



Alumni Reunion 2018

# *Distinguished Alumni Awards*

***The Marygrove College Distinguished Alumni Award is an honor bestowed by Marygrove College and the Marygrove College Alumni Association. The award was established to recognize and honor alumni who have distinguished themselves and their alma mater.***

*The **Distinguished Alumni Awards** celebrate the values of:*

- *Human Dignity (Respect and honor the inherent value of all persons)*
- *Community (Sustained engagement and responsibility for the common good)*
- *Social Justice (Ethical action that promotes equity and human rights)*
- *Ecological Justice (Action in support of the Earth Charter's commitment to "protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems, with special concern for biological diversity and the natural processes that sustain life)*
- *Excellence (Commitment to the highest quality student service and responsible leadership, grounded in a culture of high expectations, continuous assessment, and evidence-based decision making)*
- *Innovation (Imaginative energy toward new ideas and opportunities that lead to the development of a clear purpose and shared goals)*
- *Diversity (Appreciation, inclusion and acceptance of the uniqueness of each individual, welcoming differences in race, cultural background, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and perspective, among other attributes through hiring, recruiting, marketing and community outreach practices).*

*The **Distinguished Alumni Awards** honor graduates who have made significant contributions and demonstrated leadership in any of the following areas:*

- *Professional, educational or artistic endeavors*
- *The community through government service and/or civic organizations (such as Lions Club, city planning commissions, government committees, etc.)*
- *Political action, social justice or volunteer activities in schools, hospitals, etc.*
- *Marygrove College*

# Distinguished Alumni Awards

# Agenda

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2018 • 7:00 P.M. • MARYGROVE THEATRE

## Master of Ceremony

*Dennis J. Howie*

*Vice President for Institutional Advancement*

## Welcome

*Elizabeth Richards '64*

*Member, Marygrove College Board of Trustees, and 2004  
Distinguished Alumna*

## Awardees

### **Kathryn Therese Pierce, IHM '59**

*Introduced by Barbara Stanbridge, IHM '63*

### **Shirley Liss, '66**

*Introduced by Vicki Eicher '66*

### **Marguerite Williams-Harris '03**

*Introduced by James Harris*

### **Monique Stanton '11**

*Introduced by Stacy Ziarko*

## Closing Remarks

*Elizabeth Burns '72, MD, MA  
President*



MARYGROVE COLLEGE DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

*Kathryn Therese Pierce, IHM '59*



Sr. Kathryn T. Pierce—or Sr. Kate, as many of us know her—grew up in Emmett, Michigan, a humble agricultural village whose population, try as it might, never quite surpassed 600 residents. Like most families in Emmett, the Pierces, which included Kate and her six siblings lived on a farm; and while her brothers worked the land, she tended to the house, cooked, gardened and, she admits, did a lot of dreaming. “I knew there was much more to the world than what I was seeing and experiencing on that farm,” she says. “[Life in Emmett] was probably one of the reasons I joined the congregation.”

This appetite for adventure, along with a longing to see the world and “help those who were less fortunate than [her],” may have taken root in rural Michigan, but it flourished under the guidance of her teachers, the IHM Sisters: first those at Our Lady of Mount Carmel School, then the Sisters of St. Stephen High School in Port Huron, Michigan. By the time she earned her BA in history from Marygrove College in 1959, Sr. Kate had already been a member of the IHM community for five years.

Following graduation, Sr. Kate taught for three years at St. Bede in Southfield, Michigan, before accepting an assignment to teach in the interior of Puerto Rico. Was she prepared for what she was about to do? “Not at all,” she admits with a laugh. Without any real grasp of the language and little direction from her superiors, she got to work. She taught a wide variety of high school subjects for the next six years at Colegio de la Merced in Cayey.

At only 28 years old, Sr. Kate accepted a new position as superior and principal of San Joaquin, a K-12 Catholic school in Adjuntas. Here, she initiated the two-year process of integrating the Catholic high school with the highly-underfunded Adjuntas Public School, a move that was, while blessed by her superiors, controversial with many Catholic families who could afford to send their







children to private schools. “Many of the [Catholic] parents didn’t want their children mixing with public school kids,” she explains. “But I saw it as an injustice. Our student body was small, our building was large and new, and could easily accommodate more students.” The integration was a success and freed her up to serve *wherever* and *whenever* she was called.

Sr. Kate started teaching English in the Adjuntas Public High School. During this time, she received a full scholarship with salary to complete her MA degree in cultural education through New York University. After completing her degree, she returned to a large public high school in Caguas, Puerto Rico, and helped establish an Adolescent Clinic that provided language and cultural “reintegration” training for high school students fleeing the drugs and crime that had overtaken their communities on the mainland.

