

269

MAGAZINE

inside:

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IMPACTS ECONOMIC GROWTH
THROUGH STUDENT EDUCATION**

A GROUNDBREAKING VISION

**HOW URBAN PLANNING AND
REVITALIZATION WILL SHAPE
THE FUTURE OF KALAMAZOO**



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A GROUNDBREAKING VISION

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WISH YOU WERE HERE!

Our first trips to cities around the globe were EPIC!

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Visiting Singapore was eye-opening: the energy and vitality were infectious!
@ronkitchens

Heidelberg's shopping is to die for! I didn't know whether to focus on the storefronts or the looming hillside castle guarding this bustling university town.
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As soon I arrived at the airport in Jakarta, Indonesia, I battled my jet lag to sample the city's fabled street food. The spice of the mie goreng, or fried noodles, woke me right up!

On a family trip to Washington, D.C. when I was eight years old, the Metro completely fascinated me with all the people that it moved from place to place each day.
@carlaleewin

My senior trip to Chicago was big for someone who grew up in rural Michigan. We traveled via Amtrak, lunched at the exotic Kon-Tiki Ports, stayed in a high-rise on Lakeshore Drive, and explored the art museum.
@CathyKnapp12



@269MAG

Our hope is that the readers of 269 MAGAZINE will become active participants in the world around them and join our mission to make Southwest Michigan the place to build a home, go to work, and bring dreams to reality.

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BY HEATHER BAKER
EDITOR IN CHIEF

PHOTO MICHAEL DEEMER, DJEDZURA (ISTOCK)



Kid Tested. Mother Approved.

KALAMAZOO'S URBAN GROWTH KEEPS UP WITH THE TIMES

HAVE A LITTLE SECRET: I'M QUITE PREDICTABLE WHEN IT COMES TO WHAT GOES INTO MY CEREAL BOWL.

Kellogg's Frosted Flakes® filled my bowl for the first twenty years of my life. During that time, there was a brief period when my mother tried to tempt me with what was in her box of Kix®. There was no way I was eating something that was not frosted. I don't mind Kix today, but at the time, its slogan nixed any hope of me even trying what was in that orange box: "Kid Tested. Mother Approved." My then eight-year-old mind decided, without my mouth even taking a bite to allow my taste buds to send a sensory report to my brain, that "anything my mother liked could not possibly taste good."

When I became a mother myself, I must admit that I may have tried to force (or rather suggest) a thing or two on my kids. When it came to the urban offerings around Southwest Michigan, I didn't have to try too hard. When our family moved to Southwest Michigan from San Jose, California in 2001, trips with a five, three and one year old to our region's downtowns were indeed momentous occasions. An excursion to the Binder Park Zoo, South Haven's South Beach, Homer Stryker Field, or the Kalamazoo Valley Museum could occupy the family for an entire day. The feeling of enjoyment that stuck around after feeding a giraffe at the zoo or braving a snowy winter's day for the Kalamazoo Holiday Parade would last for hours upon returning home.

My kids grew older and still attended the same venues. But now, I was no longer really invited on the outings. I made a few attempts to accompany them on elementary school field trips but soon learned that I, who had introduced them to these great places, was no longer "allowed" to stand or sit by them onsite.

They enjoyed the freedom of exploring the venues with their friends without their mother yelling after them to "be careful."

Soon, my stay-at-home mom job required less of my time, and I found employment in downtown Kalamazoo. During the middle school years, my kids convinced their grandparents to drive them to meet me for lunch at Coney Island or Bimbo's Pizza during the summer or school holidays. Conversations over hot dogs and pizza became their new favorite thing to do. Dodging cars to cross over Michigan Avenue seemed very metropolitan to them, as no more than one car at one time ever came down the street where we lived.

When I became a mother myself, I must admit that I may have tried to force (or rather suggest) a thing or two on my kids.

As each turned sweet 16, they no longer needed anyone to bring them to meet me for lunch. When the school bell rang on half days, they headed their car to my office. We ate at

the same spots but expanded our rotation to include the Union, Taco Bob's, and Hop Cat. They often brought friends too.

Their familiarity and love for their hometown city of Kalamazoo continued to grow. During the holidays, they headed to Bronson Park to take photos to post on Facebook and Instagram and ride the Holly Jolly Trolley. On prom night, as each became old enough to attend, they traveled downtown for dinner at Zazios, with my daughters or son's date dressed in gowns purchased weeks before from Memories Bridal & Evening Wear. Afterward, they headed to the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts for a turn on the dance floor. I never gave their visits a second thought, as the city had become their second home.

The close of high school for each meant senior picture time. Kalamazoo's historic buildings, with their scenic backdrops, offered the perfect setting. While they smiled, they heard my blathering about the bricks of Shakespeare's Pub on 241 East Kalamazoo Avenue and how they date back to 1941, when the building served as the office of the Shakespeare Company which manufactured fishing gear. And, they had to listen about how the current location of the Kalamazoo Community Foundation was a stop on the Grand Rapids to

Now between the ages of 18 and 22, my children no longer need me to drive them downtown. Date nights or afternoon excursions with their friends find them at the restaurants or shops on the mall.

Indiana Line Station, starting in 1870, while they posed for the traditional railroad track shot to symbolize their upcoming life's journey into the unknown.

Now between the ages of 18 and 22, date nights or afternoon excursions with friends find my children at the restaurants and shops on the mall. Rocket Fizz, Juicy Leaf, Lana's Boutique, and Gazelle Sports are now frequent stops. And the one who is officially older than 21 readily admits to heading to Monaco Bay, Bell's Brewery, or The Library Kitchen & Tap House.

Over the years, our region's urban center has withstood the test of time for my kids. As they have grown, Kalamazoo and its surrounding areas have grown, too, to offer so much more. My hope is for the growth to continue. Kid Tested. Mother Approved.

READ ON,

Heather

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What excites you most about changes happening in our region's urban center?

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THERE ARE SO MANY GOOD THINGS HAPPENING IN THE URBAN CENTERS OF CITIES IN OUR REGION, PARTICULARLY IN DOWNTOWN KALAMAZOO.

It is not just new construction either, though obviously, that's great. There are also exciting initiatives emerging that will improve the lives of people in the area. Two, in particular, are the proposed mixed-use business incubator for urban start-up companies and Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo (SPK), designed to ensure that there is opportunity for everyone to improve their quality of life. Western Michigan University (WMU) students, faculty, and staff are actively engaged in these projects and not just as volunteers and supporters. There is research and experiential learning as well. Finally, a dynamic, successful heart of our community can have a profoundly positive impact on recruitment and retention for WMU. It's a great time to be a Bronco in Kalamazoo!



JESSICA KLINE

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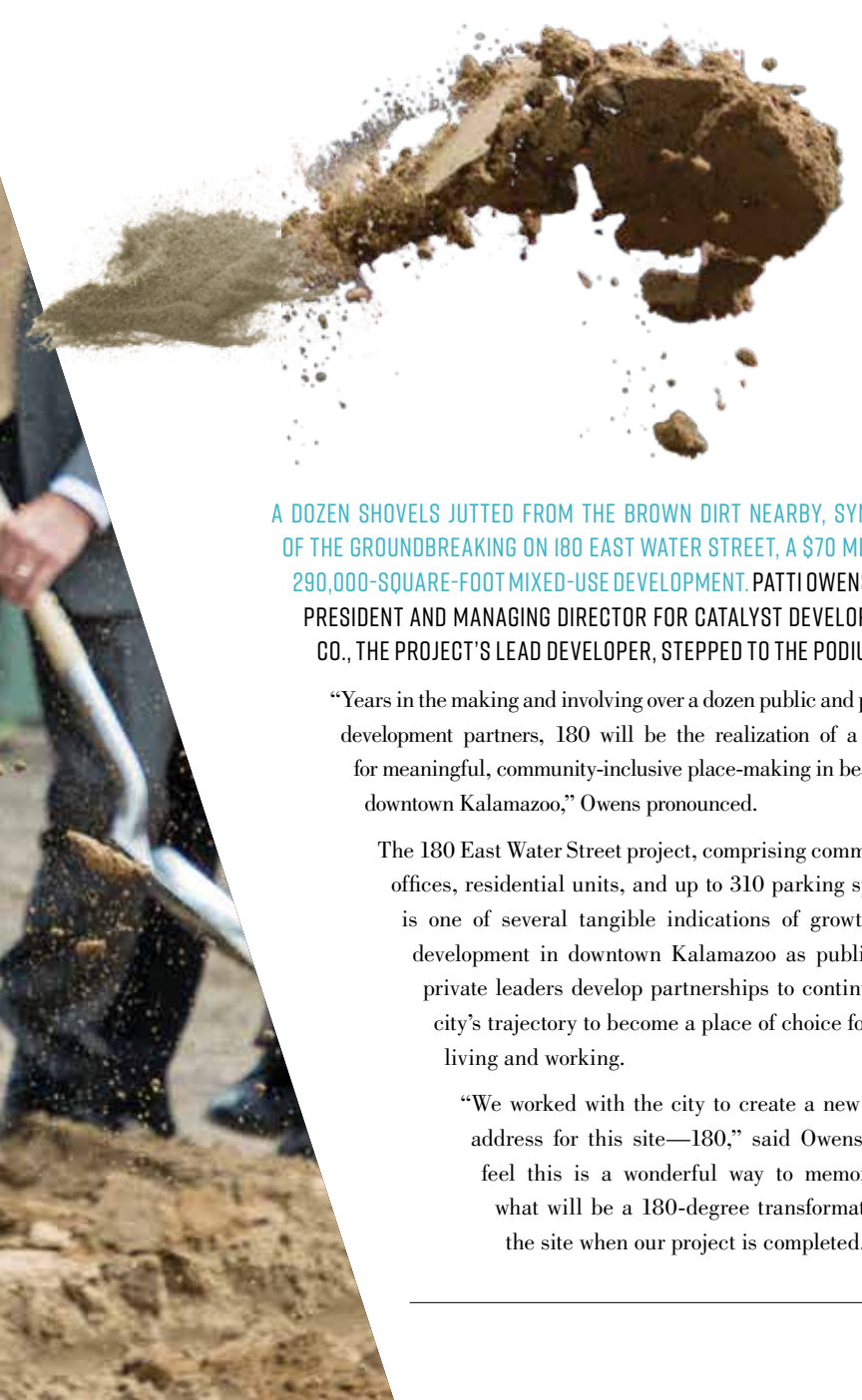


A GROUNDBREAKING VISION

HOW URBAN PLANNING AND REVITALIZATION WILL SHAPE
THE FUTURE OF KALAMAZOO BY RICK VAN GROUW

PHOTOS STEVE HERPPICH

ON A HOT AND HAZY THURSDAY AFTERNOON IN AUGUST, A SMALL CROWD SPILLED FROM A WHITE EVENT TENT ON A CONSTRUCTION SITE IN KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN.



