



Global Transformations

Newsletter of the Department of Sociology at Michigan State University

MESSAGE FROM THE USA PRESIDENT

Hello! My name is **Katrina Groeller**, and I am the new President of the Undergraduate Sociological Association (USA) at Michigan State University for the 2014-2015 school year! I couldn't be more excited for this leadership position, and I plan to really get the ball rolling next year and make the USA bigger than it ever has been before. Part of that includes keeping in touch with recent alumni who are inspiring undergraduates with examples of what their lives could be after graduation.

Graduating from a large university such as Michigan State can be both very exciting and very scary. A chapter of life has just ended, and another is just beginning. With this on the horizon, undergraduates feel the pressure to be prepared for what comes after: the job market, paying bills, and other adult responsibilities. I believe that having examples of successful and thriving recent grads will provide comfort to undergraduates, helping them understand that it is actually possible to enter the job market and be prosperous there. With that being said, I hope that communication will be rejuvenated between the Sociology department and recent alumni. If you would like to help by communicating with current undergraduate sociology majors at MSU, please send an email to me at groeller@msu.edu, or contact our Department Chair, Ray Jussaume, at jussaume@msu.edu.

We look forward to hearing from you about your successes!
Much gratitude,

Katrina Groeller



HIGHLIGHTS

- Message from the Chair
- Wiley Retires
- Alumni News
- In Memory
- Emeriti faculty Honored
- All-University Ruth Hamilton Award
- Promotions
- Grad Office

FROM THE SOCIOLOGY COLLECTIVE

This year, MSU's Sociology Collective fostered professional development by actively participating in a series of brownbag lunches and presentations by alumni and colleagues that was organized by the Department's Brownbag and Speakers committee. This speaker series was very active, inviting scholars to campus and providing us with free lunches and – even more valuable – candid advice. We enjoyed lunch with two MSU alumni who gave very stimulating presentations, **Drs. Nancy Mezey** and **Heather Dillaway**, who shared their research, answered our questions, and reminisced about their experiences in the department. Leading scholars from other universities also joined us for food and conversation. **Drs. Lucy Suchman, Jo Reger, and David Embrick** provided helpful tips on balancing work, family, and community engagement. We really appreciate the Brownbag and Speakers Committee for providing us with the opportunity to meet a diverse group of esteemed professors in a laid-back setting.

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Message from the Chair

It is once again my pleasure to share with you our department newsletter. It seems like we were just working on last year's edition. As always, our year has been busy with faculty and student achievements as we strive to do our part in achieving the University's *Bolder by Design* objectives.

Raymond Jussaume

There is no way that this newsletter can capture even a significant portion of those accomplishments. I would encourage you all to take the opportunity to catch up on our news by accessing the current news section of our department's web page at sociology.msu.edu/news. At the moment, by visiting this page, you can catch up on **Dr. Brendan Mullan's** recent election as President of the North Central Sociological Association, or catch up on **Dr. Stephanie Nawyn's** activities as a Fulbright Fellow where she is researching and writing about human trafficking issues. You can also learn more about **Dr. Cathy Liu's** ongoing research on the relationship between marital stress and heart disease, as well as **Dr. Tom Dietz's** work on whether economies can develop without warming our planet.

In this newsletter, we have tried to share with you stories about current and past students and faculty. It is our hope that by sharing these stories, we can encourage more communication between all those who have been and are members of our Departmental community. I know from my own day to day interactions that our students would love to hear from, and communicate with, alumni. These are challenging times, and our students are responding to these challenges. I hope you will take the opportunity to not only share your news with us, but also to consider opportunities for communicating with our current students. Please feel free to communicate with our students directly, as well as share your stories by writing me at jussaume@msu.edu.