In 1976, Sr. Kate was elected to the leadership team of the newly established Vice-Province of Foreign Missions for the IHM Sisters. In this position, she helped establish the IHM Mission Office in New York City, a move that centralized missionary operations, strengthening relationships with international consulates and missionary congregations, making it easier to monitor the safety and success of missionaries who were working in war-torn and politically unstable countries. During her three years with the Vice-Province of Foreign Missions, she also taught ESL classes part-time at Columbia University and Kingsborough College, and completed a second MA degree in liberation theology and scripture at Maryknoll’s School of Theology.

The Maryknoll Mission Society hired her in 1979 to help build their newly established Mission Center. For the next 27 years, Sr. Kate worked at the center, leading countless discernment and cultural integration programs for missionaries, initiating re-entry programs for missionaries returning to their homeland as well as orientation workshops for international ministers coming to work within the US Church. Sr. Kate traveled extensively (five continents) to assist mission groups in their intercultural mission endeavors. Because of financial constraints in 2006, Maryknoll discontinued this service to the US Church.

In July 2006, Sr. Kate returned to Detroit and established a nonprofit organization, Intercultural Consultation Services (ICS), to continue offering services that foster diversity and intercultural sensitivity training. After ten years, Sr. Kate retired as Executive Director of ICS and now works as an Independent Contractor where she continues to mentor others in cultural diversity and skills for intercultural living, both nationally and internationally.



MARYGROVE COLLEGE DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

*Shirley A. Liss '66*



After graduating from Marygrove College in 1966 with a degree in mathematics, Shirley A. Liss continued her studies at the University of Maryland before taking a computer programming position with IBM. In this role, Shirley worked with the company's corporate headquarters as well as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the United States Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA), and others.

The work suited her, but a chance rock climbing experience with her IBM colleagues awoke something in Shirley. It was time for her to do something drastically different with her life. So in 1970, without a job or definitive plan, Shirley packed her bags and moved to Fairbanks, Alaska. Here, she set to work, laying the foundation for a five decade-long career that has been as remarkable as it's been rugged.

In Alaska, she took up residence in a 225 square foot log cabin before signing on as a computer programmer for the Aurora Studies Group at the Geophysical Institute. She also continued her studies in geophysics before initiating a two decade-long career as a geologist with the Alaska Geological Survey.

At 44 years old, Shirley decided it was time for another move—this time from her humble cabin into a “real house.” So she installed solar panels to power her tools and got to work. “Building her own home” explains friend Bruce Campbell, “is something to be taken quite literally. She set the foundation pads and posts, had beams hauled in, and then set them on posts herself.” It was only when the work demanded another set of hands that she asked friends to help raise the walls—first one floor, then the second, and finally the trusses and roof.





Considering that Shirley's life has always embodied the pioneer spirit, it should come as no surprise that her home would be the first in Fairbanks to completely rely on solar energy. She moved into her new home at 50 years old, connected to the power grid at 60, and finally gave herself the gift of plumbing at 70.

Throughout the years, Shirley continued to research and place work in over 80 publications, volunteer, and still find the time and energy to challenge herself and help others. She has kayaked through class four whitewater Nenana Canyon, been dropped into the Alaskan wilderness by chopper, and helped clear every recreational dog mushing and ski trail in her local Goldstream Valley. Shirley has also taught winter camping and mushing courses for women.

A skilled "musher" in her own right, Shirley is well acquainted with what National Geographic once called the most rigorous dog sled race in the world: the one thousand mile Yukon Quest dog sled race. Shirley holds the distinction of being the first woman to run the race in both directions—Fairbanks to Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada one year; and Whitehorse to Fairbanks the next.

Indeed, Shirley accomplished much in her more than five decade-long career and yet she shows no signs of slowing down. These days, she takes classes and teaches for the Osher Life Long Learning Program. Additionally, she works with the American Association of University Women, the Fairbanks Land Trust, Fairbanks Paddlers, Pioneer's Home, and Rock Club. She is also a member of a couple book discussion groups, likes to play bridge, and has been known to harass local politicians.





MARYGROVE COLLEGE DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

*Marguerite Williams-Harris '03*



Marguerite's introduction to teaching came first at church when she took over Sunday school duties. At this early stage, she felt compelled to do more when she saw her students struggling to digest the Bible class material. So she went to the library, devoured all of the research on struggling readers that she could find, and began to implement what she learned into her Sunday school classes. "Those lessons revealed a natural gift I never knew I had: teaching those who struggle," she says.