A DOZEN SHOVELS JUTTED FROM THE BROWN DIRT NEARBY, SYMBOLS OF THE GROUNDBREAKING ON 180 EAST WATER STREET, A \$70 MILLION, 290,000-SQUARE-FOOT MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT. PATTI OWENS, VICE PRESIDENT AND MANAGING DIRECTOR FOR CATALYST DEVELOPMENT CO., THE PROJECT'S LEAD DEVELOPER, STEPPED TO THE PODIUM.

“Years in the making and involving over a dozen public and private development partners, 180 will be the realization of a vision for meaningful, community-inclusive place-making in beautiful downtown Kalamazoo,” Owens pronounced.

The 180 East Water Street project, comprising commercial offices, residential units, and up to 310 parking spaces, is one of several tangible indications of growth and development in downtown Kalamazoo as public and private leaders develop partnerships to continue the city’s trajectory to become a place of choice for both living and working.

“We worked with the city to create a new street address for this site—180,” said Owens. “We feel this is a wonderful way to memorialize what will be a 180-degree transformation of the site when our project is completed.”

Andrew Haan, president of Kalamazoo Downtown Partnership, also spoke during the 180 groundbreaking on August 9. “This spot that we’re on today has been a parking lot since at least 1961,” he told the audience. “That really dates to an era when we treated our cities like we needed to try and compete with the suburbs on their terms. Knowing today that we’re competing on our own merit, we’re bringing [out] the individuality and the quality assets that we have. We’re not scared to compete as cities.”

The emergence of shiny new buildings from the remnants of history is emblematic of a community-wide urban redevelopment process that appeals equally to all sectors—developers; business owners and entrepreneurs; community and regional residents; state and local governments; institutions like colleges, universities, and hospitals; and non-profit economic development and planning agencies.

“We have to be a 24-hour active place,” Haan said in a subsequent interview. “We need relevant offerings for the entire community, whether that’s based on age or demographics or income or neighborhood of residence. Downtown is everyone’s neighborhood. It has to appeal very broadly. Downtown has to be accessible, easily navigable, and safe. It’s got to be walkable, with amenities within a short distance. We’re darn close to that. We’re at a point now where we’re seeing a massive influx



of residential construction under way. The demand has been there for years, but in the last couple of years, we're starting to see some serious commitment to this market from developers and lenders who are financing these projects."

An increasing emphasis on strengthening the core city isn't unique to Kalamazoo. Greg Holcombe, an Ann Arbor-based urban planner and consultant with Urban Innovations LLC, has worked in private planning in Michigan for more than 30 years. He says that urban planning works best when a small group of leaders are all pulling in the same direction.

"A common thread to successful urban planning and development is vision—a shared vision," Holcombe said. "It's hard to do anything significant if you don't have a shared vision. That typically requires a planning process, at least by a small group of people who have thought about community issues and opportunities."

WHO'S IN CHARGE OF CHANGE?

Another essential element to successful urban planning, Holcombe says, is public-private collaboration. "If you can get three or four people in a community—and that can be an elected official or just a sharp guy in the street,

a philanthropist—you have a few key people, and you get those leaders together to talk about what is going on in the community, leading to a process or a vision. It can start with some place that somebody visited, pick your physical target, but suddenly there's a spark and a creative conversation."

Public-private partnerships are well, good, and necessary, but who or what should lead the urban planning and revitalization effort in Kalamazoo introduces a potential sticking point.

"In the past, it would have been families with names you'd recognize," said Jeff Chamberlain, deputy city manager of Kalamazoo. "Those families are still in the area and still participate in the community, and we're very grateful. But at a grassroots level, 'number one' is the small to medium-sized businesses that want to stay in Kalamazoo, want to grow, and are committed. It's individuals and families that are pushing elected officials and city staff to say, 'Here's what we would like in our community.'"

But city officials should also push urban planning and redevelopment, Chamberlain says. "The city government is charged with looking at the city, as a whole, and how all the various pieces fit together," he said. "We're always approaching issues—whether somebody wants to develop a new apartment building on a lot or transform a corridor two miles long. The function of city government will always be to determine how all these pieces fit together. It's always the high-level picture that we keep in mind."

Chamberlain acknowledges the role of private organizations, too. "Kalamazoo Downtown Partnership, Southwest Michigan First, neighborhood associations, other organizations that focus on a specific area or topic—those groups are wonderful to have leading those types of projects. Our job at the city level is to say, 'Hey, great idea! How do we fit than in with the bigger picture? How do we implement it?'"

Andrew Haan agrees that leadership must be cooperative. As head of the newly reinvented Kalamazoo Downtown Partnership, Haan sits at the hub where various interested parties intersect. His agency interacts with private developers, local and state government regulators, and community residents, and has a unique perspective on what the city center should be.

"It's not about one leader, necessarily," he said. "You want to have alignment between your major partners. And we do have alignment right now. Having forward-thinking leaders in the city—the business community, institutional partners, place managers, and economic developers—we have that." Furthermore, public input is part of the mix, as well. "Not just downtown residents, but people who live throughout the city and the region, too. We need their buy-in."

THE FUNCTION OF CITY GOVERNMENT WILL ALWAYS BE TO DETERMINE HOW ALL THESE PIECES FIT TOGETHER. IT'S ALWAYS THE HIGH-LEVEL PICTURE THAT WE KEEP IN MIND.

JEFF CHAMBERLAIN, KALAMAZOO DEPUTY CITY MANAGER

GETTING ALONG WITH THE NEIGHBORS

Fritz Brown, a partner at Treystar, a family-owned real estate development and management firm, lives in Portage and sometimes identifies with the outliers.

"Bringing them along is a challenge," Brown said. "You get people who want to take advantage of coming into the city for entertainment or dining opportunities, but they don't want to go along when something's on the ballot to make the downtown better. If it affects their pocketbook, they don't want to support it."

Brown argues that a booming city center and surrounding communities that thrive are interdependent. "Without a strong city inner core, your suburbs or neighboring towns suffer too," Brown said. "To have a successful, economically viable community, you need a strong downtown."

Brown values urban growth. Treystar recently completed The Foundry, a 52,000-square-foot office complex in Kalamazoo with loft-style brick walls, high ceilings, and a floor plan called "living office space"—a combination of open space and offices and meeting rooms. "Kalamazoo has come a long way," Brown

DOWNTOWN ADVOCACY GETS A REBOOT

said. “I don’t remember when we’ve had two cranes in the air at the same time. I’m thrilled with all the activity, but it’s hard to bring your neighboring towns along at the same time.”

Andrew Haan also sees improvement in city-county relations. “Our success is their success,” he said. “Metro areas that have good, healthy urban cores have healthy exurbs and vice versa. You can’t have one without the other. We need to focus on those partnerships, and we have strong leadership in the county right now—they’re talking about a new courthouse and administration building in downtown, and that’s a very good alignment. For us to be successful, we have to have a place that has relevant offerings and is welcoming and comfortable for all people.”

THE VISION, THE PLAN

One major component of the downtown planning and revitalization effort is Imagine Kalamazoo 2025, a recently completed outgrowth of the city’s 2012 state-mandated comprehensive plan. Document authors conducted more than 4,000 interviews with area residents to solicit input in prescribing the city’s future.

“It’s meant to be a forward-looking document that considers the values of our community, the things that we as the city and

KALAMAZOO HAS COME A LONG WAY. I DON’T REMEMBER WHEN WE’VE HAD TWO CRANES IN THE AIR AT THE SAME TIME. I’M THRILLED WITH ALL THE ACTIVITY, BUT IT’S HARD TO BRING YOUR NEIGHBORING TOWNS ALONG AT THE SAME TIME.

FRITZ BROWN, TREYSTAR

the private sector can do to make it better,” said Chamberlain. “Having a strategic vision really helps us, as city administrators and elected officials, to know what our values are as a community. What do we want to accomplish? For this intersection, do we or do we not want commercial development? What roads should have bike lanes, and which should not?”

To gather data for the vision document, city officials held public meetings in every corner of the city and sat down with neighbors to pore over block-by-block maps of specific areas. At the end of the process, they had gathered thousands of comments and suggestions. Eventually, that input coalesced into broad categories.

After nearly 30 years, Downtown Kalamazoo Inc. is undergoing a significant transformation. In September, the organization unveiled its new identity as the Kalamazoo Downtown Partnership.

“Our organizational structure was built in 1989 to serve the downtown of 1989. But downtown has evolved, and the way we serve it needs to evolve in turn,” said Andrew Haan, president of Kalamazoo Downtown Partnership. “We’ve had major changes to the landscape. The district in those days was a daytime employment and retail district. It’s still that, but it has become a 24-hour downtown, and the needs of that downtown are different than years ago.”

In addition to the organizational changes, the City of Kalamazoo has proposed the creation of a new Downtown Economic Growth Authority (DEGA) to support economic development, infrastructure, and place management activities. Under the proposed structure, Kalamazoo’s Downtown Development Authority (DDA) would retire its tax increment finance district, with a new Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district created under the DEGA in its place.

“This change allows us to reset revenue baselines to current values,” Haan said. “We can make some strategic adjustments to the boundary of the district, and we can leverage additional state matching dollars that the DDA was not eligible to receive.”

Haan emphasized that individual taxes will not be affected by the new structure. “There are no plans to levy a tax,” he said. “We will simply capture the growth in taxes that are collected in the district to fund improvements in the district, with a focus on infrastructure.”

