

*Welcome*

# *The Program*

## **WELCOME**

Gloria D. Thomas, Director  
*Center for the Education of Women, University of Michigan*

## **REMARKS**

Christina B. Whitman, Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs  
*University of Michigan*

Irma M. Wyman, College of Engineering, University of Michigan, *Class of 1949*  
*Vice-President, Honeywell, Inc., Retired*  
*Archdeacon, Diocese of Minnesota, Retired*  
*Sponsor, Irma M. Wyman Scholarship*

## **PRESENTATION OF CEW SCHOLARSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP AWARDS**

Donna Anuskiewicz  
Monica Porter  
Ranny Riecker

## **CLOSING REMARKS**

Gloria D. Thomas

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WOMEN STAFF**

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**CITATION WRITER**

Jean Waltman

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# CEW Scholarship Program

COMMEMORATING 41 YEARS OF SUPPORTING WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL DREAMS

**T**oday we celebrate the 41st anniversary of the CEW Scholarship Program by welcoming 49 amazing students to our community of scholars and fellows. CEW scholars are extraordinary people. While they will all make their own unique paths in life, they share certain characteristics, including intelligence, vision, perseverance, and potential.

Times have changed over the past 41 years. Women at the University of Michigan now earn over 50% of undergraduate degrees and over 40% of graduate degrees (Status of Women Report, University of Michigan, 2007-2008). But these numbers do not tell the whole story. Behind today's statistics are the experiences of many women who have struggled as much as their 1970's predecessors to achieve their educational dreams—or who have given up secure and prestigious careers to devote their talents to solving the world's social, political and environmental problems. The Center created its Scholarship Program in 1970 with the goal of enabling these women to continue their education at the University of Michigan.

It's clear that CEW scholarships still fill an enormous need. This year's 49 scholars and fellows—like the 1,391 who preceded them—certainly rely on the financial support. As important as the money, however, is the confidence they develop in knowing that someone believes in them. A recent scholar expressed her thoughts this way:

*“The CEW scholarship was very important to me. I received it during a time when I was contemplating giving up my education. Outside of the financial help, the scholarship gave me hope! I began to believe in myself again and to believe that I could finish my education against all odds.”*

## **OUR SCHOLARS**

The scholarships and fellowships honor the performance and potential of students who have interruptions in their education, strong academic records, and impressive past accomplishments and future goals. CEW has awarded over \$4 million dollars in scholarships since the program began. The scholarships go to women, and men, in any undergraduate or graduate program on the Ann Arbor, Dearborn, or Flint campuses.

Before returning to their studies, scholars over the years have held myriad high-paying or minimum-wage jobs, from politicians and government officials to Peace Corps volunteers; from auto assembly workers to medical professionals; and from at-home moms to professional musicians, to name only a few.

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CEW scholars are today contributing their knowledge and talents across the world. They are doctors and nurses caring for the elderly and the disenfranchised; musicians and artists; teachers, scholars, social workers, lawyers, engineers and public policy experts working across the spectrum of disadvantaged populations; environmentalists and urban planners addressing issues of sustainability; and scientific researchers working to cure all kinds of diseases.

The 2011-2012 CEW Scholars represent all three University of Michigan campuses, a wide variety of disciplines, both graduate and undergraduate degrees, and an age range from 25 to 54.

### **THE HISTORY**

Former CEW Director Jean Campbell first established the Scholarship Program in 1970 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the admission of women to the University of Michigan. In the beginning, private donations were used to establish a general scholarship fund, and the awards were simply called “CEW Scholarships.” Then, in 1990, the Margaret and Harry Towsley Foundation guaranteed the future of the program with a \$1 million endowment. In the twenty-one years since then, 478 women have been named Margaret Dow Towsley scholars.

Today, the Towsley Scholarships are just some of many awards that have been created by private donors. In 1985, CEW introduced the Mary Malcomson Raphael Fellowship for graduate women students in the humanities and social sciences. The Raphael fellowships are provided through an endowment established by the late Margaret Earhart Smith in recognition of her friend Mary Malcomson Raphael. You’ll find a description of all the 2011 awards, and the scholars, on the following pages.

### **WITH GRATITUDE**

On this joyous afternoon, we celebrate the rich partnership among CEW staff, the University community, and our loyal supporters. We join the scholars, their academic advisors, their families and friends in expressing our sincerest gratitude and admiration to the generous donors who have built such a strong legacy of financial assistance and encouragement for students at the University of Michigan.

*Thank you.*

*The Scholarships and  
Fellowships*

**GAIL ALLEN SCHOLARSHIP** *Recipient: KELLY KIRBY*

In memory of their daughter Gail, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Allen established the Gail Allen Scholarship in 1997 with support from their family and friends. Gail Allen was the 1995 CEW Dorothy Gies McGuigan Scholar whose goal was to become a teacher who would “engage high school students to think critically about our society and help young women find their voice.” Gail Allen’s excitement for studying history and women’s studies at the University of Michigan was interrupted by illness, but she persisted and earned her master’s degree and teaching certification. She was pursuing further studies in history at the time of her death. The Gail Allen Scholarship is awarded annually to recognize women who are returning to complete an undergraduate or graduate degree at the University of Michigan. To honor Gail’s interests, women enrolled in history, women’s studies, or related fields are given preference for this scholarship.

**AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN SCHOLARSHIP** *Recipient: MARY CIPOLLONE*

Created in 1990 by the Ann Arbor Branch of the American Association of University Women, the AAUW Scholarship supports women returning to school to complete their degrees at the undergraduate or graduate level. AAUW is a membership organization that promotes equity for all women and girls, lifelong education, and positive social change. The AAUW Scholarship is dedicated to creating better access to education for women.

**AAUW: MARY ELIZABETH BITTMAN MEMORIAL SCHOLAR** *Recipient: RACHEL GARCIA*

In 2006, the American Association of University Women joined with the Bittman family to establish the Mary Elizabeth Bittman Scholarship. A member of AAUW for over 50 years, Elizabeth was an Honorary Life Member –Ann Arbor Branch. She was also a 70-year resident of Ann Arbor, active in both business and community activities. Despite economic difficulties, Elizabeth graduated from the University of Michigan in 1941 with a degree in political science—at a time when a college education for women was less common than it is today. In honor of Elizabeth’s belief that, “An education is something that can never be taken away,” this scholarship is designed to help women whose studies have been interrupted to complete degrees in their chosen fields.

**JANE AND BILL BLOOM SCHOLARSHIP** *Recipient: DIANE LEMANSKI*

The Jane and Bill Bloom Scholarship was awarded for the first time in 2008. In 1964, when Jane Bloom walked through the doors of the newly opened Center for the Continuing Education of Women, she was only the second person to seek assistance. Her affiliation with CEW began then—when Jane was a forty-year-old mother of ten and Ann Arbor-area chicken farmer—and it continues to this day. With perseverance and determination, and help from CEW along the way, Jane Bloom completed both an undergraduate and a medical degree at the University of Michigan and had a distinguished career as a physician. Throughout it all, Jane’s husband Bill, who died in 2011, was a supportive partner. Jane is the first scholarship recipient to establish a scholarship endowment with the intention of fully funding tuition for a CEW scholar. With their scholarship for an undergraduate on the Ann Arbor campus, Jane and Bill sent a message to all future recipients to “aim high, raise your sights, and stick with it for a rewarding life.”

**RUTH JEANETTE BUTTREY SCHOLARSHIP** *Recipient: KRISTI LIVINGOOD*

The Ruth Jeanette Buttrey Scholarship was created in 2004 by her granddaughter Stephanie Buttrey. It honors Ruth Buttrey, who filled her life with learning and adventure. An early proponent of women’s education, Ruth studied at a teacher’s college as well as at the New England Conservatory and the Chicago Musical College. After marrying Ted Buttrey, who oversaw the growth of Buttrey Department Stores, Ruth produced a home talent show in the Midwest. Throughout her life, Ruth supported various women’s groups, especially as an active participant in the P.E.O. Sisterhood. Ruth and Ted also endowed many scholarships in his home state of Montana. CEW’s Ruth Jeanette Buttrey Scholarship recognizes an outstanding undergraduate on the Ann Arbor campus, with a special focus on the fields of business and engineering.

**CEW GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP** *Recipient: JOSEPH REILLY*

The CEW Graduate Scholarship was established in 2008, the result of a Presidential Donor Challenge launched by University of Michigan President Mary Sue Coleman. The Challenge made it possible for donors to increase the impact of their gift by matching a portion of their funds with a University contribution. The CEW Graduate Scholarship Fund supports promising graduate students, ensuring that the University will continue to attract the “best of the best.” With gratitude, CEW acknowledges Loretta M. Skewes for establishing the CEW Graduate Scholarship Fund, thereby enabling others to contribute and ensuring that we will continue to grant CEW Graduate Scholarships in perpetuity.

**COLLEGIATE SOROSIS FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP** *Recipient:* ANNE LEWIS

The Sorosis Corporation, composed of alumnae of Collegiate Sorosis, established a foundation to support sorority members in need of financial assistance in order to remain at the University of Michigan. With the closing of Collegiate Sorosis, the alumnae voted to make foundation funds available for women's scholarships through the Center for the Education of Women, thereby continuing their encouragement of women scholars.

**LUCILE B. CONGER ALUMNAE GROUP SCHOLARSHIP** *Recipients:* JUANITA JOHNSON;

DEBORAH VALLIE

Established in 1990, the Lucile B. Conger Group provides CEW scholarships for undergraduate women. The Lucile B. Conger Group is one of thirty-two University of Michigan alumnae organizations nationwide. Founded in 1947, the Conger organization has approximately 300 current members. The group is actively involved in raising funds to provide scholarships for women to attend the University of Michigan.

**MOLLY H. DOBSON SCHOLARSHIP** *Recipients:* AMAL CHEHAB; CHRISTINE SICKLE

Created in 1992, the Molly H. Dobson Scholarship supports women returning to school to complete undergraduate degrees. These scholarships recognize women who have shown creativity, persistence, and dedication while striving to complete their education. The scholarships were created through the generosity of Molly Dobson, a dedicated emerita member of the CEW Leadership Council and an active volunteer in the University and larger Ann Arbor community. Molly created these scholarships because she believes in the value of education. They are designed to be flexible because she knows that deserving women have different educational needs and goals.

**CECILIA ANNE STIBORIK DREYFUSS SCHOLARSHIP** *Recipients:* NICOLE BULLER

Family and friends of Cecilia Anne Stiborik Dreyfuss established this scholarship in her memory in 2002. Cecilia was a remarkable journalist, scholar, and champion for women's rights. The scholarship provides support for women studying literature, language and related fields from a woman's perspective—interests that Cecilia pursued throughout her life. An accomplished linguist, Cecilia received her doctorate in comparative literature at the University of Michigan, won two Hopwood Writing Awards, and was one of the first CEW scholarship recipients in 1970. This year's scholarship funds were donated to the Dreyfuss Memorial Fund at CEW in memory of Allan Leon Dreyfuss, Cecilia's husband of 54 years, who passed away in March 2011.