Her first paid teaching job was a long-term, second grade substitute position in the Flint Community School System. "From there," she says, "I was smitten." After earning a degree in communications and a stint with the *Chicago Tribune*, Marguerite still felt the tug to teach. So she taught vacation Bible school, and tutored anyone who was struggling and willing to learn from her, all while pursuing a second bachelor's degree in human services.

In 2001, she began work on her MAT degree from Marygrove, an experience that, as she puts it, "prepared me all the way around, giving me the chance to make mistakes, learn, and grow with my peers in the cohort." To put her newly-acquired knowledge to the test, she accepted a challenge even she wasn't entirely sure she was up to: working with a State Offender Recidivism Reduction Program, teaching reading and reading comprehension to inmates. Marguerite held this position until 2003, when she graduated from Marygrove.

Marguerite then took a teaching position where she taught fifth grade for five years until the school closed.

Interested in diversifying her teaching experience, Marguerite traveled overseas to gain first-hand knowledge of other education systems. This experience led to Marguerite accepting a part-time position working online with ESL students, ages 5 and 6, from China, France, Germany, and Spain.





Marguerite has taught elementary, middle school and adult students. She served as mentor coach for Genesee County Head Start Programs, has a decade of experience as a behavioral specialist, and continues to teach Sunday school.

Marguerite states that she has been very fortunate to be able to work in a field as diverse and exhilarating as education and she hopes to continue growing in education for many years to come.



***Special thanks to  
Dr. Glenda Price for  
facilitating the review  
of nominations and  
selection of this year's  
Distinguished Alumni  
Award winners.***

### **2018-2019 Alumni Association Board of Directors**

- Dr. Vanessa Howell Ghant '92, *President*  
Elizabeth Poliuto Loria '70, *Vice President*  
Samual Blue '93, *Treasurer*  
Alisa Ferguson '02, *Secretary*  
Mark Bartnik '79  
Gloria Brown-Banks '11  
Rahjinah Johnson '03, '05  
Margo R. Lee '00  
Michelle May '85  
Brigeda Nelson '85  
Miranda Linzmaier Outlaw '14  
Frances L. Brown Simmons '85



MARYGROVE COLLEGE DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

*Monique Stanton '11*



Monique earned her Master of Arts in Social Justice from Marygrove in 2011, but her “commitment to the task of building a more just and humane world” has always guided her personal and professional decisions, says friend and colleague Susan Styf. Consider, for example, Monique’s work with Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC), a non-profit that recruits recent university grads using the tagline, “Give us an intense year, and we’ll give you a sense of purpose to guide every year that follows.”

“It was definitely intensive,” Monique says, reflecting on the year she spent in Portland, Oregon, providing education, organizing cultural outings, and facilitating social service connections on behalf of at-risk and homeless youths. “But it was also life-changing. It made me realize that everything we do, every decision we make, has an impact on the larger world.”

Following her year of service with JVC, Monique joined CARE of Southeastern Michigan in 2005, serving the non-profit’s Family to Family Program as a community specialist, a role in which she tackled welfare reform by providing resources and support for families in the child welfare system.

Taking a short “reprieve” from her work with CARE, she joined Leaps and Bounds Family Services, a non-profit focused on health, education, and social and economic needs of at-risk children and families. Here, she assisted in opening the Shurly Family Learning Center, an educational hub for children and adults earning their GEDs or in need of job training.

Yet the work she had done previously with CARE was not forgotten and in 2008, she was again recruited by the non-profit, this time to fill the role of deputy director. In 2012, CARE named Monique president and chief executive officer, a decision that would “[lead the organization]





to new levels in the region,” says Director for the Michigan Heat and Warmth Fund Stacy Ziarko. Indeed, the statistics speak for themselves.

In the last year alone, CARE, which has been providing substance abuse treatment and resources in Southeast Michigan since 1977, has more than tripled its workforce, growing from 30 to 112 employees. Also worth mentioning is the fact that Monique helped increase the organizational budget from \$2.8 million in 2016 to \$4.7 million in fiscal 2018.

This is impressive to be sure—but what is even more impressive is that two years ago, state policy stopped allowing counties to outsource their addiction recovery services. For CARE, this translated to a 12 percent drop in revenue and the loss of a program that had been in place for four decades. Policy changes like this could have proved devastating for the organization, yet Monique saw this as an opportunity for change.

With her guidance, CARE hired a new development director, formulated a new strategic plan, and got creative. Instead of relying on government funding, CARE would raise funds through partnerships with local organizations and the results of these efforts have certainly been fruitful. This year, about 10 percent of CARE’s \$4.7 million budget will come from individuals and employee assistance programs offered by local employers.