The Downtown Economic Growth Authority will be a city agency, which offers jurisdictional advantages, as well. “The city is poised to take back some streets from MDOT,” Haan said. “That will allow the community to set the tone for how they work, what their character is. With streets under city control, DEGA can also install wayfinding signage and street furniture,” Haan said.

“It will allow us to better connect to Western Michigan University and Kalamazoo College and the communities to the west—all around, really. It’s all being tied together for one vision as a community.”

YOU'VE GOT TO BE COLLABORATIVE AND CREATIVE AND MOVE FORWARD. BE RESTLESS. KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN FOR NEW OPPORTUNITIES, AND ADDRESS ISSUES AS THEY POP UP.

GREG HOLCOMBE, URBAN PLANNING CONSULTANT

“As we go through the process, we identify which ideas relate to parks, which ideas relate to this neighborhood, which ideas relate to job creation,” Chamberlain said. “Over time, as we start grouping these comments, you start seeing themes. For example, this intersection is really dangerous to cross. A lot of people are concerned about the quality of sidewalks in their communities, on the west side and on the east side, so let’s start paying attention to that.”

Of course, not every idea will pass muster for inclusion in *Imagine Kalamazoo 2025*. “Kind of an outlier might be that someone wants a koala sanctuary in the city. We’re not dismissing that idea, but as we look at how we prioritize the city’s resources, it might not make the final cut.

Greg Dobson, chief operating officer and principal at AVB Inc., a commercial development firm, acknowledges the value of a primary planning document, with some qualifications. Dobson said he and other AVB executives didn’t play a major role in developing *Imagine Kalamazoo 2025*, but took part in “one or two” of the city’s input sessions.

“I wouldn’t say we agree with everything in the 2025 document, but I do think having some guiding principles is helpful,” Dobson said.

On August 22, AVB broke ground on its 400 Rose, LLC project—135 residential units over structured parking at the corner of Rose and Lovell. Dobson said the vision document helped steer the project’s design and development.

“As we were working on the project, we looked to see how our project would address some of the desired outcomes identified in the 2025 plan,” he said. “For example, our knowing that the city is desirous of having buildings that engage with the pedestrian street level impacts our total approach to the project; we pulled it all the way to the sidewalk. We are engaging the street with this development, so it feels walkable and pedestrian-friendly. This project was in the planning stages for four-and-a-half years. There are lots of ways you can develop 2.1 acres in the middle of downtown, but we were looking for the sweet spot where it was something the city was looking for and something we could make work from a market standpoint.”

ENDGAME

With ever more construction cranes punctuating Kalamazoo’s skyline, where will all the planning and redevelopment take the city?

“We have three new projects now—the Exchange Building, Catalyst Development, and ours, and they’re all adding residential units,” Dobson said. “I think it’s going to be interesting to see if that causes momentum for additional housing downtown or if that’s going to fill the need. Time will tell. I think it’s going to be pretty interesting to see if having housing—and the vibe those residences generate—will lead to more need or saturate it. That’s a question I can’t answer.”

Meanwhile, others ponder what successful urban planning looks like.

Greg Holcombe, the urban planning consultant from Ann Arbor, urges planners to “take advantage of urban dynamics. Don’t look back, don’t fall back on old successes. You’ve got to be collaborative and creative and move forward,” he says. “Be restless. Keep your eyes open for new opportunities, and address issues as they pop up.”

Andrew Haan of Kalamazoo Downtown Partnership says he shies away from specific metrics when measuring success. “The work is never done. Your downtown is never complete,” he said. “The work that was done 30 years ago to rehab historic buildings has to be done again. Streets and infrastructure always have to be fresh and inviting. To some extent, you can put metrics around it and have a scientific approach—things like occupancy, mix of uses, having a continued trend line for population growth. But you kind of just know you’re doing it right when you’re doing it.”



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AN ECONOMIC CORNERSTONE

WMU'S RESEARCH UNIVERSITY DRIVES GROWTH THROUGH STUDENT EDUCATION

BY RICK VAN GROUW PHOTOS COURTESY OF WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

SUCCESSFUL URBAN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPENDS ON PARTNERSHIPS—business and government leaders, commercial and residential developers, and major institutions like hospitals and universities—all of which contribute significantly to the economic vitality of a community and region. A recent study shows that Western Michigan University (WMU) is a big-time player in the regional economy.

The study, commissioned by WMU and regional economic development catalyst Southwest Michigan First, suggests that the university contributed \$1.6 billion, directly and indirectly, to the economies of Kalamazoo, Van Buren, and Calhoun counties during fiscal year 2016-17.

“One-point-six-billion. That’s a big number,” said Tony Proudfoot, the university’s vice president for marketing and strategic communications.

Economic input starts with the university’s faculty, staff, and nearly 23,000 students. Based on the study’s findings, “Every student at Western represents \$11,500 in either direct or indirect expenditures in the community,” Proudfoot said. “When you see four students sitting and waiting for a table for brunch, that’s approaching \$50,000 for the community sitting there.”

“The study is a quantifiable example of how the university can be a benefit to the community itself,” Proudfoot said. “We bring 16,700 jobs directly or indirectly to the community.” In turn, a

healthy community also benefits the university. “The relationship that any university has with its local community is mutually beneficial,” Proudfoot said. “We want a vibrant community around us for our students, and as a place for our employees to live and work and play.”

Proudfoot also said the university contributes to the community in non-financial ways, including students who volunteer and work non-paying jobs. “Our students last year contributed 235,000 hours in the community—volunteering, helping local businesses,” Proudfoot said. “There’s this giant pool of bright, eager, talented young people who want to make an impact on the community around them.”

The study, conducted by Impact DataSource, an Austin, Texas-based economic consulting firm, breaks down economic impact into five buckets—university operations, capital and construction projects, student spending, visitor spending, and campus research.

According to the study, the university’s direct economic impact on the region was \$616.7 million. Direct economic impact included “payments that the university made for employee, faculty, and staff salaries;

purchases of goods and services; and other expenditures. The direct spending generated \$403.0 million in indirect and induced sales or economic output in area businesses and other organizations.”

To estimate indirect expenditures, the study uses a Regional Input-Output Modeling System. RIMS is a financial tool developed by the government to assist in public and private planning. According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, “RIMS II multipliers are based on 2007 national benchmark input-output data and 2016 regional data. These multipliers were first released in March 2018.”

Ron Kitchens, chief executive officer and senior partner of Southwest Michigan First and a university trustee, sheds additional light on WMU’s economic role, “WMU is critical to the future of the Kalamazoo region. There is no other business enterprise that has and can have the impact that WMU has, from the nearly 17,000 direct and indirect jobs it creates to the \$260 million that the students spend annually in our community to the thousands of new graduates who call Southwest Michigan home each year.

“We have no bigger opportunity to grow the economy of the region than by growing Western. If we want our families and community to thrive, then Western Michigan University must also thrive.”



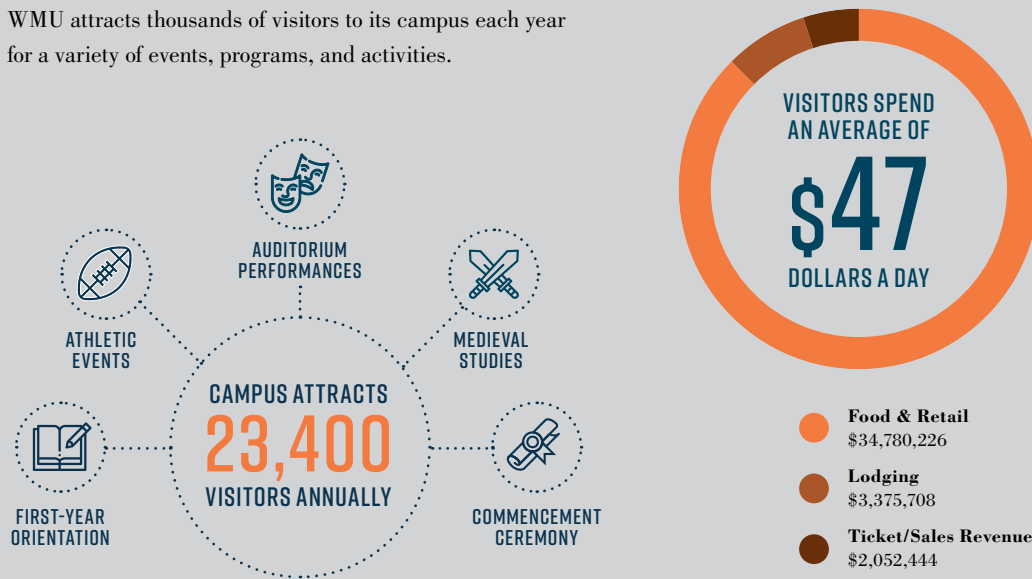
IT ALL ADDS UP

HOW WMU ENROLLMENT IMPACTS THE REGION

Western Michigan University (WMU) enrolls nearly 23,000 undergraduate and graduate students in 140 majors, minors, and concentrations, in addition to 70 graduate degrees offered through 9 colleges and schools. Once class is in session, the impact of the university and its students on the three-county region of Kalamazoo, Van Buren, and Calhoun counties goes well beyond campus boundaries.

VISITOR SPENDING

WMU attracts thousands of visitors to its campus each year for a variety of events, programs, and activities.



UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS	11,200 EMPLOYEES	
CONSTRUCTION SPENDING	557 EMPLOYEES	
CAMPUS RESEARCH	217 EMPLOYEES	
STUDENT SPENDING	3,946 EMPLOYEES	
VISITOR SPENDING	770 EMPLOYEES	
TOTALS	16,690 EMPLOYEES	

\$1,019,689,979
IN ECONOMIC OUTPUT OR SALES

\$504,853,865
IN WORKERS' EARNINGS

\$79,226,306
IN ECONOMIC OUTPUT OR SALES

\$27,079,304
IN WORKERS' EARNINGS

\$45,670,735
IN ECONOMIC OUTPUT OR SALES

\$13,280,368
IN WORKERS' EARNINGS

\$403,775,149
IN ECONOMIC OUTPUT OR SALES

\$105,712,674
IN WORKERS' EARNINGS

\$61,031,704
IN ECONOMIC OUTPUT OR SALES

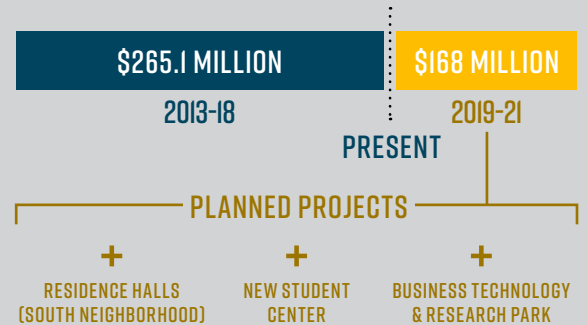
\$18,974,863
IN WORKERS' EARNINGS

\$1,609,393,873
IN ECONOMIC OUTPUT OR SALES

\$669,901,073
IN WORKERS' EARNINGS

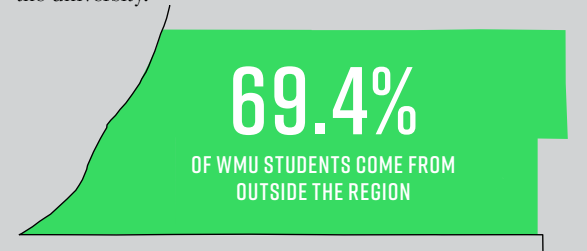
CONSTRUCTION SPENDING

On average, WMU spends at least **\$50 million** in major construction enhancements per year.



STUDENT SPENDING

With approximately 30.6% of WMU students coming from homes located in Southwest Michigan, that means **69.4%** of the students are drawn from outside the region to attend the university.

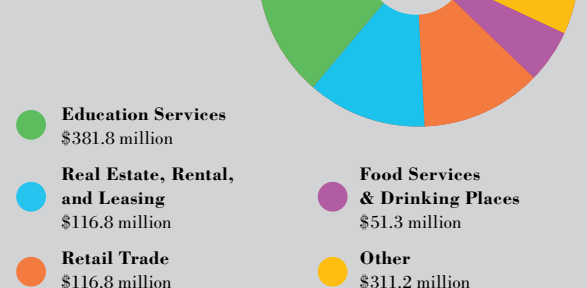


TOTAL STUDENT SPENDING IN THE COMMUNITY IS ESTIMATED TO BE
\$236.6 MILLION

OR APPROXIMATELY
\$11,513
PER ENROLLED STUDENT.

GROSS AREA PRODUCT

The university supports a total of **\$977.9 million** in gross area product.



IMPECCABLE TASTE

NATIONAL FLAVORS DELIVERS JOY THROUGH FLAVOR

BY HEATHER BAKER PHOTOS NATIONAL FLAVORS

COMPANY

National Flavors LLC

A TALE OF TWO JACKS AND JOHNS

National Products was started in Kalamazoo in 1941 by a father and son team, Jack and John Polzin. Jack was a sales representative for another flavor company. John just graduated from Kalamazoo College with a degree in chemistry following his return from service in the U.S. Army during WWII.

Across town in Otsego, another Jack—Jack Hinkle—founded a bakery in the 1950s. Along with his wife Marilyn and sons, John and Ron, the family baked Long Johns, apple fritters, butter flake rolls, cookies, cakes, and breads.

The two families did business together over the years as the flavor company helped the bakery's products taste delicious. When it came time to leave his family's business, John Hinkle joined the renamed National Flavors in 1995. His son Dan followed suit in 2008. As part of the company's succession plan, Dan purchased the company in 2012.

THE PURE TASTE OF JOY

"We deliver joy through flavor," says Dan Hinkle. "Our customers make experiential products that are consumed for enjoyment. When consumers eat ice cream on a hot summer's day with their kids, our mission is to help that ice cream taste great, enhance their experience, and bring a small amount of joy into their lives."

THE EVOLUTION OF FLAVOR

"When you go to the grocery store, look at the variety of products on the shelf in every category. Whether it's a beverage, frozen dessert, or cereal, it's an incredible time for consumers. From third-party certifications like organic, fair trade, or GMO-free to different combinations of flavors or ethnic foods, there is something for everyone.

Flavor is a key differentiator and is the No. 1 reason consumers buy the brands that they do," explains Hinkle.

PACKAGING UP FLAVOR

National Flavors blends essential oils, botanical extracts, fruit, fruit juices, essences, distillates, and aromatic compounds to enhance the flavor of foods and beverages. Their product is in liquid form and shipped to the customer to be used as a key ingredient in customer's recipes for frozen desserts, baked good, confections, beverages, and fruit preparation products like applesauce and pie filling.

THE FLAVOR CHEMIST

"Every essential oil has hundreds of components. To understand each of those components individually, a flavorist has to be familiar with several thousand raw materials to understand the finished product. Heating and cooling processes also affect flavors in varying ways. In ice cream, flavors compete with sweetener and fat. In a baked good that's going to be heated at 300 degrees for half an hour, heat will impact the flavor differently. To formulate changes in flavors for a baked good versus a frozen product, you need to understand the fundamentals of how the processing conditions impact the flavor of the product," says Hinkle.

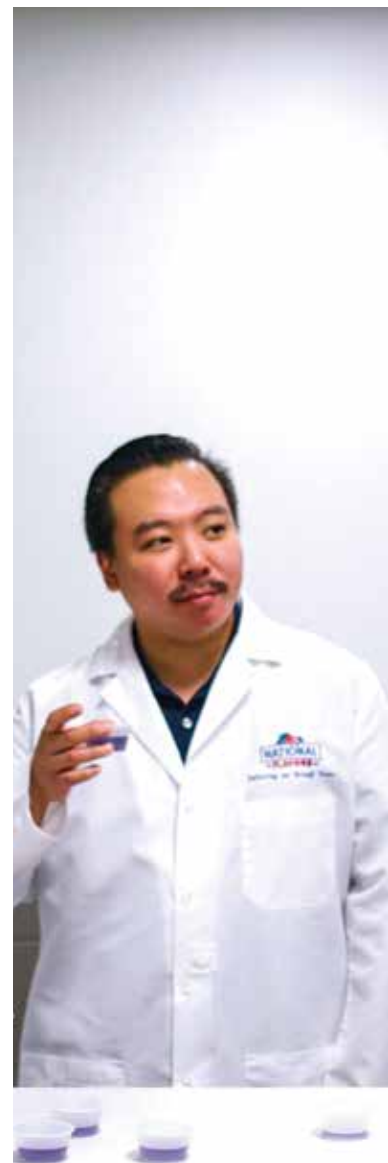
"R&D team members typically come to us with a science-based degree such as organic chemistry or food science. They then train as an apprentice under a certified Flavor Chemist. After five years they take a test to achieve Junior Flavorist Certification. After two more years, they take their final test to allow them to become a Certified Flavorist through the Society of Flavor Chemists."

FLAVORFUL IDEAS

Product developers constantly come up with ideas for new products. To support their quest to be first to market, National Flavors developed a streamlined sampling service called Flavorush. Within 24 hours, a flavor sample can be sent to the customer who would have to wait five to ten additional days for a sample to arrive from one of National Flavors' competitors.

TRENDING TASTES

- Breakfast is no longer reserved for the morning; consumers want to taste cereal milk, cinnamon bun, and French Toast all day.
- One of the most popular flavors, Birthday Cake, saw a 57-percent increase in new product releases from 2016 to 2017, according to data from Global Data Group Intelligence.
- The addition of boozy flavors to foods is also a current craze with bourbon, Irish Cream, Mai Tai, Margarita, Mojito, and Sangria infusions.
- Consumers who look for clean and natural labels choose products tasting like chai tea, cinnamon, ginger, and grapefruit extract.
- Farm-to-table trends continue, and Michigan apple, blueberry, and cherry flavors are top picks!

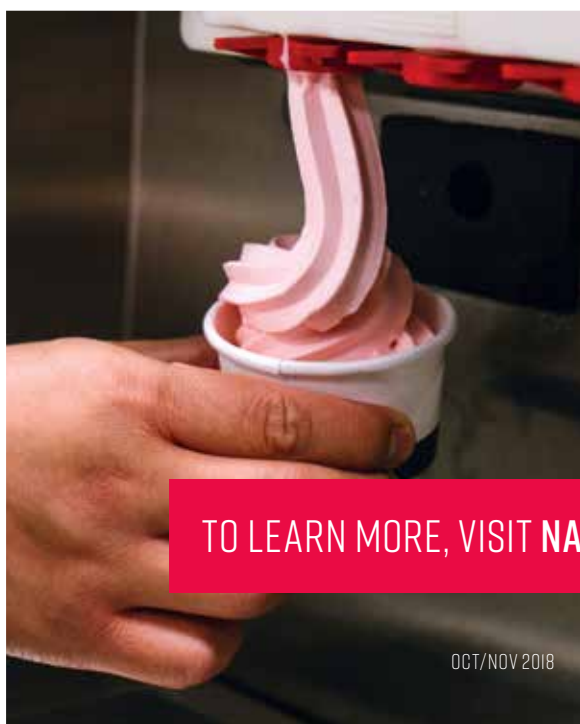




YUM. THAT'S TASTY!



National Flavors ships over three million pounds of flavors representing 1,200 SKUs (stock keeping units) to more than 1,000 customers annually.



REGIONAL LOCATIONS

National Flavors completed construction of a new 36,000-square-foot headquarters at 3680 Stadium Park Way in Oshtemo in 2018. Its multi-million dollar investment created space for new offices, labs, manufacturing, and distribution. It continues to maintain a location on Crosstown Parkway in Kalamazoo for warehousing and distribution.

EXECUTIVE

Dan Hinkle, President

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

42

WHO WORKS THERE

Research and development (including flavor chemists), production, shipping/receiving, administrative, quality control, regulatory, and information technology.

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Visit www.nationalflavors.com/Home/WhoWeAre#wwa-careers.

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT NATIONALFLAVORS.COM



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Spectrum Health Integrated Care Campus, North Muskegon, MI
Photo By Jeff Garland



Spectrum Health Integrated Care Campus, North Muskegon, MI
Photo By Jeff Garland



Bronson Battle Creek Family Medicine, Battle Creek, MI
Photo By Jeff Garland



Bronson Battle Creek Family Medicine, Battle Creek, MI
Photo By Jeff Garland

DO YOU HEAR THE MUSIC?