**ROBERT BRUCE DUNLAP MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP** *Recipient: SUE STRIBLEY*

This scholarship was established in 2006 in memory of Robert Bruce Dunlap. Robert was a long-time University employee, first at the University Hospital and later at the School of Dentistry, and an even longer-term sometime patient at the University Hospital. As a professor's son, he was well imbued with the importance of education and the necessity of helping students further their education. Because of Robert's long association with the University Hospital and his gratitude to all members of the medical teams, it is appropriate that first preference be given to an Ann Arbor campus undergraduate student pursuing a career in a health-related field.

**UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN FACULTY WOMEN'S CLUB SCHOLARSHIP (FWC)**

*Recipients: FEYISETAN ADUNBI; LIANA MAY*

Founded in 1921 to promote friendship and fellowship among its members, the University of Michigan Faculty Women's Club (FWC) is comprised of women faculty members, spouses or partners of faculty members and their guests. In keeping with FWC's commitment to furthering the interests of the University and women, FWC is proud to award this scholarship from the FWC Endowment Fund.

**ELSIE CHOY LEE SCHOLARSHIP** *Recipient: MARY BETH CAROLAN*

The Elsie Choy Lee Scholarship assists undergraduate and graduate women pursuing their own work in art, writing, or music. It is also given to students researching creative women who have struggled to find their own voices within these fields. The cultivation of creativity was a vital part of Elsie's search for life's purpose and meaning. In "Art in My Life," a talk Elsie gave in 1991, she said: "Literature, art and poetry have been my friends all my life; they are my media of expression in good times and bad. Looking back, I can say that these arts not only enriched my life, they have helped me regain part of my health." Elsie advocated making known the unheard voices of women in the arts in world cultures throughout time. Her eight-year research on an 18th century Chinese woman poet resulted in *Leaves of Prayer: The Life and Poetry of a Farmwife in Eighteenth-Century China* (The Chinese University Press of Hong Kong, 2nd ed., 2000). The Elsie Choy Lee Scholarship was established in 2001 by her husband, the late Joseph T. A. Lee, with the support of family and friends.

**SARAH WINANS NEWMAN SCHOLARSHIP** *Recipients:* LAUREN MALONEY; TEHMINA MASUD

The Sarah Winans Newman Scholarship, created in 2001, provides financial support to graduate, undergraduate and professional women pursuing degrees in biological and biomedical sciences and related fields, demonstrating financial need and showing promise of academic merit. Dr. Newman most recently served as Associate Dean of the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies and, from 1970 through 1996, was a professor in the Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology at the University Medical School. A long time volunteer and friend to the Center, Sarah recognizes the contributions CEW makes to the University community and is pleased to continue her commitment to the education of women.

**ALINE UNDERHILL ORTEN FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP** *Recipient:* JES SKILLMAN

Established in 2001, the Aline Underhill Orten Foundation Scholarship extends support to women pursuing careers in chemistry, biology, natural resources, epidemiology, and related fields. Aline's intelligence and versatility always led her to new ways of learning and teaching. An early student of engineering, she started her career in chemistry by attending classes with medical students and began a lifelong pattern of excelling by crossing disciplinary lines. Like Dr. William Beaumont on Mackinaw Island in the previous century, Dr. Orten had an opportunity to study working intestines through the open wound of a cooperative patient who participated in her study for many years. She later worked to construct an analyzer of body fluids, the first in the Midwest. Always innovative in her own work, Aline understood that rapidly changing environments in the sciences demand high levels of education, resourcefulness, and flexibility. The scholarship is dedicated to that purpose.

**MARY MALCOMSON RAPHAEL FELLOWSHIP** *Recipients:* MARIANA CRACIUN;

SARAH HILLEWAERT; TRACI KENNEDY

The Mary Malcomson Raphael Fellowship was established in 1985 for women graduate students in a humanities or social science field in the College of Literature, Science and the Arts. The fellowships are awards of distinction presented to women held in the highest esteem by their faculty. Fellowship recipients have been nominated by their departments and are selected on the basis of their academic excellence and their potential to make contributions of exceptional usefulness to society. The fellowships are provided through an endowment established by the late Margaret Earhart Smith in recognition of her friend Mary Malcomson Raphael, a singularly resourceful and creative woman who "had a gift for evoking power in people above and beyond their ordinary capacity."

**LINDA J. RIDER SCHOLARSHIP** *Recipient:* MARY POWERS

This scholarship in celebration of Linda J. Rider was established by her family in 2004. When Linda enrolled at the University of Michigan at the age of 41 to earn her bachelor's degree, she was a professional writer, editor, photographer and single mother. To honor her accomplishment of earning a degree as a nontraditional student, the Linda J. Rider Scholarship is awarded to women who need financial assistance to return to college later in their lives.

**HELEN HUFF SHELL SCHOLARSHIP** *Recipient:* DEB HEED

The Helen Huff Shell Scholarship was established in 1982 by Helen when she retired from her distinguished career in personnel management. Throughout her career, Helen diligently sought to enhance the status of women in the workplace. Her scholarship recognizes that commitment to women in business or the professions.

**MARGARET DOW TOWSLEY SCHOLARSHIP** *Recipients:* ANDREA ALEXANDER; JAMIE AUSTIN; ERIKA BEHM; JENNIFER BRAGG-GRESHAM; JESSICA BROOME; REBECCA COHEN; DONNA COLE; KATRINA ELLIS; BRADY G'SELL; TINA HAMZE; CLARA JULIEN; COLLEEN KUUSINEN; KATRINA LEFLORE; ANN LEPKOWSKI; MICHELLE MCCOY; CHRISTINE NEUMERSKI; KARLA PATTEN; JOYCE PATTERSON; ELIZABETH PRICE; JENNIFER SANO; KATHRYN THIROLF; AMORITA VALDEZ; MARIA WATHEN; JEMINA WILLIS

The life and work of Margaret Dow Towsley, has opened countless doors for women and children and immeasurably improved the life of the Ann Arbor community. After completing a bachelor's degree at the University of Michigan and a master's degree at Columbia University Teachers College, Margaret Towsley taught preschool at the University School in Ann Arbor, married pediatrician Dr. Harry Towsley, and started a family. A neighborhood summer play group in her home became the Children's Play School, which thrived for more than 53 years. Margaret was one of the first persons in Ann Arbor to acknowledge the special needs of children and working mothers, and her leadership helped inspire and shape the Perry Nursery School. An early believer in equal access for women, Margaret was a major force in creating a gender-integrated Ann Arbor YMCA. When women and their organizations needed a home of their own, she helped establish the Women's City Club. An active political leader, she became the first woman elected to the Ann Arbor City Council. Those who knew Margaret Towsley describe her as a woman devoted to her family and as a mother who fostered in her five daughters an independence of spirit

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and a confidence to reach for their own stars. Her quiet and sustained support nourished the CEW Scholarship Program since its founding. Returning women students have benefited in untold ways from her faith in the Center and her belief in educational opportunities for women. Indeed, Margaret Towsley always acted upon the premise that, given support and nurturing, all people can achieve their dreams.

**IRMA M. WYMAN SCHOLARSHIP** *Recipient:* BENITA ROBINSON

The Irma M. Wyman Scholarship provides support for women students in engineering, computer science, and related fields on either the graduate or undergraduate level. Criteria for selection also include merit, promise of future contributions, and life circumstances. Irma is herself a 1949 graduate of the College of Engineering at the University of Michigan, one of two women in her class. She became involved with the computer industry in its early stages and rose to become the first female vice president at Honeywell, Inc., then a Fortune 100 company. After retirement from the corporate world, she served 10 years as Archdeacon of the Diocese of Minnesota. Ms. Wyman is now fully retired. Having benefited during her education from both the financial and psychological support of a Regents Scholarship, she established the Irma Wyman Scholarship in 1996 to provide a similar boost to others.

*The Scholars and Fellows*

FEYISETAN ADUNBI

*University of Michigan Faculty Women's Club Scholar*

"I grew up in a culture where children and women had no voice, could not question adults or speak without being spoken to," explains Feyi Adunbi. "Because I made it my business to defend myself and anyone else needing defending, I earned the childhood nicknames 'basket-mouth' and 'firebrand.'"

Feyi determined that she would never succumb to the injustices women face in African societies, including her native Nigeria. She earned a BA in English education and a master's degree in human resource management from Nigeria universities. She also married, but by the age of 26 she was a destitute single mother who'd spent four years nursing her terminally ill husband. "I came out of that life-changing experience stronger and more determined to live by my own rules." Feyi joined various Nigerian human rights groups; worked with victims of domestic and cultural abuse; organized programs to empower women's grassroots political participation; and even hosted her own TV and radio shows.

By the time Feyi moved to the US, she had a new husband, three children, and a resolution to pursue an academic career. She earned an MA in African studies from Yale University, where her research focused on sexual violence as a tool of the genocide in Darfur. Next, Feyi became a case worker for a non-profit agency, assisting refugees from Cuba, the Middle East and many other African nations in turmoil.

According to Feyi, "The pull towards social work is inevitable." When she finishes her MSW from the University of Michigan, Feyi knows she will continue to empower and mentor young women. She has won the admiration of her professors and colleagues for her academic talents and her commitment to "human rights and to the advancement of women in the US, in Nigeria, in Africa and in the world."

With gratitude and admiration, CEW names Feyi Adunbi a University of Michigan Faculty Women's Club Scholar.



ANDREA ALEXANDER

*Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar*

This is Andrea Alexander's "new normal": A cancer survivor working on a master's degree from the University of Michigan's School of Information and planning for a rewarding career as a law librarian. In Andrea's words, "I've found my calling." It is, she explains, very different from her "old normal" plans for her life.

After completing a BA in English from Michigan State University in 2002, Andrea set out to earn a law degree from the University of Wisconsin. Her life looked secure and happy. At that point, "things began to unravel." An unexpected divorce, a debilitating illness, a heavy financial burden and a failing economy left Andrea with an uncertain future and three years of physical and career challenges.

Andrea eventually found a job at a small law firm, but she quickly realized that she was no longer interested in being a practicing attorney. After "some serious soul-searching about my next steps," Andrea decided to come back to Michigan to be closer to her mother and to seek out a new career for herself.



"I'm 31 now, and I really do consider myself a survivor. It's statistically unlikely that my cancer will return, I'm doing well in school and I have a solid plan for my future...I'm motivated and resilient and no matter what happens down the road, I'm confident I can handle it."