Raymond Jussaume
Professor and Chair



Sociology Department evening at the Lugnuts Game.
June 29, 2013

WILEY RETIRES

Dr. David Wiley, Professor of Sociology and director of the African Studies Center at Michigan State University for 30 years, officially retired on December 31, 2013. His honorable career has included conducting research on urban and rural environments in Zambia, Kenya, and race relations in Zimbabwe and South Africa. He was a Fulbright Senior Fellow in South Africa and co-chair of the Higher Education Forum of the U.S./South Africa Bi-National Commission, President of the African Studies Association, Vice-Chairperson of the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO, and chairperson of international committees of the National Science Foundation, American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the American Sociological Association. He has authored and co-edited a number of works on African environmental issues, Southern Africa, African film, and international education, including *Building the Nation's International Expertise for a Global Future: Forty Years of the Title VI and Fulbright-Hays International Education Programs*, *Changing Perspectives on International Education*, as well as *Group Portrait: Internationalizing the Disciplines*, and *Southern Africa: Society, Economy, and Liberation*. He was co-founder of the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars and the National Council of National Resource Title VI Center Directors.



Dr. David Wiley

To keep up with all of the exciting research that is being done by our faculty and students, please visit our website at sociology.msu.edu

Dr. Laurel Hilliker received her Ph.D. in Sociology at MSU in 2011. She now holds a tenure-track position as an assistant professor at Park University in Parkville, Missouri. Soon after her arrival at Park, Dr. Hilliker was successful at securing a grant that helped start a Center to Advance the Study of Loss at Park University. The Center serves two populations, students and current professionals working in end of life and bereavement care fields. The Center has developed a Certificate of Thanatology [study of death and dying] as well as a minor in sociology. It recently offered a workshop with a nationally known speaker, Dr. Harold Ivan Smith, that covered the topic of the unacknowledged grief of medical professionals when their patients die. In addition, at the end of her first year at Park, Dr. Hilliker was awarded the Faculty Newcomer of the Year Award by Park University's Student Government Association!



Dr. Laurel Hilliker

Dr. Hilliker's advice to graduate students is to learn about Faculty Senate and Faculty Federation organizations as they become very important resources. She also suggests that when they are offered a new junior faculty position, that they negotiate for a mentor for year one. "I was fortunate that one of the department faculty members provided me with mentoring and it was invaluable."

Dr. William V. D'Antonio received his Ph.D. in Sociology and Anthropology in 1958. Dr. D'Antonio's career has included stops on the faculty at Notre Dame, as professor and chair at Connecticut, and as a research Professor at Catholic University. He was also chief executive officer of the American Sociological Association from 1982 to 1991. Ever active, he has recently co-authored books on Religion, Politics and Polarization and American Catholics in Transition.

Ms. Claudia Geary graduated with a B.S. in Sociology in May 2013. She had received a B.S. in Nutritional Sciences at MSU the previous year. Claudia wrote us that "Most people I knew questioned my decision to add a second degree in Sociology since they could not see how it related to nutrition, but to me it made perfect sense. I had developed a great interest in community nutrition, and what better way is there to learn how to appeal to the community than to learn how society is organized and how it functions? Sociology has given me a unique perspective that not many others have. After graduation, I looked in to AmeriCorps programs, and I am currently serving as an AmeriCorps VISTA at the HACAP Food Reservoir, which is one of eight food banks in Iowa. AmeriCorps turned out to be a great way for me to use the knowledge I learned in both Sociology and Nutrition to help those who are food insecure. In the fall I will be attending the University of Tennessee, Knoxville to earn a Master's degree in Nutrition, with a concentration in Public Health Nutrition.

"I learned a great many things from different courses and faculty members in the Sociology Department that have been of value, but because of my background and interest in community nutrition, everything I learned in both SOC 281 and 282 have been of most value to me. Being able to analyze data and know which kind of equations to use in what scenarios will help me tremendously. Based off of my experience in the Sociology Department, I have some advice for current undergrad students. A great thing to do is to form study groups. Another is to go to office hours. Even if you don't need help, I would still suggest going to office hours just to talk to professors. Talking to professors could change your life. If I had not gone to several of my professors' office hours, I would not be where I am today."



Ms. Claudia Geary

In Memory

Dr. Richard P. (Dick) Gale, who received his Ph.D. in Sociology in 1968, passed away on September 27, 2013 in Laguna Woods, California. Dr. Gale spent his career on the Sociology faculty at the University of Oregon. He was an early pioneer in the area of Environmental Sociology. His early work focused on the growing environmental movement. Dr. Gale was a pioneer of Social Impact Analysis, and also researched issues pertaining to the sustainable use of natural resources.