A Q+A WITH ZACH DEYOUNG

PARTNER AT MAESTRO

BY JAKE FREDERICKS
PHOTOS BY HANNAH ZIEGLER

If I am working on a long-term project, I'll pick an album that kind of feels connected to the work, and I'll listen to that album through most of the project, drawing inspiration from that.

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HOW DO YOU APPROACH DESIGN AT MAESTRO?

Maestro is a forward-thinking design agency creating things that you probably wouldn't imagine get made in Kalamazoo.

We've been here for 11 years, and we work with huge Fortune 500 companies like Southwest Airlines, Johnson & Johnson, and Google. I would say design is the core of everything that we do. We create brand experiences in all formats.

WHAT TYPES OF PROJECTS COME THROUGH YOUR DOOR?

Right now, we're working with Southwest Airlines to create an onboarding experience for its new employees. Southwest flies every new hire, no matter what their role is, to its headquarters in Dallas. We're creating the companion phone app they use for the onboarding experience. The app will have everything from onboarding documents, campus maps, and even an integrated augmented reality experience.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE AT THE AGENCY?

I'm a partner at Maestro along with two other people, including our founder, and I lead the studio team. My role is to ensure that everything that we're creating is designed with excellence and is a thoughtful and meaningful brand experience. Our brand promise is "Perform Beautifully," and it's crucial that all of our work substantiates that claim. Most of my days are filled with meeting, with either my studio leadership team or with an individual project team, and working on projects and solving problems.

Be honest with yourself. Don't try to be someone else. It's important to know who you are and what you contribute. Maximize and focus on that.

WHAT PAST PROJECTS ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

I'd have to say one of my favorite projects has been helping to re-establish the brand of a musician. His name is Marc Scibilia; he's a former Nashville musician that is rediscovering his roots on the East Coast. I've been a fan of his for a while.

We partnered with him to redesign his albums, website, promotional material, and merchandise. I have a passion for both design and music, so connecting those two things made the project so much fun. Marc has since become a personal friend.

Our brand promise is "Perform Beautifully," and it's crucial that all of our work substantiates that claim.

HAVE YOU ALWAYS BEEN DRAWN TO DESIGN?

I've always been interested in design, even though I didn't know exactly what that meant. When I was studying business in college, my college roommate was a singer and songwriter. I just started messing around, creating his gig posters. I loved it. Later, I switched my business major to a business minor and then went back to school as a design student. I fell in love with it after three minutes of my first class, honestly. I sat in that class thinking, "This is what college should be like. I'm actually engaged! This is what I was destined to do."

HOW DO YOU KEEP YOUR CREATIVITY SHARP?

I believe very strongly that you have to stay connected to your community, whether that's personally, or virtually. It's important to see what everyone is doing, so you can start to identify trends and patterns to get down to the core of what's changing and why it is changing. Then, you can riff off of that. Also,

listening to music. If I am working on a long-term project, I'll pick an album that kind of feels connected to the work, and I'll listen to that album through most of the project, drawing inspiration from that.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST LESSON YOU HAVE LEARNED?

Be honest with yourself. Don't try to be someone else. It's important to know who you are and what you contribute. Maximize and focus on that. If you're not true to yourself, what you're creating will not come out as authentic. One of the great things about Maestro is that we celebrate people's differences and their unique skill sets. And as a leader, I have to be able to rely on people whom I know are more talented than me in some areas. That puts us all in a position to succeed. It's liberating and freeing and provides passion and opportunities for people.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO AN ASPIRING DESIGNER?

Everything that you put out in the world represents who you are as a designer, whether that's your personal Twitter profile, your Instagram account, or what's in your portfolio. All of those things represent your brand and how you express yourself to other people. If you don't have all of those things aligned and are not intentionally working together to communicate who you are, you are not going to make the grade. You have to be intentional about your personal brand.

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STRYKER'S EXPANSION BOOSTS MICHIGAN'S MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY

AWARD-WINNING CULTURE WILL BE VALUABLE RECRUITMENT TOOL

BY GATHY KNAPP PHOTO COURTESY OF STRYKER

WITH ITS JOBLESS RATE HOVERING AROUND 4.0 PERCENT, THE SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN REGION MAY BE EXPERIENCING WHAT MANY ECONOMISTS DEEM "FULL" EMPLOYMENT.

This statistic is a positive one when describing the area's economic health, but a challenging one to overcome for companies seeking to hire new employees. To attract job seekers, companies must differentiate themselves in this highly competitive market.

Stryker has found its means of differentiation. For the past eight consecutive years, the global medical technology manufacturer has been named to the 100 Best Companies To Work For® list by Fortune and Great Place to Work (GPTW). In 2018, more than 315,000 employees from companies throughout the U.S. provided feedback used by GPTW to establish the list. Companies need to have more than 1,000 employees to be considered. Survey questions included content about pride in having an impact on the community, the feeling of making a difference, and whether work has special meaning. Stryker ranked 16th out of the 100 award winners.

Stryker's successful culture is a valuable recruitment tool. On June 26, 2018, the company announced it will expand capacity of its Medical division in Portage, Michigan. The company will invest almost \$110 million in a 253,000-square-foot expansion project that will result in the expected recruitment of 260 new employees by the end of 2025. The average annual salary of those positions is expected to be \$73,000. Stryker is noted for its inclusive and collaborative practices, and the upcoming expansion will include amenities such as a new café, a patio, expanded training space, and newly designed offices

to encourage collaboration. Construction is anticipated to begin this fall and be completed by the end of 2020.

To fill these new roles, Stryker will search for talented people who are passionate, focused, driven, and expect to win. The goal is to identify team members who will constantly challenge each other to achieve more. They will join the ranks of highly engaged employees like Rishabh and Monique who proudly describe their work environment.

"I work with a young, cohesive and energetic team," says Rishabh, Staff Engineer. "We spend a good amount of time in the office and the team has become a group of friends who enjoy work. I feel lucky that Stryker has people as a core value. While working here, I can see why this organization is always on top of the charts as a best employer. The exposure and platform to showcase your skills is unmatched."

"Stryker supports diversity by selecting and hiring candidates from all different backgrounds and experience," says Monique, Manager of Research and Development. "The workforce here is very diverse. Stryker also focuses on employee engagement and individual development plans that provide opportunities for advancement."

To explore how to become part of the Stryker team, visit careers.stryker.com.

WHERE THE NEW JOBS ARE

Here's a list of company announcements made in the second quarter of 2018 as reported by the regional economic development catalyst Southwest Michigan First.

These new jobs have been introduced to each company's hiring schedule and, depending on the individual announcement, may come available any time between now and the year 2025.

STRYKER

PORTAGE, MI
STRYKER.COM

EXPECTED NEW JOBS: 260

XL MACHINE

THREE RIVERS, MI
XLMACHINE.COM

NEW JOBS: 10

CHEM LINK

SCHOOLCRAFT, MI
CHEMLINK.COM

NEW JOBS: 15

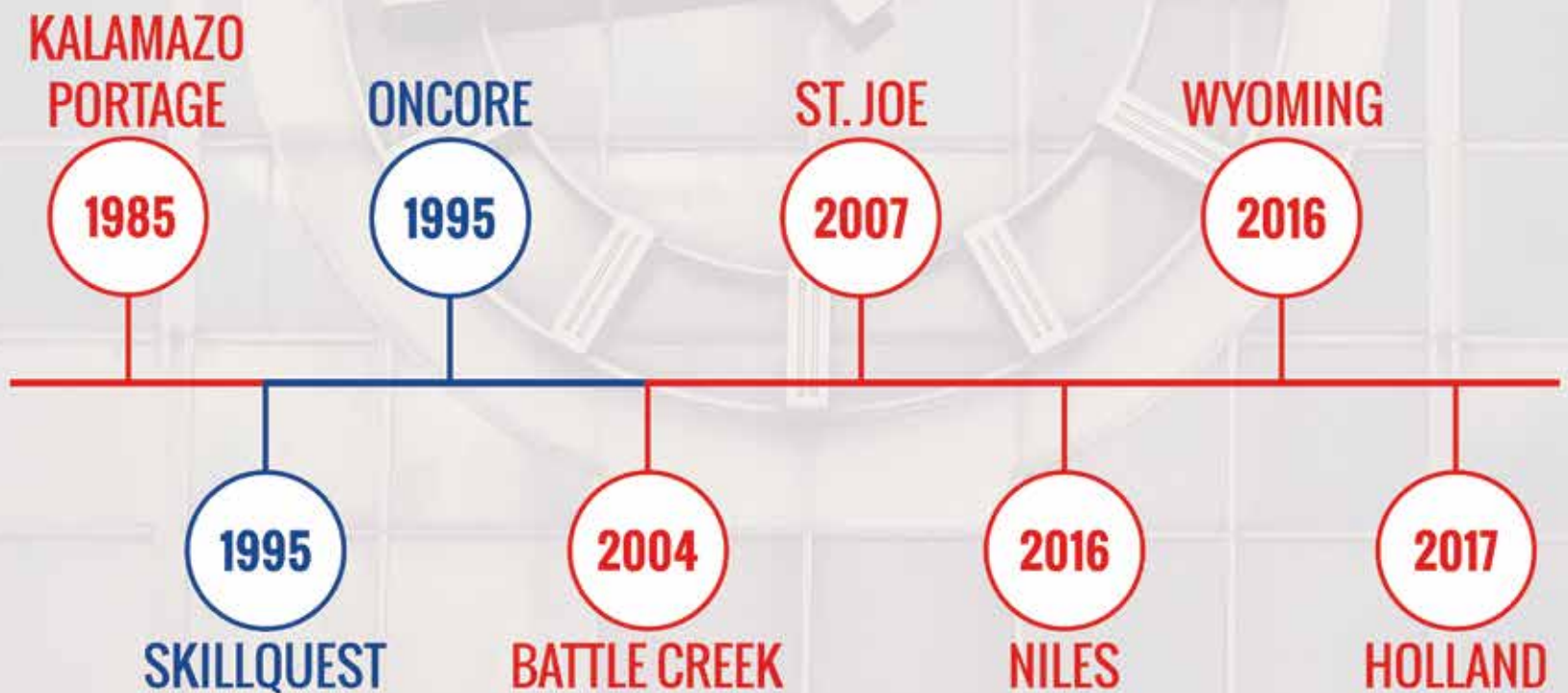
MENDON SEED GROWERS CORP.