Andrea's professors and former colleagues share that confidence. They praise her intelligence, her ambition and fortitude and her skills as a writer and critical thinker. As one of her advisors tells us, "Andrea is just the type of leader our profession needs, and I am excited at the prospect of her graduating from the University of Michigan and going on to do great work." Eager to support Andrea Alexander's exciting new life and work, CEW proudly names her a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.

JAMIE AUSTIN

*Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar*

Jamie Austin is well aware that aspects of her background may, in the eyes of some, suggest the unlikelihood of her earning a PhD. Her father deserted the family when she was young. And even as the valedictorian in an economically-troubled, inner-city public school, Jamie was told by her guidance counselor to forego any thoughts of attending the University of Michigan. Then, in the course of her college career, Jamie married and balanced school with raising a family. At one point, she even found herself unemployed and uninsured.

That is not, of course, the whole story: Jamie is from a family of teachers for whom education is a top priority. She has earned both a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from Notre Dame and a master's degree in bioscience from Johns Hopkins. And, before deciding to return to school once more, Jamie held prestigious jobs as an environmental engineer and consultant.

In Jamie's mind, all of these experiences and obstacles have strengthened her resolve. "I have," she explains, "always felt driven to improve the lives of people in hopeless medical situations, resulting from either the affliction itself or the patients' socio-economic circumstances."

Jamie, now a mother of four, is a doctoral student in the University of Michigan's College of Pharmacy. She plans to become a faculty member at a research institution, doing research to "develop therapies for diseases that disproportionately affect low-income, underrepresented and pediatric populations."

In the words of one of her former supervisors, Jamie is "a person of keen intelligence, strong analytical skills, intellectual integrity, formidable work ethic and a desire to lead a life that matters." In the opinion of another, Jamie is destined for an exceptional career.

CEW acknowledges the talent and perseverance that have carried Jamie Austin through a life of challenge and achievement by naming her a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.



ERIKA BEHM *Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar*

On November 8, 2004, Erika Behm decided she wanted a college degree. She was in Vietnam with her father, returning to Hanoi as part of his healing process. In a former POW camp, they encountered a gardener who recognized the 82nd Airborne emblem on her father's hat. When the two men realized they'd fought on the same Vietnamese battlefields, they embraced. "The gardener said, 'Now we are friends.' The importance of human relationships (even with those we think to be enemies) became clear to me at that moment," says Erika. "I applied to Mott Community College two weeks later."

At Mott, Erika volunteered with a Department of Defense program to remedy employment complications for veterans. She became an ombudsman, facilitating mediations between employers and their military employees. After delivering a keynote address to a National Guard unit returning from Iraq, Erika worked with others to create the first veterans' court in Michigan—supporting legal services for veterans suffering consequences related to military service. It is, she explains, her way to "advocate for social justice."

Erika is now pursuing her bachelor's degree in social work at the University of Michigan-Flint. Her goal is to earn an MSW at the University of Michigan and then determine whether to continue with a doctorate in social work or pursue a law degree.

One of her advisors describes Erika as a "spark plug—someone who lights up a room with her energy. She has a knack of making everyone on a team feel special and energized. It's hard to grasp at times that a woman so solidly a part of the volunteer community is also raising three children and immersed in pursuing her college degree." Joining those who honor "her personality, intelligence, commitment to service and passion for learning," CEW proudly names Erika Behm a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.

JENNIFER BRAGG-GRESHAM *Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar*

From the time she entered the University of Michigan as a freshman, Jennifer Bragg-Gresham was equally fascinated by medical science, statistics and anthropology. Unable to choose, she graduated with a double major in biology and cultural anthropology.

She followed with a master's degree in biostatistics from UM's School of Public Health and a 10-year career as a research analyst at Arbor Research Collaborative, a local non-profit organization focusing on dialysis-related research. "I loved their goal," Jennifer explains, "to improve patients' lives." In the course of working at Arbor, "I expanded my statistical techniques, experienced 'real' data, wrote proposals, and began to understand the big picture of health outcomes research." She also co-authored over 50 articles for such journals as the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

By 2009, Jennifer was the mother of three small boys, so she couldn't imagine returning to school, even though she longed to expand her research role and expertise. But "when my husband brought up the idea on New Year's Eve, I knew immediately that it was what I wanted to do." Jennifer is currently a doctoral student in the University of Michigan School of Public Health's Program in epidemiology. Her goal is a faculty position at a research university.



The scientists who have worked with Jennifer over her career are excited that she's back at the University to earn her PhD, and they predict that she'll do as well in the academic world as she has done in her previous position. They point out Jennifer's excellent statistical and data-management skills, her intelligence and passion for new ideas, and her strong communication ability as evidence that she'll be a successful epidemiologist, teacher and researcher. In support of her next big career, CEW is delighted to name Jennifer Bragg-Gresham a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.

JESSICA BROOME *Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar*

After graduating with a BA in sociology from Connecticut College, Jessica Broome had no interest in pursuing graduate study. Intent upon a social service career, Jessica joined the Peace Corps and spent 27 months in Cape Verde, “carrying buckets of water on my head and teaching classes of 40 seventh graders without a chalkboard.”

Then Jessica discovered the world of social research. She returned to New York and took a series of jobs in the non-profit sector that introduced her to different research methodologies for a wide variety of audiences and purposes. She “interviewed inmates in a maximum security prison and tracked down active crack addicts in homeless shelters for follow-up interviews.”



In order to broaden her skills, Jessica earned a master’s degree in applied social research from Hunter College. With her increased knowledge of statistics and survey design, she moved on to public relations and market research. For five years Jessica conducted “actionable research that led to real business decisions.” During that time, she says, “I investigated questions like ‘What motivates women to lose weight?’ I conducted focus groups on epilepsy and golf, and I wrote surveys about living with bipolar disorder and what the tooth fairy looks like.”

Now Jessica is a PhD student in survey methodology at the University of Michigan. She sees her past experiences as “an ever-widening pyramid.” When she graduates, Jessica will scale “the next level of the pyramid by becoming a research expert for non-profit and social service agencies, evaluating social problems and measuring the best ways to address them.”

Jessica’s professional and academic colleagues love working with her. They cite her technical skills; her ability to work with all types of people; her talents as a teacher, manager and scientist; and her never ending curiosity for new ideas. Delighted that Jessica Broome has found her ideal career, CEW names her a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.

NICOLE BULLER *Cecilia Anne Stiborik Dreyfuss Scholar*

“In many ways,” says Nicole Buller, “my life is complete. I consider myself lucky to have a supportive and admirable supervisor, a wonderful husband, two great children and many friends and family members who are interested in seeing me succeed.” Nicki’s current job involves working with university students, and she says that watching them pursue their studies has given her the courage to ask “Why can’t I do that? Why can’t I pursue my dream too?”

That dream is ultimately to become a therapist. And so Nicki has recently enrolled as an MSW student in the School of Social Work at the University of Michigan. Her goal is to help others achieve the “inner peace and happiness” and personal growth that her own counseling experiences have given her and her family.

Nicki began her career as a biologist. After earning a BA from Albion College, she worked as a technician at the US Food and Drug Administration. Then, after spending 10 years at home to raise her children, Nicki came to the University of Michigan as a lab manager in the Department of Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology. It’s a job that has won her success and high praise. But, as much as all her colleagues and supervisors say they’ll miss her, they also support Nicki’s decision to change careers, and they predict she’ll be as outstanding a therapist as she is a biologist.



One of Nicki’s advisors describes her as “a woman of tremendous intelligence: thoughtful, caring, insightful, hard working and conscientious.” As another supervisor tells us, “I am almost envious of her future clients. They will be so lucky to have Nicki work with them!” In support of her past personal and professional success, as well as her bright future, CEW delights in naming Nicole Buller the Cecilia Anne Stiborik Dreyfuss Scholar.

MARY BETH CAROLAN

*Elsie Choy Lee Scholar*

Mary Beth Carolan began her career as an architect but soon found herself disenchanted with “the business of architecture.” Living in Detroit, Mary Beth had become involved with the art scene there, doing community-based art projects. “Along with a tight-knit group of artists and musicians, we turned music performances into multimedia happenings, pedestrian bridges into free galleries, a new contemporary art museum into a theatrical fashion show and an abandoned storefront into an experimental art space using recycled materials.”

This was her passion: to create public art and to teach her art to others. As a way to prepare herself for her new career, Mary Beth spent four years as the art teacher at Detroit’s Our Lady of Guadalupe Middle School for Girls. She calls it “the best job I’ve ever had; I finally felt like I was contributing to the world in a positive way.” During that time, Mary Beth also bought, renovated and lived in an 1850 worker’s row house in downtown Detroit.



Now working on her MFA at the University of Michigan’s School of Art and Design, Mary Beth has a vision of what to do next. “I plan to establish a professional art practice, teach art at the college level and start a not-for-profit organization in Detroit that will serve artists, architects, designers and musicians involved in creative development projects for their communities.”

Those who’ve worked with Mary Beth are awed by her talent and her wide-ranging interests. They describe her as a curious and creative leader. Says one of her former colleagues, “Mary Beth is an artist, an educator, and a wonderful model of a young woman who has said ‘Yes’ to life and to her own possibilities.” Grateful that she will be sharing her talents and enthusiasm to enrich our Southeastern Michigan communities, CEW is happy to name Mary Beth Carolan the Elsie Choy Lee Scholar.

AMAL CHEHAB *Molly H. Dobson Scholar*

Born and raised in Sydney, Australia, Amal Chehab was 19 and working on a degree in computer programming when she decided to move to the United States. “Young, independent and enthusiastic for change,” she describes herself, “ready for the beginning of a new life, family and adventure.”

Amal at first enrolled in a business school, intent upon completing her programming degree. “Walking through the hallways and hearing the American accent all around me was surreal; I felt as though I was in an American movie.” The experience, says Amal, helped her to “understand how difficult moving to a new country and learning a new language would be.”

Amal interrupted her education to marry and have a family, a decision that transformed her life in many ways: “I did not realize that teaching was in my future until my first son was born and motherhood changed my views and ideals.” Ten years later, when the youngest of her three children started school, so did Amal. She earned an associate’s degree in pre-elementary education at Henry Ford Community College and now works part time as a paraprofessional teacher at a nearby elementary school.

In addition, Amal is completing her bachelor’s degree in elementary language arts education at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. Her goal is to be a teacher who “assists English language learners on a daily basis.” Eventually, Amal plans to earn a master’s degree.

One of Amal’s professors describes her as a “bright, intuitive individual who works hard to make herself and the people around her better.” She is a “fast learner who interacts positively with staff, students, and parents.” With her professionalism and dedication, Amal “will provide important support to the immigrant population in the Dearborn area.” In support of her passion for learning and teaching, CEW names Amal Chehab a Molly H. Dobson Scholar.