In addition to her work with CARE, Monique is an active member of a variety of local coalitions and task forces, and is a 2013 Business Magazine 30 in Their Thirties honoree. In 2014, the *Detroit Free Press* and Metropolitan Affairs Coalition awarded Monique the Shining Light Dave Bing Future Leader Award for her regional advocacy addressing substance abuse disorders.





MARYGROVE COLLEGE DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

# Past Honorees

## 2002

Veronica Mary Maher, IHM '51  
Barbara Bigley O' Brien '55  
Gilda Sferrella Pace '52  
Marie Jean Brinkman Sloan '54  
Teresa Snider-Boring '98  
Norma Wilson Wade-Miller '71  
Reverend Curtis C. Williams '96

## 2003

Gabrielle Baker Burton '60  
Mary Margaret Connolly '67  
Maura D. Corrigan '69  
Ann Moore Feeney '57  
Deborah Hunter-Harvill '77  
Mary Joseph Maher, IHM '53  
Alice Geisler Raftary '49, '67  
Richard J. Samyn, O.F.M. '95

## 2004

Ann Gabriel Kilsdonk, IHM '45  
Angela Celeste May '90  
Khris Nedam '98  
Elsa Potter '60  
Elizabeth Fischer Richards '64  
Mary Ellen Riordan '41  
Mary Massaron Ross '82

## 2005

Rosemary DeLaurentiis Blaszkiewicz '62  
Edee LaFramboise Joppich '53  
Kathleen Prendergast Kaiser '70  
Lorraine Lubawy Ozar '68  
Nettie Harris Seabrooks '55  
Mary Anderson Walker '56  
Jacqueline G. Woods '97

## 2006

Brian Christian '07  
Margaret Brown Dudar '46  
Rita Edgeworth Fields '96, '02  
Bridget Gonzales '82  
Mary Kathleen Hughes '66  
Sheila Keefe '56  
Yesenia Lara '07  
Amata Miller, IHM '54

## 2007

Elizabeth A. Burns '72  
Armando R. Cavazos '99  
Lana Cavalier Cowell '64  
Suzanne M. Fleming, IHM '57  
Lynne O' Loughlin DeGrande Hackathorn '67  
Victoria E. Jones '76  
Amy Pavlov '08

## 2008

Debra S. Barash '09  
Patricia Newman Brasseur '73  
Mary D. Moore Hubbell '56  
Sharnita C. Johnson '87  
Patricia Mucci LoRusso '77  
Mary Trepanier-Street '71  
Elizabeth Walters, IHM '66, '08

## 2009

Nancy McDonough Geschke '64  
Eileen Connell Heasley '67  
Sharon Holland, IHM '61  
Amy Lange '08  
Kathleen O'Reilly '68  
Brianna Williams '09

## 2010

Margaret Brennan, IHM '45  
Mark Honeyman '85  
Suzanne Stead Husband '65  
Patricia Siroky Konovalov '87  
Ann Petrie '60  
Kim Redigan '08  
Angela Watley '10

## 2011

Shanelle Jackson '07  
Ann Burger Klocke '56  
Mary Callaghan Lynch '76  
Brittany Mack '12  
Judith Tomlanovich Miller '61  
Jan Soleau, IHM '59  
Virginia Wadsworth '86

## 2012

Juliana Casey, IHM '62  
Miriam Mohrhoff Poirier '62  
Dorothy Seebaldt '66  
Sharon Rodgers Simone '67  
Francie Kennedy '73  
Rochelle Dornatt '77  
Jarell Williams '12

## 2013

Dorothy Jones Hogan Sweeney '48  
Barbara Kent Freeman '63  
Suzanne E. Sattler, IHM '65  
Virginia Burdick Skinner '67  
Jane Hammang-Buhl '68  
Karel Bowlus Oxley '72  
Robert D. Tompkins '14

## 2014

Mary Ellen Johnson McCormick '48  
Yvonne Lawrence Larabell '64  
Anne Fitzgerald '67  
Patricia Dean Phillips '13  
Alesha Jones '14

## 2015

Mary Harris Martin '62  
Judith Anne Eliassen, IHM '64  
Carol Wagner Cousineau '67  
Helen Kozlowski-Hicks '84  
Sheila Dorsey-Smith '86  
Tina Marie Perry '16

## 2016

Alice Baker, IHM '59  
Peggy (Margaret) Devaney, IHM '64  
Barbara Jean Nienstedt Buttell '65  
Kathleen Alessandro '72  
Lou (Koss) Moss '73  
Camryn A. Washington '18

## 2017

Barbara G. Stanbridge, IHM '63  
Catherine Haven Rohlman '72  
Christine Kennedy '72  
Sylvia Colding Manlove '82, '91  
John Meulendyk '97  
Dursej Wade, Jr. '18