STURGIS, MI
PREMIERSEEDGROUP.COM/MENDON-SEED-FARM-LLC

NEW JOBS: 6



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FULL STEAM AHEAD

WITH MITCHELL BINGAMAN

BY JAKE FREDERICKS | PHOTO HANNAH ZIEGLER

EDUCATION

Western Michigan University
(WMU) Mechanical Engineering,
B.B.S. '17

EMPLOYMENT

Application Engineer, Steam
and Condensate Department,
Armstrong International

HOMETOWN

Scotts, Michigan

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

I have been working at Armstrong International since March 2018. Armstrong designs and manufactures mechanical solutions for steam, air, and hot water applications. Our products are used everywhere from education and healthcare to the food and beverage industry. As an application engineer, my job is to directly support Armstrong's third-party representatives by thoroughly answering any and all technical questions.

Sometimes, my team has to calculate a quote for a big project. Other times, there may be an issue with a product, and we have to troubleshoot it. I never know what question I am going to get.

TALKING SHOP

For this job in particular, being able to stay organized is vital. On any given day, I have many projects to manage simultaneously. My team, the Applications Team, prides itself on providing prompt and accurate responses, so I am always answering emails and phone calls. We are a tight-knit group, so we all know that we can rely on each other to share information and lend a hand.

FROM INTERN TO EMPLOYMENT

I previously had three internships at Armstrong, so I got to know the company pretty well and built relationships with the people here before I got the job.

During my first two internships, I worked in the Humidification Department, testing prototype humidifiers and their software. Then, for my senior design project at WMU, I worked at Armstrong for a semester to redesign a heat-exchanger for greater efficiency and heat transfer in a smaller-sized tank.

LOOKING AHEAD

As a new employee, I have been taking advantage of Armstrong's training sessions. Recently, I attended two offsite project management classes.

I learned how to budget time and money effectively for large-scale projects, while still keeping progress on pace. I can definitely see that information being useful down the line.

STAYING LOCAL

I have lived in Michigan my whole life, so it was great to be able to find a job in a familiar place. I love living in Three Rivers—it's a perfect location for me because it's close to work, and I can easily get to either downtown Portage or Kalamazoo. I usually meet up with my friends on weekends to go bowling at Airway Fun Center, kayaking on the Kalamazoo River, or to unwind at one of the local breweries.



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michiganlottery.com

IT'S DOWN TO A SCIENCE

WITH HALI KUNST

BY JAKE FREDERICKS | PHOTO HANNAH ZIEGLER

HOMETOWN

Caledonia, Michigan

EDUCATION

Western Michigan University

Chemical Engineering Major; Biology Minor;

Life Sciences Focus

Expected Graduation: Spring 2020

POSITION

Process Engineer

Intern

HIGH-TECH AND FAST-PACED

Industrial consulting firm CRB's engineers (chemical, mechanical, civil), along with critical utility specialists, and an array of other experts, collaborate to design solutions for clients. We work in four phases: conceptual, schematic, design, and then construction. As a process engineer intern with a background in chemistry and biology, I help design detailed plans for life science projects. I also create instrumentation diagrams that visually represent the process of how chemicals will be made.

WORKING TOGETHER

I am currently working on an expansion project for GRAM (Grand River Aseptic Manufacturing) alongside Melinda Smith, a pharmaceutical specialist. Melinda is offsite, but we still connect via Skype. We video call, share screens, and are able to work together on the project remotely. Along the way, I have been getting trained in computer simulation programs like Microsoft Visio for diagrams and MicroStation for CAD (computer-aided design).

SOMETHING NEW EVERY DAY

I have learned to be proactive with my goals and manage my responsibilities. CRB encourages me to go ahead and try things on my own, but I know to check and double check my work. CRB also has an open-door policy, so I can ask anyone for help if I need to. People are always willing to drop what they are doing, so I don't ever feel like I am intruding on their work. This has gotten me out of my comfort zone in regard to asking for help because, in school, I was always the type of person to silently struggle my way through.

MOVING FORWARD

In high school, chemistry challenged me like no other class did. It helped that I had a terrific chemistry teacher who pushed me. I loved it. I am so happy to be here today getting real experience and pushing myself farther. I have learned so much and met so many terrific people at CRB. I am especially thankful for the opportunity to try the consulting side of chemical engineering before I graduate and decide on a career path.



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TAKING THE

WEST MICHIGAN DISTILLERIES OFFER THE PERFECT THIRST QUENCHERS

BY CHAZ PARKS PHOTOS COURTESY OF LONG ROAD DISTILLERY

THE PERFECT COCKTAIL IS A BEAUTIFUL THING.

It can be a refreshing gin drink on a Michigan summer's day or a bold bourbon concoction that warms you as winter rolls in. That's why it may not come as a surprise that craft distilleries across the country grew by nearly 20 percent in 2017, with over 50 of them calling Michigan home. Craft spirits are on the rise, and they are altering the state of cocktails.

"The craft spirits industry has seen tremendous growth over the past couple of years," says James Loughmiller, Spirits Category Manager at Imperial Beverage. "Michigan alone has been making strides, producing some of the highest quality spirits in the nation. We are usually known as a craft beer state, but recently spirits have started to take hold, and we are seeing a surge of new distillers open throughout the state with a dedication to craft and quality. The craft segment of the spirits category is growing at a rapid pace, and we don't see it slowing down anytime soon," Loughmiller confirms.

A shining example of this craft movement comes right from west Michigan. Long Road Distillers has been producing high-end craft spirits since 2015. It is located on Grand Rapids' west side and has created a stunning home by dedicating their craft to the community that surrounds them. Both co-founders Jon O'Connor and Kyle Van Strien reside on the west side.

"We both have deep roots on the west side of the city, so it was a no-brainer for us to develop this project here. We wanted to give

back to the community and make this a shared space with the people that support us. It's been amazing watching the area thrive over the past three years," says Van Strien, co-founder of Long Road Distillers.

Southwest Michigan is home to an array of local distillers, from Green Door Distilling in Kalamazoo to Bier Distillery in Comstock Park, and the craft spirits game has exceeded expectations helping to grow the Michigan economy. Operating locally has positively affected the restaurant and retail industry as well as resident farmers who are seeing the boost in their own economic benefits from this new flourishing industry.

Rows of wheat don't usually come to mind as your bartender makes your Michigan Mule but, when you put quality over everything, it is a must. Utilizing the freshest grain Michigan has to offer, Long Road puts an emphasis on locally sourced agriculture whenever possible. Red winter wheat, for example, is a staple ingredient for the distillery. Long Road utilizes the wheat in several of its products. It is sourced from Heffron Farms in Belding, Michigan, just 25 miles from the distillery.

"It's in our name. We wanted to make the best locally-sourced product we could with no shortcuts. From our grain to the malt to even the fruit we use for our seasonal limited releases, it all comes from local farms. When we set out to build the distillery, our main objectives were to one, produce world-class, quality spirits that were world-renowned, and two, locally source every ingredient it takes to make those spirits," Van Strien explains.

Kalamazoo-based Imperial Beverage is fairly new to spirits distribution. Obtaining its ADA (Authorized Distribution Agents) certification in the spring of 2017, its portfolio has grown into a craft-centric powerhouse. Long Road



LONG ROAD

was recently added to that ever-evolving portfolio, making the distiller's products available statewide for all connoisseurs of locally-sourced spirits in Michigan to enjoy.

It's in our name. We wanted to make the best locally sourced product we could with no shortcuts. From our grain to the malt to even the fruit we use for our seasonal limited releases, it all comes from local farms.

KYLE VAN STREIN, COFOUNDER OF
LONG ROAD DISTILLERY

"Working with Long Road has been an absolute pleasure," says Loughmiller. "Its commitment to sourcing ingredients, not spirits, and its dedication to utilize as many local ingredients and farms as possible sets it apart from your everyday distillery. The team there is dedicated, hardworking and goes above and beyond to produce its products. Jon and Kyle have been

instrumental in helping our team understand spirits and how to go to market with them. They are truly great partners and friends!"

The results have been worthy of celebration. Long Road has seen early success with the transition to Imperial Beverage, achieving a growth in sales since making the move in spring of this year. The sales team at Imperial works hard to ensure that Long Road products are widely available across the state and is committed to getting their craft into your glass.

Chaz Parks is Donations and Special Events Coordinator at Imperial Beverage, a long-standing member of the Michigan beverage distribution community. Established in 1933 after the repeal of prohibition and purchased by Kalamazoo's Cekola family in 1984, Imperial has grown from a one county beer distributor to a top 10 statewide beer, wine & spirits wholesaler. With 330 employees and four locations in Kalamazoo, Livonia, Ishpeming, and Traverse City, Imperial provides statewide coverage that serves every Michigan County, every week, all year long.

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DANNIE ALEXANDER

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NICOLE MARQUES

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER AT MILLER-DAVIS COMPANY

HOW CAN YOU IDENTIFY A GREAT LEADER?

DANNIE ALEXANDER: I identify a great leader as someone who treats everyone the same as the next person. They don't cater to folks they feel will be more influential or more powerful. A leader is someone who can connect with all people.

NICOLE MARQUES: A lot of people are leaders, but when I think of a great leader, it's someone who looks at every person to figure out their strengths and weaknesses and leads accordingly. Outstanding leadership is not one size fits all.

I don't need distractions—I just zone out and think about things. It helps me connect the dots.

DANNIE ALEXANDER

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST STRENGTH AS A LEADER?

DANNIE: I consider myself to be an intuitive, positive person, and I feel I also have some dexterity that allows me to adapt. But more importantly, I strive not to make assumptions about people.

Someone can walk in here, and I should not assume that they're going to be a particular way. This is important to me because I think folks are so unique; no one's the same.

NICOLE: I thrive on positivity, encouragement, and optimism. That's why I try to give back to my teammates. Everyone deserves a cheerleader in their corner, and if I can do that for somebody, then I did my job.