MARY CIPOLLONE *American Association of University Women Scholar*

“My experiences in Nicaragua,” explains Mary Cipollone, “deepened my commitment to education and social justice.” After graduating from Dartmouth College with a degree in biology, Mary travelled to Nicaragua for a fellowship with Los Quinchos, a program to help that country’s children “trade the violence of street life for books and affectionate care.”

Her transition from Central America to the streets of Harlem was jarring. “Coming from a place where lack of shoes prevented children from attending school, it was a shock to work with adolescents clad in Nike sneakers. But their trappings of wealth could not disguise the poverty of their often violent lives, inadequate schools and limited access to higher education.” In Harlem, Mary held a succession of responsibilities with a non-profit after-school mentoring and college prep program called StreetSquash.



Given Mary’s commitment to helping young people succeed, it is not surprising that she is now a master’s degree student at the University of Michigan’s Ford School of Public Policy. She is here to learn more about “the societal structures that contribute to cycles of poverty and the policies and programs that create a more equal playing field.” Mary plans to use her expertise to direct non-profit or government programs aimed at increasing postsecondary degree attainment for first-generation, minority, low-income students.

People who’ve worked with Mary know she’s up for the challenge. They praise her incredible intelligence, her “deep-felt concern about the inequalities that exist for students and their families” and her “resolve to do something about it.” As one of her former colleagues tells us, Mary has made a “deep and long-lasting impact on the lives of countless poor children and their families” and will continue to do so throughout her career. In honor of her commitment to future generations of America’s youth, CEW names Mary Cipollone the American Association of University Women Scholar.

REBECCA COHEN *Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar*

“Our health is undermined by the food we eat,” says Rebecca Cohen, “in terms of life style, socio-economic status, food safety, rampant chemical usage, and the prevalence of highly processed food.” Combining her interests in international politics and natural foods, Rebecca has discovered the ideal way for her to meet the challenge of improving the diet of people around the world.

Rebecca majored in international relations at California State-Sacramento. To support herself throughout her undergraduate studies, she worked for Natural Value, her family’s natural food business. In addition to learning many behind-the-scenes aspects of the organization, Rebecca “devoured books about food politics” and determined that her interest in food was political rather than commercial.

So Rebecca began to consider her next career steps. “I like international relations, but I want to help actual people rather than study theory.” That realization led Rebecca to the field of public health. She’s currently working on a master’s degree in epidemiology in the University of Michigan’s School of Public Health. Rebecca’s focus is international health, which will allow her to do global research on world-wide environmental and social diet-related issues.



According to Rebecca, “I came to Michigan with a clear vision of my future,” and she’s proud that in the process she has developed the confidence, perseverance and will to succeed. Her professors praise Rebecca’s academic accomplishments and future promise, and they are already urging her to consider a PhD. As one of her advisors tells us, “The accomplishments I have witnessed from Rebecca indicate that she is destined for excellent academic ventures.”

“The task of improving the diet of even a small segment of the population is not an easy task,” Rebecca acknowledges, “but it is a challenge I look forward to.” To support her important goal, CEW names Rebecca Cohen a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.

DONNA COLE *Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar*

For Donna Cole, the words “begin again” represent “sparkle and hope for a better tomorrow.” Donna has lots of experience with starting over. She’s done it ten times in her life, including marrying young; being left abandoned and homeless with two young children to raise; and becoming a successful real estate agent and commercial property manager and executive. She’s also earned an undergraduate degree, with honors, in business administration from Siena Heights University; remarried and fulfilled her dream of home ownership; lost her job with the real estate collapse; and worked as the manager of a medical real estate portfolio.

Through it all, Donna’s motto has been “Thin ice, skate fast, and begin again.” Following that philosophy, Donna is now a student at the University of Michigan-Flint, working toward a master’s degree in public administration. Her goal is a leadership position in a large non-profit hospital or government entity, where she can apply her vast experience and skills as an ethical and successful property manager and “give back to the community that has given me so much.”



“The dormant seed that aspires to break through, grow and thrive into a fresh new start” stills lives within Donna. In fact, she tells us that, when she’s 70, she hopes “to be able to think back, relax and begin again.”

Donna’s refreshing attitude about her life and work has impressed her UM-Flint professors. They describe her as a dedicated, smart, high achieving, hard-working, insightful and enthusiastic student. Given her compassion for others, exemplary work ethic and keen organizational judgment, Donna’s admirers know that she is “creating a legacy for herself.” In honor of “starting over” and keeping alive the sparkle of new adventure, CEW awards Donna Cole a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholarship.

MARIANA CRACIUN

*Mary Malcolm Raphael Fellowship*

“My path to a doctorate in sociology,” explains Mariana Craciun, “began with my family’s immigration from Romania to the US in 1999.” Mariana was 20 years old. She started her higher education at a nearby community college and then earned a BA in sociology at UCLA, where she discovered her love of social research. But, says Mariana, “my academic studies came at a price, one that I paid by holding a full time job at Macy’s throughout my college years.” Her inspiration was her parents, who gave up careers as engineers to start over in the US and who hold education in high esteem.

Mariana is now a PhD student in the University of Michigan’s Department of Sociology, completing extensive field work and writing her dissertation. Mariana’s ambitious study involves questions related to various psychotherapy orientations: how practitioners within those orientations become experts; the ways their expertise influences both their patients’ and their own lives; and the role that knowledge and emotions play in the process. The theoretical complexity and originality of her research is profound and, according to her faculty advisors, “will produce major contributions to sociological theory.”



Equally important to Mariana, however, is working with students. “I chose an academic career not only because of its focus on research but also because of the opportunities it offers for teaching and mentoring. My goal is to engage students in a critical examination of our society and their roles as members of it.”

Mariana is described by one of her professors as “an experienced and devoted teacher. She is as kind and conscientious as she is talented and analytically astute. She will be the sort of scholar, teacher and mentor that every department needs and every student deserves.” In support of her promising academic future, CEW names Mariana Craciun a Mary Malcolmson Raphael Fellow.

KATRINA ELLIS *Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar*

When Katrina Ellis completed her BA from Dillard University, she planned to become an art teacher. “I would never have imagined,” she tells us, “that I would someday be in the field of public health or pursuing a doctorate degree.”

A number of significant events led to Katrina’s current career goals. She enjoyed doing community service while growing up in Kalamazoo. During college, she volunteered at a homeless shelter and developed “a desire for social justice and work that benefited society.” Later, as a member of the Melton Foundation at Dillard, she travelled internationally to meet other university students. Working after her graduation with non-profit groups, Katrina witnessed the “complexity of chronic disease management, especially when clients are dealing with other glaring issues such as poverty and recovery from drug and alcohol addiction.”

Her experiences led Katrina to Fiji as a Peace Corps volunteer. There she became friends with a Fijian nurse whose passion for life in the face of inoperable cancer had a powerful impact. “I began to understand how the health and welfare of individuals, families and communities are tied together with social norms and practices.” Katrina returned to the US and earned dual master’s degrees in social work and public health at UM, including an internship at the Comprehensive Cancer Center.

After completing a fellowship with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Katrina is now a PhD student in the School of Public Health at the University of Michigan. Her ultimate goal is an academic position, researching families affected by cancer and eliminating disparities in treatment for communities of color.

Described by one of her professors as “an exceptional student and researcher committed to understanding and addressing racial and ethnic health disparities,” Katrina has the experiences and passion to fulfill her dream of helping others. To support her, CEW names Katrina Ellis a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.



RACHEL GARCIA

*AAUW: Mary Elizabeth Bittman Memorial Scholar*

“I have never set foot into a high school,” explains Rachel Garcia. “I failed almost every single class in school from grade six until I dropped out in the ninth grade. It’s not that I was a bad kid. I did not do drugs or get into fights.” Instead, Rachel suffered from a “depth of sadness” that interfered with her ability to focus on anything.

Rachel’s road to healing began when she married, had a daughter at the age of 16, and ended her adolescent life by “growing up.” She worked as a housekeeper, earned her GED, and began her own process of self-learning. “Since I had struggled with math more than anything else, I got my hands on a teacher’s edition pre-algebra text and worked through it until I’d correctly solved every single problem in the book!”

When her marriage ended, Rachel became a massage therapist and yoga instructor, igniting “a powerful interest in health and wellness and a desire to help people manage their stress and pain.” At the same time Rachel knew that her lack of education limited her options; she believed going to college would be impossible for a middle-school dropout.



When a friend opened Rachel’s eyes to the reality that a quality education was not out of reach, she enrolled at Washtenaw Community College’s exercise science program and then transferred to the University of Michigan’s School of Kinesiology, where she’s an undergraduate in movement science. Rachel’s next step is to become either a physician’s assistant or a physical therapist.

Rachel’s professors are “in awe of her discipline, clarity, integrity and kindness.” She has, they tell us, the ability and perseverance to “navigate the complicated rigors of academic life.” Eager to support her educational and career goals, CEW is proud to name Rachel Garcia the AAUW: Mary Elizabeth Bittman Memorial Scholar.

BRADY G'SELL *Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar*

As a child, Brady G'sell spent 13 years in a choir “whose mission was to bring together Chicago-area children from various races, cultures and economic backgrounds.” Her experiences, including a performance tour in South Africa, gave Brady both a fascination for that country and a passion for “thinking about difference.”

Working on a BA in international studies at Vassar, Brady returned to South Africa to learn Zulu and conduct research. Her exposure to “the country’s incredible linguistic, cultural and political diversity” led her to understand the difficulties of applying broad solutions to individuated, complex problems.

At one point, Brady—still an undergraduate—set out to improve intercultural awareness by designing her own



12-week intercultural, grant-supported education program in underprivileged neighborhoods in Albany, NY and Hlabisa, South Africa. The program allowed children to act “as native ethnographers, analyzing and sharing their daily lives through photographs, drawings, stories and songs”; creating questions for their counterparts; and reflecting on the insights they gained.

Brady decided that studying anthropology was the best way for her to make a difference. She earned a master’s degree in that field from the University of Chicago before entering an interdisciplinary PhD program associated with Michigan’s Departments of Anthropology and History. Brady’s research focuses on South African women seeking child support in the context of personal and bureaucratic obstacles. Her career goal is to become a professor and researcher. “I want my work to be of practical value to institutions seeking to combat the poverty and inequality that many South Africans live with every day.”

Brady tells us she is fascinated by “the many means by which people make their way in this world.” Her professors call her one of the best students with whom they have ever worked. To honor her talent and her commitment to diversity and social justice, CEW proudly names Brady G'sell a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.

