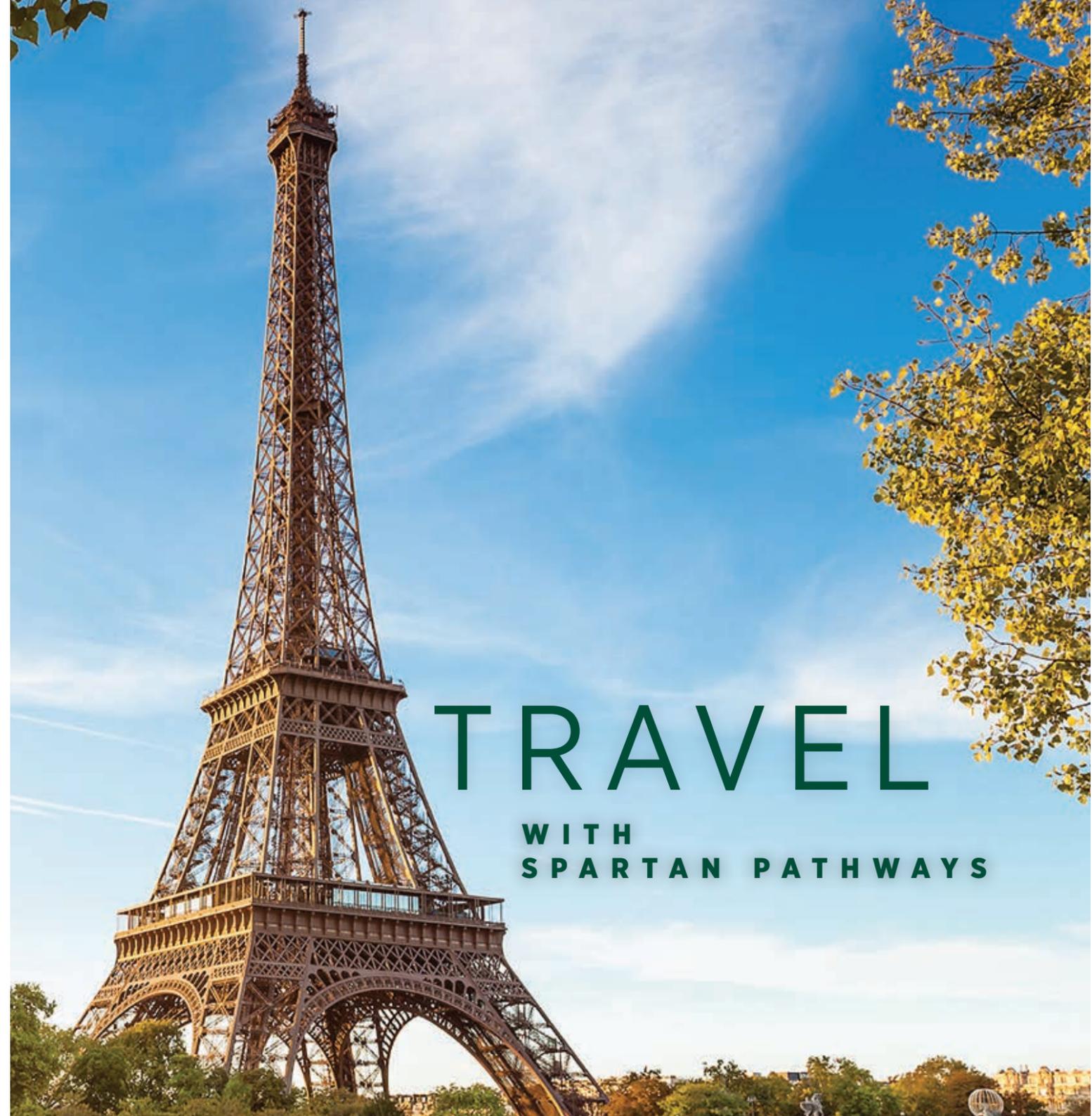
MSU ATHLETICS



Campus Dog Days

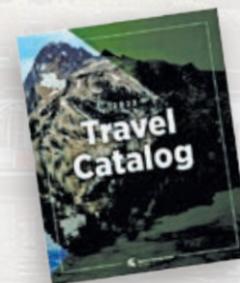
President Kevin Guskiewicz takes a moment out of his busy schedule to introduce us to the family dog, Koda. During his first few weeks in East Lansing, he's learned the ropes with some quality time on campus and made many new Spartan friends—and so has President Guskiewicz.

Follow Koda's adventures on Instagram: @Koda_MSU



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