HOW DO YOU GET YOUR MOST CREATIVE IDEAS?

DANNIE: I may free write or sit in silence with my thoughts. Sometimes, I like to drive with no radio. I get a lot of creative ideas like that. I'm one of those types of folks. I don't need distractions—I just zone out and think about things. It helps me connect the dots.

NICOLE: I get my best ideas when I'm able to disconnect from work a little bit. Whether it's on vacation or when I am out-of-town

traveling for work, I need to step away from the day-to-day. Sometimes at night, right before I fall asleep, I get the best ideas, then hurry up email myself so I don't forget it in the morning.

IS THERE ONE BEHAVIOR OR TRAIT THAT YOU ARE SEEING DERAILED MORE LEADERS' CAREERS?

DANNIE: Impatience. People want things now. We all see folks in high positions and think, "Hey, it'd be great to be that person," but no one has any idea what that successful person went through to achieve that. I guarantee it took them plenty of patience and sacrifice. I believe you don't arrive before your time. If you try to rush it, you are not going to be ready.

NICOLE: When you get to be a great leader, you say "we" instead of "I." It should be about the team. You have to give credit to those around you. At some point, it's no longer about you—it's about everyone else around you. You have to have self-awareness as a leader.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

DANNIE: What inspires me is when I see folks begin to live up to their potential. I also love to see people step out of their comfort zone and go after something. I am inspired by people who are willing to take the leap and say, “I have a passion for X,” then go after it wholeheartedly with no safety net or guarantee of success.

NICOLE: I’m a tad competitive with most things. It began with sports. I naturally want to be [and make things] better. I’ve been with Miller-Davis for almost 11 years, and I have seen that construction is really important. It improves communities, and I think that’s what drives me—seeing the look on our client’s faces of how you’re able to transform something and make it better. It’s really rewarding.

When you get to be a great leader, you say “we” instead of “I.” It should be about the team. You have to give credit to those around you.

NICOLE MARQUES

HOW DO YOU ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR TEAM?

DANNIE: I try to include my team in decision-making. At the end of the day, I have to make the decision, but I like to involve my team. I like to put them in situations that are going to pull them out of their comfort zones, and also give them opportunities to lead. I also try to think of other unconventional ways to help them develop by involving other folks who know my team members’ craft better than I do.

NICOLE: I think it’s most important for me to trust my team. Not only am I their cheerleader, but I trust them with whatever project they’re given. I know that they’re going to do their very best. That gives them the motivation to do the job well. I’m not a big believer in micromanaging. I want people to have the freedom to do the best they can.

WHICH QUOTE GUIDES YOU THROUGH LIFE?

DANNIE: I could give you pages upon pages of quotes. I’m a quote person. But I do have one that I just heard recently: “Your peers will respect you for your integrity and your character, not your possessions.” David Robinson said that.

NICOLE: When I started at Miller-Davis, on my very first day, my older sister, who lives in London, sent me flowers. On the card, she wrote the Woody Allen quote: “80 percent of success is showing up.” I have had that note pinned up on my bulletin board ever since, because it encourages me to try things that are uncomfortable for me. For example, public speaking terrified me at first. But 80 percent of the difficulty was starting, then the rest followed.

WHAT HOBBY DO YOU PURSUE IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

DANNIE: I like to fish. But here’s the thing: I would like to try something different. I think it would be cool to learn the art of tailoring. I have many memories of my great-grandmother creating terrific things—I think I would enjoy that.

NICOLE: I have two dogs, so my husband and I do a lot of hiking with them. I also love to travel. Italy is my favorite vacation destination. If I could go every year, I would.

IF YOU COULD HAVE DINNER WITH ANY THREE LIVING PEOPLE, WHO WOULD THEY BE?

DANNIE: I would like to have my second-grade teacher, Miss Pitman—I will never forget her. You always have teachers you never forget. Another person I think would be interesting to have dinner with is a guy by the name of Jeffery Canada. He started the Harlem Children’s Home. And my third invitation would have to go to Malcolm Gladwell, because I find him so interesting.

NICOLE: I would invite Sheryl Sandberg, the Chief Operating Officer of Facebook, because I love marketing. I’ve also wanted to meet Julia Roberts since I was a child, so she has to be at the table. Also, Simon Sinek. He wrote “Start With Why” and just did a great recording of Millennials in the workforce.

WHAT WOULD YOUR SUPERPOWER BE?



I would fly. I eat up a lot of time trying to get from one place to another, especially when I’m driving. If I could fly, I could bypass the traffic soaring from meeting to meeting and get a lot more accomplished.

DANNIE ALEXANDER



I would say flying. I went skydiving once, and that feeling of being so free and floating above the clouds was amazing. Everyone should do it. I could zip right on over to Italy, or anywhere I wanted, for free!

NICOLE MARQUES

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CARLOS WHITTAKER



Carla Sones sat down with the self-described "hope dealer" and People's Choice Award winner to talk about how to make a moment and learn how to breathe again.



Where did your leadership journey begin?

I was born in Pico Rivera, East Los Angeles, California. My father was a first-generation immigrant to the United States from Colón, Panama in 1960. When he left Panama, he was 18 years old. My grandparents gave him 20 dollars cash and a shoeshine kit. My dad got a one-way ticket from Panama to LAX, got off the plane, shined shoes for a year and a half, and made enough money to enroll at Los Angeles Community College. He is Dr. Fermin Whittaker, retired CEO of the California Southern Baptist Convention. So when it comes to being inspired, I don't have to look very far. **How did you get started as an author and speaker?**

My journey was a little bit different. I ended up signing a record deal and making music, traveling, and touring the world. I still stand on stages, but I don't sing anymore. I speak now and inspire people through spoken word and through words I've written. I have two books, "Moment Maker" and "Kill the Spider," in which I let people know that they can live their life on purpose as opposed to their life living them. I like to tell people I'm a hope dealer, so I am just dealing some hope, especially to leaders. **In your mind, what is the biggest challenge leaders have to address in today's world?** Society today is moving at such a rapid pace. We are getting blasted by information from all sides and at all times. I don't believe in any way, shape, or form that the

human soul was meant to operate at the current pace we have to keep up with. So, what we're seeing is an influx of anxiety and an epidemic of depression. If you look back 100 years, there is no comparison. Everything has been doubling, tripling, and even quadrupling in speed. So, when it comes to leadership, I think the biggest thing we can start doing is teaching those who are leading, as well as those who are following, how to rest and how to breathe. If we can't do that, we're going to start seeing more and more families fall apart, more and more companies disintegrate, and more and more institutions implode.

What advice do you have for our readers? We're all hoping and praying that we're going to have this one massive moment. Whether

it be at work, an event, or even at home in our personal lives, we dream of the one moment that will be the catalyst to propel us

forward to the next phase of life. I want to tell every leader that it's never about just one moment. Yes, milestones are important; but by sitting around waiting for that one explosive event, we lose sight of the countless tiny moments that pass us by. If you live those little moments on purpose, and with purpose, they are going to add up and propel you to those great achievements. ✨



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PUT COACHING IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT

LET THE GROWTH OF YOUR EMPLOYEES TAKE OFF

BY SARAH MANSBERGER | PHOTO MIROSLAV _ I (ISTOCK)

IN HIS 2009 BOOK, "DRIVE," DANIEL PINK ARGUES THAT ACTIVATING EMPLOYEES' INTRINSIC MOTIVATION IN THE WORKPLACE HINGES ON THREE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS: AUTONOMY, MASTERY, AND PURPOSE.

Flip the purpose switch, he argues, and provide meaningful learning opportunities for employees and a big enough sandbox to play in. And bingo! You build the foundation needed to support the kinds of happy, productive people we all hope to work with and for.

Pink's formula is elegant—and yet it can be surprisingly challenging to puzzle through the right approach and apply the model to every employee. Leaders of others especially must think critically about each piece of the puzzle. For example, as a general rule, how much autonomy is the right amount and how does honoring employee autonomy fit with your leadership style and philosophy? What about the team where "Employee A" seems to thrive on frequent check-ins and "Employee B" could go weeks without touching base? Is either employee optimally autonomous? How do you know? Mastery can be a little easier to measure, but purpose is especially slippery. What gives each member of your team meaning at work? How do you find out?

A coaching approach can be helpful. At its core, coaching enables learning. Coaches have the power to help employees discover and develop their potential and increase their overall self-efficacy on the job. Coaching centers on the premise that the answer lies within the individual. It is the job of the coach to help draw it out with deep listening, rich questions, and by challenging assumptions. One coaching strategy that sparks learning involves asking questions about a "peak" experience. For example, if I wanted to better understand what motivates one of my employees, I might ask her to describe a time when she was at her best and felt especially motivated at work. What was she doing, who was she with, and what made the experience

stand out in her mind? A good coach will follow up with (often deceptively simple) questions to help open dialogue, deepen the specificity of the insight and turn it into action.

The GROW Model is well-established and based on the four phases below.

G: GOAL

- What do you dream of creating?
- What do you want to change?
- What do you want to do and by when?

R: REALITY

- What is happening right now in your life? How does your current state affect your ability to make meaningful progress on your goals?
- What kind of progress have you made on the goal thus far? What has helped you get as far as you have? What has stood in the way?

O: OPTIONS

- What step could you take next? How about the next two steps after that?
- What would happen if you did nothing? What are the alternatives and choices you have in front of you?

W: THE WILL OR WAY FORWARD

- What will you do to start?
- What can I do to be of help to you?

Turning insight into action through targeted, coaching-style Q&A sessions honors the unique contributions of each employee, while providing leaders of others with intelligence they can use to better understand each person's needs for autonomy, mastery, and purpose.

What gives each member of your team meaning at work? How do you find out?

What kind of leader do you dream of being? What is one step you take to get there? What alternatives do you have in front of you? What will you do to take the first step to getting there? Master the art of great questions with the GROW model by your side and maybe, just maybe, your own feelings of autonomy, mastery, and purpose will grow in lockstep.



Sarah Mansberger is a partner at Southwest Michigan First tasked with curriculum development behind leadership programs like *Managing From the Middle*, *Catalytic Cultures*, *First 50*, and *Leadership Kalamazoo*. Learn more at catalystuniversity.me/programs.