TINA HAMZE *Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar*

“Perfection is not reality,” says Tina Hamze. “Perfection is an impossibility, like the illusion that you can touch the clouds.” Aware that she spent much of her adult life “trying to please those around me and show them I was worth their approval,” Tina is now in the process of learning the importance and joy of living up to her own expectations.

Tina credits Starfish Family Services, a Detroit-area non-profit organization serving children and families, with giving her hope and helping her to recognize her potential. Inspired by the need to provide a positive role model for her four young daughters, Tina enrolled as an undergraduate at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. Now, she says, “Every day that I step onto the campus, I prove to myself that I am capable of achieving my goals.” Those goals include completing her degree in psychology, earning an MSW and becoming a family advocate. Tina’s personal and volunteer experiences have inspired her “to reach out to those struggling in poverty and/or destructive living situations.”



Like many others before her, Tina has benefited from the support of UM-Dearborn’s Student Outreach Academic Resources (SOAR) program for non-traditional students. Her SOAR advisors tell us that Tina has “blossomed as a student, volunteer and leader.” In the words of one mentor, “With each new experience she immerses herself in, I can see Tina growing, stretching and changing.”

Tina’s professors admire her determination, conscientiousness and perseverance. One of them praises her for being “head and shoulders above many other students and a truly amazing woman. Consider a CEW scholarship for Tina to be an investment in someone who will make us all proud.” Eager to play a part in Tina Hamze’s exciting future, CEW awards her a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholarship.

DEB HEED *Helen Huff Shell Scholar*

Deb Heed's undergraduate degree, in performing arts management from the University of Michigan, led to a 14-year career in marketing, advertising and personal coaching. In 2008, however, she took "a major leap of faith" and moved her life in a completely new direction.

Deb's inspiration was living with her family in Germany for a year, "in a society that integrates sustainability into everyday life." Returning home, Deb knew that the US has the potential to do the same—and she was determined to help make that vision a reality.

She began by volunteering for the Clean Energy Coalition, a non-profit organization working with small business owners to reduce their energy and water use. Realizing that she'd discovered her true calling,



Deb decided to "take the plunge into graduate school"—in order to become a leader and change agent in nation-wide efforts to help companies conserve energy while maintaining financial stability.

Deb is now a student in the University of Michigan's Erb Institute MBA/MS program at the Ross School of Business and School of Natural Resources and Environment. Her goal is to "work in the realms of organizational and financial management in support of environmental stewardship."

Those who've worked with Deb enthusiastically endorse her new career direction and assure us that she is destined to succeed. One of her former colleagues describes Deb as "a person of great integrity and passion who brings substantial wisdom, skill and emotional intelligence to any situation." Given her relevant past professional experiences, as well as her natural leadership ability and a "personality that exudes confidence and accessibility," Deb will become an agent who "lays the foundation for significant change that affects hundreds of organizations, thousands of employees, and one important environment." In support of Deb Heed's ambitions, CEW names her the Helen Huff Shell Scholar.

SARAH HILLEWAERT *Mary Malcomson Raphael Fellow*

“I am,” says Sarah Hillewaert, “a citizen of Belgium and a scholar of Africa.” She has both an undergraduate degree in African studies and a graduate degree in African sociolinguistics and culture from Ghent University.

Because Sarah was born and raised in Belgium, where “intricate language legislation” regulates which of three national languages is used in various situations, she has always been fascinated with languages’ ability to shape social relations and identities. Fueled by her undergraduate research opportunities, Sarah also developed a fascination for Africa, especially the languages of Kenya.

Sarah is now working on a PhD in linguistic anthropology at the University of Michigan. According to one of her professors, she “came to Michigan well trained in African languages and cultures.” Sarah is using that expertise to conduct complex dissertation research in Lamu, “an old, conservative, largely Muslim, Swahili-speaking, Kenyan port town on the Indian Ocean” that has become a tourist destination. It has, explains Sarah, a “lively, often marginalized youth culture, much of it oriented toward the more illicit margins of society and tourism.”



During nearly three years of field work, Sarah studied the linguistic practices of this group of young Lamu citizens. Her dissertation will provide new insights into the creativity of young people using language to reinvent themselves. It will also, explains an advisor, illuminate the “global imagery of youth, modernity and popular culture as it moves into African hinterlands and comes up against local relations, traditional culture and authority, and countervailing images from a globalizing Islam.”

Admired by the Anthropology Department for her outstanding teaching as well as her brilliance as a student and scholar, Sarah is “an individual of extraordinary energy and personality who is supportive, respectful and generous.” In honor of predictions that she “will be a linguistic anthropologist of note,” CEW is proud to name Sarah Hillewaert a Mary Malcomson Raphael Fellow.

JUANITA JOHNSON *Lucile B. Conger Alumnae Scholar*

Juanita Johnson's original plan was to finish high school and go to college. But, as she explains, "Life happened. I moved out on my own at 16, got my first apartment at 17, and became responsible for my 11-year old brother." After earning her GED, Juanita held a variety of jobs, but she "gravitated to being a daycare provider" because of her love of children.

The child of a deaf parent, Juanita says "Everyone automatically assumes children like me will grow up to be interpreters for the deaf." And that was indeed the path she initially took. After earning an associate's degree from Mott Community College, Juanita worked at the Michigan School for the Deaf. There, she says, "My entire outlook changed. My work became about more than helping the deaf community but being able to help children who fall through the cracks." In other words, Juanita decided to become a teacher.



She is now a math major at the University of Michigan-Flint, working on a BS degree in elementary education. Juanita's goal is to earn a master's degree in special education and a doctorate in curriculum development. "I want to be involved in creating educational initiatives to benefit my community."

Juanita is currently fulfilling her commitment to help others by working as a "top tutor" in the UM-Flint Academic Enrichment Center, where—according to her advisors—she "makes a difference in the success of students." In the words of one of her professors, "Juanita will help hundreds of future students make real sense of mathematics, who in turn will help thousands of others. The investment of a scholarship for Juanita Johnson is an investment paid a thousand times over." CEW is honored to join Juanita Johnson's campaign to improve our educational system and delights in awarding her a Lucile B. Conger Alumnae Scholarship.

CLARA JULIEN *Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar*

“Everything I have done in my life,” says Clara Julien, “has been related to understanding culture.” Clara attributes this fascination to the fact that she was born in Peru to a North American mother and a Peruvian father. Clara’s interest led her to complete an undergraduate degree in folklore & ethnomusicology and Spanish at Indiana University. It led her to a San Francisco AIDS foundation to work with men and women often marginalized by society. It then took her to Honduras as a Peace Corps health volunteer, where she observed firsthand the type and breadth of care nurses provide.

Clara returned with a strong conviction to become a community health nurse. As she explains, “If the nurses I worked with in Honduras could do wonders with what little was available to them, imagine what I could do as a nurse in the United States!” Clara completed the accelerated BS in Nursing Program at the University of Michigan in 2010. She is now working on a family nurse practitioner master’s degree and completing a scholarly project that “looks at occupational health disparities among migrant workers in Southeast Michigan, who suffer a disproportionate number of occupational fatalities, injuries and illnesses with limited access to health care.”



Clara’s goal is to become a family nurse practitioner and provide primary care to under-served populations, especially migrant workers. Those who know Clara are not surprised by her chosen career. As one of her mentors explains, “Although Clara is still young, she has spent a large part of her adult life devoting herself to helping others improve their lives. She is unselfish and giving.” Others describe Clara as an exceptional student, industrious, disciplined, intellectually precocious, motivated and altruistic. In support of her commitment to becoming “the best professional I can be,” CEW awards Clara Julien a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholarship.

TRACI KENNEDY *Mary Malcolmson Raphael Fellow*

Traci Kennedy believes “psychologists have the responsibility not only to publish their findings but to actually take those findings in hand and utilize them to better understand and improve the human condition.” In support of that belief, Traci is now a PhD student of clinical psychology at the University of Michigan, committed to an academic career that combines research and teaching with on-the-ground clinical practice.

Her professors know that Traci is destined to be a star in every area of her work. They speak of her in superlatives reserved for only the most gifted of students. She is, says one advisor, “a true gem with enormous potential to be a top-notch scholar.” In addition, she’s “an exceptionally gifted teacher” and someone who “cares about and connects with others around her—no matter how different their life experiences may be from her own.”



Traci earned her BA in psychology from the University of Pennsylvania, where she developed a passion for the same issues that drive her current research: the effects of violence on young people, especially Latinos. For her dissertation, Traci has already investigated the ways in which exposure to community violence in Chicago negatively affects Latino youth. The next phase of her research takes Traci to Colombia, where she will evaluate the effectiveness of a local intervention program for children exposed

to violence.

“Her commitments run deep,” explains another advisor. “Traci is the essence of integrity and effectiveness, and she has an intense drive to make a major difference in the lives of desperately challenged individuals and communities.”

Based upon her research, Traci plans to design and implement effective interventions for children and adolescents who have developed post-traumatic stress disorder, depression or aggression in response to community violence. Grateful for her compassion and commitment, CEW names Traci Kennedy a Mary Malcolm Raphael Fellow.

KELLY KIRBY *Gail Allen Scholar*

Kelly Kirby's educational journey has been both circuitous and challenging. Kelly admits that, after she "went astray in high school and almost didn't graduate," she left the confines of her small Rhode Island town, moved to California, completed an associate's degree in fashion design, and won admittance to both Parsons School of Design and Rhode Island School of Design.

Unfortunately, Kelly explains, "attending these prestigious schools is extremely costly." The scholarships she received didn't cover her costs, so she was forced to abandon her dreams for either school. "I was," says Kelly, "devastated and resentful of life." Then, after working for several years as a designer in the Los Angeles fashion industry, Kelly discovered the public university system in California.

"It was as if I'd won the lottery! Mira Costa Community College changed my life forever." At MCCC, Kelly fell in love with anthropology. She transferred to the University of California San Diego and graduated with a BA in anthropology.

Kelly has been a PhD student in U-M's Department of Anthropology since 2002. During that period she married and had three children. Now she's ready to begin her dissertation: Doing fieldwork in Dakar, Kelly rediscovered her love for textiles and design. So she's come full circle. She'll be researching the complex aesthetic, social and political implications of cloth and dress in Senegal.

Kelly plans to become a university professor. She will continue to research art and cloth in West Africa and to mentor high school students "so that they know what educational options are available to them."

Praised by her professors as "an exceptionally talented and innovative scholar and teacher," Kelly has found a way to combine her loves of design and anthropology. To support her bright future, CEW is happy to name Kelly Kirby the Gail Allen Scholar.



COLLEEN KUUSINEN *Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar*

“I have not followed a path,” says Colleen Kuusinen. “Rather, I purposefully carved out a path that has led me to pursue a doctorate in education and psychology at the University of Michigan.” The distinction is important to Colleen. It explains why, after receiving a BA in English from UC Berkeley, she deliberately chose to work in four different educational settings.