Dr. Douglas C. Kongshoj Wilson, who received his Ph.D. in Sociology in 1996, passed away on December 18, 2013. After leaving MSU, Dr. Wilson was a post-doctoral researcher at Rutgers University, and subsequently moved to Denmark when he obtained a position at Alborg University. He became a Professor at Alborg in 2012. His research interests included local ecological knowledge, fisheries co-management, and marine governance.

EMERITI FACULTY HONORED

At this year's upcoming meetings of the American Sociological Society, Sociology Professor Emeritus **Dr. Harry Perlstadt** will be awarded the ASA Distinguished Career Award for the Practice of Sociology. This lifetime achievement award recognizes a sociologist whose work has significantly impacted the utility of sociological practice, including impacts in advancing human welfare. Dr. Perlstadt joins a long list of esteemed sociologists who have won this award, including Eliot Liebow, Peter Rossi, and Bill Kornblum. Congratulations, Dr. Perlstadt!



Dr. Harry Perlstadt

In October, Professor Emeritus **Dr. Maxine Baca-Zinn** received the Charles Horton Cooley Award for Scholarly Contributions to Sociology from the Michigan Sociological Association. MSU Sociology has a long-standing involvement in the MSA, and is proud to recognize Dr. Baca-Zinn for this special award.



Dr. Maxine Baca-Zinn

YOU CAN DONATE TO OUR DEPARTMENT ONLINE.

www.socialscience.msu.edu/alumni/giving.html

- ➔ Scroll down and click on make an online gift
- ➔ Under search for a fund type in Sociology
- ➔ Box will drop down with list of funds
- ➔ Click on fund of your choice
- ➔ Complete donation

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

The Department of Sociology is committed to sharing your stories as well as improving communication with alumni.

To help us, we would be grateful if you would send us an e-mail at contact@sociology.msu.edu with your current contact information and stories of your personal and professional milestones, recent accomplishments and recognition.

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Undergraduate Professional Development Endowed Fund

The Department of Sociology is committed to creating an endowed Undergraduate Professional Development Fund which will enable the department to provide support to our undergraduate students in the form of scholarships, conferences, study abroad, and research opportunities. As of this writing, just over \$5,000 has been raised toward a goal of \$30,000. The establishment of this fund is our top department priority. We are asking you to join us in this effort by making a gift in support of this endowment. If you are interested in doing so, call Nick McLaren toll free at 866-761-4199 or view instructions on the back of this card to make your gift online today. Thank you!

ALL-UNIVERSITY RUTH HAMILTON AWARD – 2014

The purpose of the All-University Student Awards for Excellence is to identify a student who demonstrates/produces an outstanding academic work-paper or original scholarship. The Ruth Hamilton Award has been designated to the Department of Sociology in honor of Dr. Ruth Simms Hamilton, who was known internationally for her research on African Diaspora. This year's All-University Ruth Hamilton Award recipient is:

Hollis Henry



Dr. Xuefei Ren

Promotions

Dr. Xuefei Ren is the Sociology Department's newest Associate Professor, having been promoted to that rank with tenure in 2013. Dr. Ren came to MSU in 2007 from the University of Chicago, where she earned her Ph.D. Dr. Ren's research program is built upon her interests in the political economy of urban development, politically as it affects the rapidly urbanizing regions of the global south. She is concerned with addressing issues of inequality associated with urbanization processes. Her most recent book manuscript, *Urban China* (Polity Press) was awarded an Outstanding Academic Titles award in Choice Magazine. Dr. Ren's appointment is shared with MSU's Global Urban Studies Program. Dr. Ren teaches Urban Sociology and Comparative Urban Theory.

GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT OFFICE

Thanks to a very generous in-kind donation from the Shell Oil Corporation last fall, the Sociology department received new office furniture for the Graduate Teaching Assistant office (Berkey Hall, Room 8). We are particularly grateful to Bill Fitzpatrick at Shell Downstream and Pamela Ewton at Shell Real Estate for their help, as well as the College of Social Science for its support. Subsequently, Room 8 underwent a significant re-design, including new paint, during the spring 2014 semester. The result is a significantly improved work environment for our graduate students and improved space for communication and interaction between graduate and undergraduate students.



Before



After