How Did I Get Here?

A Journey with Southwest Michigan's Preeminent Female Leaders

BY JAKE FREDERICKS PHOTOS TRISHA DUNHAM

WOMEN MAKE UP OVER 50 PERCENT OF THE REGIONAL POPULATION IN SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN.

Though workforce participation has skyrocketed, challenges still exist for women in the workplace, such as unequal pay, underrepresentation in managerial roles, and fewer degrees earned in university subjects such as engineering and computer science.

To address these issues head-on, Southwest Michigan First recently hosted an all-star panel of female leaders for a candid discussion as part of its First Leaders event series. Four women from very different industries spoke about the challenges they faced at the start of their careers and gave informed advice to emerging leaders starting out in today's evolving corporate culture.



**KATHY
BEAUREGARD**

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR
OF WESTERN MICHIGAN
UNIVERSITY



**DANIELLE
MASON
ANDERSON**

PRINCIPAL AT
MILLER GANFIELD



**AMY
MCCLAIN**

VICE PRESIDENT OF CLIENT
AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
AT PNC FINANCIAL
SERVICES GROUP



**ANITA
MEHTA**

DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY AT
STRYKER

I WAS BORN AND RAISED IN THIS COMMUNITY AND HAD ESTABLISHED MYSELF HERE AS A GYMNASTICS COACH FOR NINE YEARS BEFORE INTERVIEWING FOR THE ROLE OF ATHLETIC DIRECTOR.

However, there were only six other female athletic directors in the country at the time, so I was still a risky hire. I have to say, the best part about being one of the only women in the department was not having to

share the bathroom when the men's room had a line!

Because I studied to be a teacher and started my profession in the coaching, I learned that leaders are always team building. No matter how great I think I am, it's those around me who make the department truly great. It can never be all about me. I also learned leaders should not try to be someone they aren't from within—people can smell it a mile away.

Leaders should not try to be someone they aren't from within—people can smell it a mile away.

WHEN I FIRST STARTED PRACTICING LAW, I WOULD SHOW UP FOR DEPOSITIONS AND PEOPLE WOULD ASSUME THAT, BECAUSE I WAS A WOMAN, I MUST BE THE COURT REPORTER.

In the office, people would also expect me to be the one to get coffee or make copies. I had to have private conversations with those individuals later, but having thick skin was still very important at the time.

I would warn leaders away from perfectionism. It can be paralyzing. You can't be afraid to make a decision for fear that it's going to be the wrong one. You have to be willing to make mistakes to move forward. You are going to learn more from an error than you would have by just getting by with a safe decision. If you wait until you feel like something is perfect, you have missed your opportunity.

You can't be afraid to make a decision for fear that it's going to be the wrong one. You have to be willing to make mistakes to move forward.

WHEN I USED TO WALK INTO A BOARDROOM FULL OF MEN AND PRESENT, SOMETIMES, I WOULD BE SO NERVOUS—I FELT I WASN'T STRONG ENOUGH.

I had to reach the realization that it was time for me to own my own happiness. Once I was confident about who I was and my value, I could walk into any room, no matter who was in there, without fear.

I would advise leaders not to seek success but seek value instead. Value is a level of importance. Change happens, so if you're not grounded in yourself, with a strong foundation within you, it will be very hard to build yourself up. Instead of focusing on any one task or role, focus more on you and the value you can bring.

Once I was confident about who I was and my value, I could walk into any room, no matter who was in there, without fear.

DURING THE FIRST DECADE OF MY CAREER, WHETHER I WAS DEALING WITH OUR SURGEON CUSTOMERS, MANAGEMENT TEAM, OR SALES FORCE, I WAS TYPICALLY THE ONLY WOMAN IN THE ROOM.

When my daughter was born, we decided that my husband was going to be the stay-at-home parent, but I still wanted to go to her doctor's appointments and drop her off for her first day of daycare. I can tell you that when she was a toddler, I used to make excuses because I felt guilty about taking time off to be there for those important moments. Since then, I have learned to

permit myself to block out time for personal things.

I think we have made a ton of progress for women in the workplace. If I were to give advice to my 12-year-old daughter, what I would tell her today is very different from the advice I would have given at the beginning of my career. I would tell her to own her own career. Don't wait for somebody else to lay that path for you. If there is something you want, whether it be an international assignment or a job in a new field, be fearless and go for it!

If I were to give advice to my 12-year-old daughter... I would tell her to own her own career.

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LOCAL LEADERS SOFT-SHOE, WALTZ, AND WHIRL TO SUPPORT STUDENT AID

BY JAKE FREDERICKS | PHOTOS COURTESY OF LYNN CHEN ZHANG

LYNN CHEN ZHANG

Partner and COO of Zhang Financial

Trustee of Western Michigan University (WMU) and Vice President of the WMU Foundation's Board of Directors

ORGANIZATION
Western Michigan University Department of Dance

EVENT
Dancing with the Stars

DATE
Saturday, October 27

TIME
7:30 P.M.

LOCATION
Miller Auditorium,
2200 Auditorium Drive,
Kalamazoo, MI 49003

A STAR-STUDED AFFAIR

Western Michigan University's annual Dancing with the Stars event connects the community with the university and brings some well-deserved attention to its Department of Dance. Each year, local leaders are paired with WMU dance students and perform on stage to support essential scholarships for the department. It is almost exactly like the reality TV show "Dancing with the Stars," but with familiar faces.

I am a trustee for WMU and have been on the university's foundation board for a long time. I am still amazed when I talk to each department and hear about the success of their students. I am particularly impressed with the Department of Dance: One-hundred percent of the department's graduates find a job in a dance-related field, and most within three months of graduation. That's impressive and speaks to their talent, but it also underscores the importance of supporting scholarships.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

I did ballroom dancing when I was in college, but just for fun. The great thing was that I never had to remember anything; I could just dance. But when I competed in Dancing with the Stars last year, I had to memorize every step. I was lucky that I had some experience, since I was out of town before the event and only had one week to practice.

Being a part of the process, I got to see everyone's devotion to the program. The event took the combined effort of organizers, instructors, and countless others. The department's costume

I was lucky that I had some experience, since I was out of town before the event and only had one week to practice.

designer found a perfect outfit for me and even called her brother from Las Vegas to custom-make a fabulous necklace. It looked stunning. The entire night was so much fun because of that kind of collective effort. And, of course, everyone was so darn competitive.

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

The audience was so enthusiastic that you could feel the excitement in the theater. I did the tango and had loads of fun. When I was performing, my friend held up an enormous banner that he made to cheer me on. It was also great to see the community come together to support all of the participants. One person who was extremely impressive was WMU President Dr. Montgomery.

Although I did win the People's Choice Award, it was more important to be winning for WMU dance students. With the help of the community, we raised the most money to date and got to show off the caliber of talent at the university. The students are real professionals—that was clear to everyone in the audience.

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BY RON KITCHENS
PUBLISHER

PHOTO JASON W LACEY (ISTOCK)



Where Are You From?

LET'S BUILD AN URBAN CORE AS VIBRANT AS WE ARE

W

HEN I TRAVEL OUT OF STATE, PEOPLE ALWAYS ASK ME WHERE I LIVE. THIS PRESENTS A FAMILIAR CONUNDRUM FOR THOSE OF US WHO LIVE IN SMALL, NATIONALLY-UNKNOWN VILLAGES.

I could just tell them that I live in Texas Township; but usually, this response is met only with head scratching. If you live

in Portage, Parchment, or Paw Paw, you know that I mean no offense, it's just the way these conversations go.

These days, I simply answer that I am from Kalamazoo. Everyone knows at least something about Kalamazoo—maybe they know the city's world-renowned breweries, rich industrial past, or maybe it's just the stand-out name. My point is that whether or not you live within the city limits, Kalamazoo is the starting point we all share.

Kalamazoo is the center of our Midwestern city-state, halfway between Detroit and Chicago, like how Athens was the heart of Ancient Greece. The urban core and center of connectivity for a community, Kalamazoo is the place that many of us go every day for work and where we return each Friday night for dinner and a show.

Stroll through Kalamazoo, and I bet you can find more than a few restaurants, breweries, shops, and monuments that are close to your heart. This city is not just for one person or one group of residents. It belongs to each of us who call the region home. However, the question remains: How can we make Kalamazoo a city we are all proud to be associated with?

Shortly after World War II, Kalamazoo city planners faced a similar question. Suburbs began to take shape and threatened to parochialize the region. To keep up with the pace of change, city leaders decided to make the downtown walkable, so people could

We are experiencing a renaissance of core communities. People now want an integrated life. They want to live, work, and play in the same area.

actually enjoy the city, instead of only seeing it from behind the window of a car. That's when a radical new idea was born: the Kalamazoo Mall, the first pedestrian-only outdoor mall in the United States.

Although the Kalamazoo Mall was recently featured on the PBS special "10 Streets That Changed America," it didn't completely solve the problems the city faced. The good news is that today, we have advantages

unavailable to past city planners. Namely: incredible connectivity. We are experiencing a renaissance of core communities. People now want an integrated life. They want to live, work, and play in the same area. They want diverse neighbors, diverse restaurants, and diverse entertainment. Even suburban areas are trying to create artificial urban cores by creating public spaces for entertainment, the arts, and community engagement.

So, what solutions will we dream up next as a community that will put Southwest Michigan at the forefront of progress? How can we make our streets more inviting to foot traffic? How can we engage the thousands of young people attending our colleges and universities? If the past is any indication, I am confident that we will come up with exciting and innovative solutions that will make all of us in Southwest Michigan proud to say we are from Kalamazoo.

ALWAYS FORWARD,

Enjoyed this article? Let us know! Tweet @269Mag using #269Mag with your thoughts.



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Rebecca volunteers on a Habitat for Humanity project in 2018.

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Delivering hope and energy with a purpose

ACROSS THE 269 AREA CODE AND BEYOND, hundreds of Consumers Energy employee volunteers are picking up paint brushes, hanging vinyl siding and hammering nails to help build stronger Michigan communities.

The Consumers Energy Foundation annually contributes \$200,000 to Habitat for Humanity of Michigan's Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative. The effort aims to build, rehabilitate and repair homes while working with people in need across Michigan.

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