Within the various contexts, Colleen held fast to one goal: to witness and participate in programs for teaching at-risk children and providing equitable education to all students. Her first experience was as director of an after-school program at the Urban Promise Academy, a middle school in an impoverished Oakland, California district funded by the Gates Foundation Small Schools Initiative. The Academy proved to be an inspirational model for educational reform in urban communities.



Colleen then became a language and social studies teacher at Urban Promise. The challenges she faced in the classroom, she says, gave her a “more nuanced and interdisciplinary conceptualization of teacher preparation.” Colleen’s third position, as a literacy consultant and trainer at a private tutoring organization, convinced her of the importance of mentoring for teachers’ professional development. Finally, she worked at a private educational research firm, where she discovered an aptitude for conducting research.

Now a PhD student in UM’s Combined Program in Education and Psychology, Colleen believes her varied experiences, working both as a teacher and with other teachers, have uniquely positioned her to help reform teacher preparation programs and to “build better teachers.” Her belief is shared by Colleen’s UM professors. Impressed with her experience, professionalism, collegiality, strong work ethic and passion, they predict that Colleen is destined for a “productive and important career in educational psychology.” Delighted that Colleen’s Kuusinen’s commitment to education led her to the University of Michigan, CEW awards her a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholarship.

KATRINA LEFLORE *Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar*

One could describe Katrina LeFlore's life by listing the unimaginable obstacles she has faced. But, in the words of an admirer, "Katrina's gifts have carried her through a hurricane of a life—financial hardship, a closed-head injury and years of subsequent therapy—and brought her to an exciting and promising future."

"I grew up near the site of the Detroit riots on the upper level of one half of a two-family flat," Katrina says. "The sole reason I survived each day was the kindness of teachers who believed in me. Through their guidance, I found I was a smart, good person, and I learned to read with a fury." Despite her intelligence, however, college was not an affordable option, so Katrina worked three jobs—until the event that forever changed her life.

In 1992, Katrina suffered a traumatic closed head injury when a speeding car struck her vehicle. Her injuries were massive, her recovery slow and fraught with setbacks. "My love for my son motivated me to reclaim my life," says Katrina. "As he learned his alphabet, I studied mine; as he learned his numbers, I relearned math. When he entered school, I stayed with him the whole day and volunteered. Each day the children I worked with encouraged me to do more. I was motivated to learn so I could help them."



Katrina committed herself then to becoming an educator. After earning an associate's degree at Oakland Community College, Katrina is now completing a degree in earth science and secondary education at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. She plans to obtain advanced degrees in educational leadership and work with students whose talents are missed and neglected.

One of Katrina's professors tells us, "Every now and then an extraordinary human being crosses your path and leaves her imprint. Katrina is such a human being....She has overcome many barriers with determination, courage and grace." With admiration for her journey, CEW names Katrina LeFlore a Margaret Dow Towsley scholar.

DIANE LEMANSKI *Jane and Bill Bloom Scholar*

Diane Lemanski is one of eleven children who grew up on a farm. Though earning a bachelor's degree was always her intention, Diane's full life led to several detours along the way. After completing an associate's degree in dental hygiene from Ferris State University, Diane postponed returning to school in order "to rebuild my bank account." She'd worked in dentists' offices for eight years when she and her husband moved to North Carolina for his education.

"Two kids and eight years later, we moved back to Michigan," Diane explains. Living on the west side of the state, she was once again thwarted in her plans to return to school because no universities in the area offered dental hygiene completion programs. So Diane continued to work for many years, "growing through the continuing education classes I took." She also devoted herself to volunteering, especially as the captain of a very successful team for the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life campaign.



Diane's first encounter with online classes was through her college-aged daughter. "It certainly caught my interest," Diane says, and she began to investigate this intriguing new way to complete her undergraduate education. Diane selected the University of Michigan's program and, after "a long enrollment process with lots of interviews and computer skills tests," she was accepted and began work on "that elusive bachelor's degree."

When she graduates, Diane plans to teach, either in a college setting or in corporate dentistry. "I look forward to the impact my years of experience may have on the young adults just beginning their dental hygiene careers." According to her professional colleagues, Diane is well suited to teach and mentor others. They describe her as knowledgeable, capable and competent, with excellent leadership, organizational and interpersonal skills. Delighted to help Diane Lemanski achieve her long time goals, CEW awards her the Jane and Bill Bloom Scholarship.

ANN LEPKOWSKI *Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar*

“My story is not unique,” says Ann Lepkowski, “but I am extremely proud of where I am today because I know where I’ve come from and how hard I’ve worked to get here.” Ann earned a BA in art history at Wheaton College and was a magazine editor for several years before becoming the mother of three children.

She then worked part-time as a parent educator in Ann Arbor-area schools, creating a number of outreach programs to help parents “become their best selves.” During much of that time, Ann was enduring an abusive marriage, nearly giving up hope that her own life would ever be better. However, Ann explains, “One of my early supervisors saw something in me that I did not at the time see for myself: My spirit was not dead, just severely beaten down.” Such encouragement was “life changing” and, with newly found self-esteem, Ann ended her marriage and faced the question of what to do with her life.

“For years, the thought of going to school for a graduate degree seemed very intimidating to me. Financially, how did people do it? Was I smart enough? Was I up to the challenge?” Facing her fears, Ann enrolled and was accepted into the University of Michigan’s School of Social Work. When she graduates with her MSW, Ann initially plans to be a geriatric social worker. One day she vows to work with women experiencing abuse.



One of Ann’s former colleagues assures us that Ann “embodies the spirit of CEW. With her strong motivation, intellectual curiosity, a commitment to social justice and a world of relevant life experiences, she is sure to succeed.” Newly married, Ann happily proclaims “My journey is far from over!” Proud to be part of Ann Lepkowski’s life adventures, CEW names her a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.

ANNE LEWIS *Collegiate Sorosis Foundation Scholar*

Anne Lewis has a clear sense of how her personal, academic and professional experiences contributed to her new career in urban planning. Anne grew up in a Boston neighborhood, enjoying the “density of homes and abundance of families, the feeling of freedom with friends, stores, public bus lines and open spaces within walking distance.” She wants to create a similar sense of freedom and security for others. “Access to safe and affordable housing,” Anne says, “is a human right.”

Anne graduated from Williams College with undergraduate majors in both physics and political science, a challenging mix of disciplines that stimulated different ways of thinking. She then interned with a non-profit organization and learned the importance of solving complex problems in ways that are both “locally relevant and financially feasible.”



Before coming to Michigan, Anne lived in Lewiston, Maine for two years as a collegiate rowing coach and then as an analyst for L. L. Bean. She observed how Lewiston officials reinvented their community, reinvigorated businesses and neighborhoods and repaired environmental damage after the death of the textile industry. “My decision to pursue graduate study was in part spurred by my experiences in Maine.”

Now, as a master’s degree student in urban planning from U-M’s Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Anne is synthesizing all those past experiences in a new direction. Her passion is to be part of a public or non-profit organization and to improve the linkages between housing and transportation planning, especially within low-income areas.

Everyone with whom Anne has ever worked describes her as “one of the best.” They cite her exceptional intelligence and analytical skills as well as her diligence, motivation, creativity and willingness to challenge the status quo. Grateful for her future contributions to improved neighborhood housing and transportation, CEW names Anne Lewis the Collegiate Sorosis Foundation Scholar.

KRISTI LIVINGOOD *Ruth Jeanette Buttrey Scholar*

“My decision to return to the University of Michigan,” says Kristi Livingood, “is the culmination of many years of self-discovery. I would not be where I am today if I had not chosen different educational paths and careers.”

Kristi was just 17 when she entered the University of Michigan with a dual major in psychology and English: “I didn’t know much about career paths, salaries, preparation for graduate studies, or exploring jobs suited for my personality and strengths.” When she graduated with a secondary education certificate, Kristi took a teaching job in California’s Mojave Desert. She enjoyed working with students, but to supplement her income Kristi became a realtor—at first just in the summer but then as a full-time career.

“I had enjoyed the process of finding my own first home. I loved guiding people through all the stressful situations involved in buying and selling.” When her mother became ill, however, Kristi returned to Michigan. Her efforts to re-establish herself as a realtor were thwarted by the collapse of the real estate market.

At that point, Kristi reevaluated her goals: She began to understand more and more the importance of promoting good health. She realized that nursing was the perfect fast-paced, multi-tasking, people-oriented career for her. To prepare herself, Kristi both enrolled in Washtenaw Community College’s pre-nursing program and became a volunteer doula, supporting women throughout their pregnancies and births. During her studies, she herself became a mother for the first time.

Kristi is now enrolled in the University of Michigan School of Nursing’s Second Career BSN Program. When she graduates, she’ll pursue an advanced degree as a midwife, nurse practitioner, or other exciting option the nursing profession offers. Kristi’s professors describe her as dedicated, intelligent and hard working. CEW is delighted to support Kristi Livingood’s new career by awarding her the Ruth Jeanette Buttrey Scholarship.



LAUREN MALONEY *Sarah Winans Newman Scholar*

After graduating from Washington College with an undergraduate degree in environmental studies, Lauren Maloney set out to explore her career options. She worked at a couple of organic farms, both growing vegetables and leading field trips for student groups. “I taught them about animal tracking, winter trekking, maple sugaring and animal husbandry.”

Next, Lauren went to the Caribbean as a botanical gardener at St. Eustatius National Park, cultivating endangered plant species and eradicating invasive ones. Through all of these experiences, Lauren came to appreciate the importance of biodiversity. “I learned that sustainability starts with land ethic and extends to community education and individual practice.”



In 2008 Lauren became a Peace Corps volunteer in Niger, West Africa, teaching better farming and gardening techniques and resource conservation. In Niger, Lauren observed firsthand the power of education. “It allowed my villagers to live better lives.” She also realized she was ready to focus once again on her own education.

Lauren is now working on her MS from the University of Michigan School of Natural Resources and Environment, specializing in conservation biology. For her master’s project, she is working with the Hannahville Native American Community to acquire land for sustainable forestry practices. Lauren’s career goal is to work with a government or non-government organization to reduce resource consumption and promote sustainability. “I want to work with farmers to restore wetlands, protect habitats, increase biodiversity, conserve natural resources and reduce agricultural runoff.”

“Lauren is an environmentalist by heart and by conscience,” one of her former supervisors explains. “She is bright, engaging and passionate about her work.” Given Lauren’s commitment, vast knowledge and past experiences, her colleagues and advisors tell us she will be “an extremely valuable asset to the sustainable agriculture movement.” Eager to support Lauren Maloney in her important work, CEW names her a Sarah Winans Newman Scholar.

TEHMINA MASUD *Sarah Winans Newman Scholar*

“I knew right from the beginning,” says Tehmina Masud, “that I had to become a doctor.” During a clinical oncology rotation in her native Pakistan, however, Tehmina realized that—instead of “feeling helpless when discussing bad news with terminally ill patients”—she’d prefer to devote herself to cancer research. “The miracle of modern medicine will not be palliation; it will be prevention. My interest lies in exploring the intricate biological and molecular processes that will lead to better treatment options in the future.”

Tehmina quit her residency to establish a new career as a medical researcher. She taught in the pathology department of a leading medical school in Pakistan but, at the same time, continued to volunteer as a doctor in medical camps, including during the 2005 earthquake. Because of limited opportunities for molecular research in her country, Tehmina applied for and won a Fulbright Scholarship to study in the US. She is now a PhD student in the Department of Human Genetics at the University of Michigan.

“It meant starting my life all over again,” says Tehmina, “including struggling against the pressures to give up my goals and become a traditional housewife. At times, these societal pressures did diminish my will, but my tough decisions have made me a strong, motivated and independent woman.”

Tehmina plans to continue her research on DNA damage and repair. Eventually she will return to Pakistan to help “establish a scientific culture where doctors and scientists can do basic biomedical research.” She’s especially determined to combat the traditional gender roles that prevent women from becoming scientists.

Her advisors call Tehmina a highly motivated and passionate student, “genuinely fascinated by the mysteries of biology and how they relate to human disease” and destined for a successful research career.

In support of her commitment to both cancer research and women’s rights, CEW names Tehmina Masud a Sarah Winans Newman Scholar.



LIANA MAY *University of Michigan Faculty Women's Club Scholar*

"I became interested in the relationship between people and the environment," explains Liana May, "while growing up in the changing environment of northwestern Michigan." As a teenager, Liana observed both rapid land conversion and decreased Lake Michigan water quality and was alarmed by the "lack of acknowledgement or understanding of these changes within my community."

To broaden her understanding of conservation issues, Liana completed an undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan School of Natural Resources and Environment (SNRE). In 2010, Liana went to Madagascar with New Latitude, an Ann Arbor/Madagascar based non-profit group studying tropical forest "hotspots" with high diversity/productivity in the midst of rapid land conversion. Liana then returned to the University of Michigan for a master's degree from SNRE. Her focus is on forest ecology. "I want to learn the valuable tools used today to gather ecological data and enhance conservation."



Liana has both short and long term career goals. After graduating, she plans to apply her new skills in sub-Saharan Africa. This understudied region is of particular interest, Liana explains, because "within the context of the current global environmental crisis, the health of Africa's forests plays a major role in our ability to mitigate climate change, provide clean air and drinking water and foster biodiversity."

Eventually, Liana knows she will return to our state, working in the non-profit sector "to understand the mechanisms of forest health and ecology in the face of global change."

Liana's professors and supervisors praise her as an accomplished, passionate ecologist who's willing to work under the most challenging environments. They commend her work with the Leelanau Conservancy and with UM projects at both the Pictured Rocks and Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshores, "under such difficult conditions as black flies, mosquitoes, waist-deep streams and beaver ponds." With gratitude for her commitment to Michigan's environmental future, CEW delights in naming Liana May a University of Michigan Faculty Women's Club Scholar.

MICHELLE MCCOY *Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar*

“Self-determination” is an essential concept to Michelle McCoy, both for herself and for the people she hopes to serve. As Michelle explains, “I was raised by deaf parents who faced discrimination, financial and otherwise. In my family, education was considered the only way to achieve freedom from discrimination. So, from an early age I was determined to go to college.”

Michelle worked her way through school by holding many different jobs, from resident assistant, sign language interpreter, dorm room cleaner to cafeteria worker. “I even ran carnival games at Hart Plaza.” After graduating from MSU’s James Madison College with a BA in social relations, Michelle held a number of jobs while raising her four children, who today are between 8 and 16 years old.

Through all of her experiences, Michelle says, “I witnessed the social injustice faced by individuals.” Determined to help others advocate for themselves as she has learned to do—and seventeen years after completing her undergraduate degree—Michelle is a student again, working on an MSW in the University of Michigan’s School of Social Work.

Michelle’s initial intention was to work with the children of deaf parents. In the course of her studies, however, she has discovered that “the challenges facing children and families in the larger population are far more similar to those facing the deaf community than I had anticipated.” So, she will expand her focus to include all types of families facing discrimination. Michelle eventually hopes to earn a PhD in social work and psychology, so that she can conduct her own research.

Those who know Michelle describe her as an innovative, decisive problem solver and a tireless ambassador for the deaf community. “My goal,” says Michelle McCoy, “is to ameliorate the barriers to self-determination for all children and their families.” In support of that goal, CEW awards her a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholarship.



CHRISTINE NEUMERSKI *Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar*

Christine Neumerski describes being an inner-city middle school teacher in Washington DC as “simultaneously the most rewarding and most frustrating job I have ever held.” She faced seemingly impossible challenges: “How could I teach a 14-year old to read and maintain some semblance of self-esteem? How could I engage students who had been labeled failures by previous teachers and were now afraid to try? What should I say to students pressured to join local gangs?”

Though Christine is proud that she “found ways to navigate even the most difficult of situations,” she realized that she wanted to investigate “the structural changes that might be made to our educational system to assist our neediest students.” And so Christine, who holds a BA in English and religion from The Catholic University of America, enrolled in the University of Michigan’s School of Education to earn a PhD in educational administration and policy.



“I remind myself regularly,” says Christine, “of why I came to graduate school: To seek answers about how our nation might restructure our poorest schools to enable students from various social and economic backgrounds to succeed.” Christine is convinced that strong, committed leaders are essential, and so she is concentrating her research on how instructional leaders “facilitate the improvement of instruction in high-poverty urban schools.”

When Christine completes her doctorate, she plans to become a university professor and researcher. According to one of her professors, Christine and her research will have a profound impact. “Her ability to succeed in academic coursework, engage in a variety of research projects, undertake scholarly writing successfully, teach undergraduate and graduate courses, develop curriculum, and work as part of a team leads me to conclude that, even among her talented UM peers, she has distinguished herself.” Eager to support her important work and academic promise, CEW names Christine Neumerski a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.

KARLA PATTEN *Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar*

When Karla Patten completed her bachelor's degree in computer science from the University of Michigan ten years ago, she admits she did not have a clear vision of her professional future. Working as a systems analyst at Eastman Kodak, however, Karla realized she wanted to understand a wider range of business skills and company functions.

To do so, she accepted a position in a rotation program at Ford Motor Company that immersed her in various corporate departments. Karla enjoyed her early rotations but longed for a challenge "outside my comfort zone." For her final rotation, therefore, she accepted a job in an assembly plant. "I knew it would test me because I had worked only in office environments."

"When I first arrived, I was afraid to walk on the assembly line floor: The equipment appeared so large and ominous, and the sheer amount of activity overwhelmed me." Karla soon came to love her job, excited to "contribute to the collective goal of rolling 850 F-150 pickups off the line every day." And she accepted a permanent position in the plant.

Karla says that her five years at the assembly plant "transformed me from an uncertain and inexperienced employee to a confident leader." Now, ready to take on a new challenge, Karla is back in school, working on an MBA at Michigan's Ross School of Business. When she completes her degree, Karla is headed back to corporate America. Her goal is an upper level management position that will enable her to shape IT strategy in a manufacturing setting.

"Exceptional" is how Karla's supervisors describe her. They praise her natural leadership ability, excellent interpersonal and communication skills, and ability to manage crisis situations calmly and effectively. CEW agrees with her employers that Karla Patten is destined to become an outstanding leader and manager. We support her talent by naming her a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.



JOYCE PATTERSON

*Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar*

“Sometimes a true calling comes later in life,” says Joyce Patterson. “In my case it has come so loudly and clearly that I cannot ignore it.” Joyce had a career as a professional marketer after earning a BA in English from the University of Michigan. So deciding to become a registered dietitian meant “starting from scratch.”

The impetus for such a dramatic change came from Joyce’s family: a husband, daughter and son all diagnosed with a number of food allergies. “Needless to say, managing my family’s diet has been a full-time job. The first time I went to the grocery store after my daughter’s diagnosis, I cried. Every package on the shelf contained something to which she was allergic. I did not know how to feed my child.” As a result, says Joyce, “Every shopping trip became a research mission. With the research came insight. And with every meal came satisfaction that my family was healthy.”



Aware that “diet modification is an issue for almost every person at one time or another,” Joyce is now working on a master’s degree in nutritional science and dietetics from the UM School of Public Health. Her goal is to provide others with nutritional information, guidance and training, and especially to help those facing the same difficulties that her family has endured.

Joyce is thankful that, despite a number of challenges, her family has given her “an outstanding amount of support.” Determined to excel in her new career, Joyce possesses all of the qualities she’ll need. According to her professors, she is an outstanding student and natural leader with a “can-do nature.”

In support of the number of families who will benefit from her nutritional education and support, CEW delights in naming Joyce Patterson a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.

MARY POWERS *Linda J. Rider Scholar*

“When I think about how far I have come in the last few years, I pat myself on the back,” says Mary Powers. Mary was a good student who always planned to attend college. Life intervened, however, when Mary took a job after high school to earn tuition money, then married and had two children.

“Unfortunately,” says Mary, “my marriage was not the romantic tale I thought it would be,” and she eventually left the abusive relationship. Mary has since remarried, to a man who has helped her “emotionally and mentally,” and they have two children. With her new, stable life, Mary began to think about her future. When her youngest child entered school, Mary started school right along with him. She is now working on a BA degree in psychology at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. “It was scary,” Mary recalls, “but after the first day it was exhilarating!”

“I never stop thinking about the future. I know exactly what I want and what I have to do to obtain it. I want to be a good example to my four children. I want to make them proud and make myself proud too.” Mary’s goal is to attend graduate school, become a licensed clinical psychologist, and “feel like I am contributing to the world.”

Mary’s colleagues and professors know that she will achieve all her ambitions for herself and her family. In the words of one of her teachers, “Mary is an exceptional student in almost every way”: interested, involved, and capable of outstanding work. Another of her advisors tells us that, because of her hard work and commitment, “Mary has been recognized by organizations across the country as a great success story—moving from a life of chaos to long-term goal setting and achievement.” With admiration for her past achievements and faith in her future accomplishments, CEW awards Mary Powers the Linda J. Rider Scholarship.



ELIZABETH PRICE *Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar*

Elizabeth Price is a survivor. In her words, there have been “more cracks in my path than bridges, and I almost fell through.” Throughout a troubled childhood, however, Elizabeth found the strength to overcome seemingly impossible odds to reach her current, bright future.

Elizabeth has known homelessness and rejection. For example, when her principal discovered she no longer had a valid address, “I was dragged out of high school. With limited options, I found myself leaving school at 15 and working in a restaurant, washing dishes.”

But Elizabeth never gave up on education. With help from friends and relatives, she was able to complete high school and save enough money to take courses at various community colleges. Along the way, she never stopped reading. “When people look at the Kindle or iPad, they see a way to store and read books with convenience. I smile because I see more room in a duffle bag.”



Today, Elizabeth says, “My most prized and valuable possessions are my schoolbooks... and my educational credits. School saved my life.” She is currently working on her BA in English at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. Elizabeth’s aspirations “are higher than ever before”: graduate school, a doctorate and a career as a post-secondary teacher of English and comparative literature. “It was only because of books and authors and stories that I am here today, and so my goal is to help other students see that, through the study of literature, there are ways to live, not just survive.”

“Brilliant” is the way Elizabeth’s professors describe her. As one of them told us: “Every once in a while a student comes along to remind me why I love teaching—a student who is curious, open, and hungry to learn. That student is Elizabeth Price.” In support of her talent and perseverance, CEW is proud to name Elizabeth Price a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.

JOSEPH REILLY *CEW Graduate Scholar*

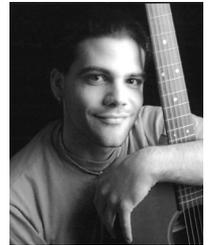
Joseph Reilly knows exactly who he is: A singer, songwriter and educator who loves sharing his music. “My greatest joy is writing and performing songs that water the positive seeds of healing, community, peace and joy in young people.”

After earning an undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan, Joseph invested the next ten years building a career in music, activism and education at Ann Arbor’s Leslie Science and Nature Center and at other regional organizations. “During that time,” says Joseph, “I have written and recorded hundreds of songs, many with elementary school classes in the Detroit and Ann Arbor public schools.” He has also shared his songs “with diverse audiences across lines of race, class and gender throughout the United States and in Europe.”

Joseph eventually realized a need to deepen his effectiveness with at-risk youth. Yet, when he learned he’d been accepted into the MSW program at the University of Michigan, Joseph was “frozen with fear. Would going back to school mean the end of the musical opportunities I had worked so hard to create for myself?” With the mantra “I breathe in faith, I breathe out trust,” Joseph set out on a spiritual journey to confront those fears and determine the right path. Guided by trusted others, he came to understand that “these different aspects of my life are interdependent, connected in a way that makes a beautiful whole.”

When Joseph completes his social work degree, he plans to return to his prevention work with Michigan youth, combining song writing with his new academic knowledge. Those who’ve worked with Joseph are enthusiastic admirers. One of them calls Joseph an “exemplary educator” and a “positive force who has a way of looking at the world and seeing only the solutions.” Excited to be a part of his exciting and important work, CEW awards Joseph Reilly the CEW Graduate Scholarship.

*Photo by Linda Wan*



BENITA ROBINSON *Irma M. Wyman Scholar*

Benita Robinson acknowledges that “the path that led me to where I am today was not the easiest but, because of the challenges I faced, I am a much more vigorous, dedicated and goal-oriented woman.” Benita’s challenges were formidable: absent father, abuse from her mother and her foster family.

At 16, Benita says, she “moved out into the world on my own, secured a job and an apartment, and lived life on my own terms.” She struggled financially but eventually was able to fulfill her dream of attending college. Discovering the Student Outreach and Academic Resources (SOAR) program at the University of Michigan-Dearborn was Benita’s salvation and inspiration. Now she says, “My goals for the future are vivid in my mind.”



Benita has ambitious dreams for her life after she completes an undergraduate degree in computer science and a graduate degree in public administration. Among her many plans for helping others, Benita intends to “open a non-profit facility that offers free computer and other instructional classes to central city kids—who lack the tools and technology available to suburban children.” Benita tells us that “giving back to my community, especially to the people who will one day lead us, is not charity or an option. It is a duty!”

One of Benita’s advisors tells us that she is “an impressive role model and a shining example to us all. She inspires me personally with her grace and grit and her quiet but fierce determination to succeed and achieve.” Another of her professors describes Benita as embodying “the focus, ability and sense of personal responsibility that we in academia ask of all our students, especially those who seek to change their stars or alter their destinies.” CEW is honored to play a role in helping Benita Robinson seek her stars and achieve her important career goals. We proudly name her the Irma M. Wyman Scholar.

JENNIFER SANO *Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar*

Jennifer Sano has not had an easy life. She's faced many hardships and overcome many obstacles, including neglect and abuse. At age 15, Jennifer left home and worked a series of low-paying jobs to singlehandedly raise her 11-year-old brother.

After her brother graduated from high school, Jennifer continued to work low wage jobs. When her house was destroyed in a fire in 2001, she and her brother lost all their possessions, and it has taken her many years to restore her life. Through it all, Jennifer says, "I refused to give up no matter what circumstances I found myself in."

Then Jennifer's luck began to change. She met a professor who became her best friend. "He and his wife helped me get into college fifteen years after high school. They gave me my dream and changed my life." Jennifer earned an associate's degree at Henry Ford Community College before coming to the University of Michigan-Dearborn. Her initial interest in biology drew her to environmental science, with a specific focus on hydrogeology.



Jennifer's studies in UM-D's Department of Natural Sciences, in addition to her extensive volunteer work for environmental causes, have led her to an exciting new career. "In Michigan," she explains, "we are surrounded by waters that are threatened by pollution, Asian carp and other invasive species. And around the world, water scarcity is a serious problem." Jennifer plans to work with consulting firms "to help find greener ways to live and care for our earth." At some point she also hopes to start her own company, primarily to "give others the chances I have been given to succeed in life."

Impressed by her tenacity and hard work, Jennifer's professors call her a star student who "enjoys learning for the sake of learning." Honored to support her exciting new life, CEW names Jennifer Sano a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.

CHRISTINE SICKLE *Molly H. Dobson Scholar*

Christine Sickle is a victim of our state's economic troubles and her own personal setbacks. Her 38-year business, Sickle's Dance Gallery, suffered; a divorce left her with financial obligations she could not meet; and she eventually lost her home to foreclosure.

Her problems may be all too common, but Christine's response to them has been unique and life-changing, both for herself and others. Attending her first Public Housing Assistance meeting, Christine rose in the audience to voice her concern with "the increased unemployment of automotive workers and the absence of affordable housing options." From that evening, says Christine, "I have been a spokeswoman on behalf of my fellow Dearborn citizens."



She became an expert, attending conferences, joining committees and educating herself about policies related to the "new homeless" and the programs that exist to help them. Christine then established her own non-profit organization, Serenity Center, Inc., whereby she—a newly certified homeownership counselor—can advise people going through foreclosure. "The joy I felt from helping a woman who called in distress, and from her phone call 30 minutes later with positive results, reassures me that I can be a source of support."

Christine is also proud to be returning to school over 30 years after earning her associate's degree from Henry Ford Community College. Now an undergraduate student at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, Christine is concentrating on community development in the areas of environmental, urban and regional studies and organizational communication. Her goal is to work in the field of community and economic development, seeking positive solutions for residents during Michigan's economic crisis.

Those who know Christine describe her as a passionate, determined and intelligent public servant who will continue to work on behalf of the citizens of Michigan. Grateful for her compassion and dedication to others, CEW names Christine Sickle a Molly H. Dobson Scholar.

JES SKILLMAN *Aline Underhill Orten Foundation Scholar*

In 2002, the “best mistake I’ve ever made in my life” led Jes Skillman to her new profession. Working as a waitress to support her dancing career, Jes was fired for giving someone the wrong check. “Humiliating as this moment was, it helped me to reassess my long term plans.”

Jes loved dancing, which she’d studied at Canada’s Ryerson University, but she also loved math and science. And so, a month after losing her restaurant job, Jes returned to school at the University of Toronto and completed a bachelor’s degree in the biological sciences. During the process, Jes had many experiences that clarified her career goals: She worked with an environmental advocacy group in Ontario; she studied alpine ecosystems in Colorado; and she completed a semester abroad in Turkey, from which she realized “the limitations on environmental sustainability caused by socioeconomic status or cultural values.”

Jes then returned to Istanbul with her husband, worked with local environmental agencies, taught Pilates classes and had a baby—all the while researching the best place to continue her education. She chose the School of Natural Resources and Environment at the University of Michigan. When Jes completes both a master’s degree and her SNRE Spatial Analysis Certificate, she plans to work as a researcher/analyst for a non-profit group focusing on food justice. “I am particularly interested in Heifer International’s food justice program because I agree that people have a right to grow their own food rather than be subjected to the whims of international market prices.”



Jes has won the praise of her professors for her “thorough, creative and abundant work.” They describe her as combining “brilliant academic intelligence with a ‘roll up her sleeves and get down to work’ attitude and an understanding that policy plays a huge role in what happens in the world.” Happy to support her new, promising scientific career, CEW awards Jes Skillman the Aline Underhill Orten Foundation Scholarship.

SUE STRIBLEY *Robert Bruce Dunlap Memorial Scholar*

“If someone had mentioned nursing as a career option for me 20 years ago,” says Sue Stribley, “I would have laughed.” After high school, Sue earned a degree in employment relations from Michigan State University. She then worked a variety of corporate jobs while also raising three children and doing extensive volunteer work.

At the same time, Sue was by necessity becoming a caregiver. Her older brother, whose kidneys began to fail when he was 5 years old, eventually endured years of dialysis, two failed transplants, and many debilitating health problems. Sue was intimately involved in his medical care. At one point, she says, “I drove 50 miles round trip, sometimes twice a day, to change the sterile bandages on his legs.”



By the time her brother died, Sue was also caring for her mother, who succumbed to cancer nine weeks later. “Through my family’s struggles, I learned that the human body is capable of unbelievable things, and that the strength of some people is greater than any machinery known to man. I have been fortunate to see the beauty in both ends of the life cycle and much in between.”

Sue knows she’s ready to become a professional caregiver. As she explains, “In my life, I have been many people. Now I have a new role to play.” After completing her BSN in the Accelerated Second Career Nursing Program at UM’s School of Nursing, Sue plans to be a nurse practitioner or anesthetist. Her goal is to work with dialysis, transplant, and chemotherapy/radiation patients and eventually to teach nursing students.

Sue’s professors describe her as an excellent, dedicated student. They all also mention her wonderful sense of humor “that allows her to persevere and make the most out of difficult situations.” Eager to support her new career, CEW names Sue Stribley the Robert Bruce Dunlap Memorial Scholar.

KATHRYN THIROLF

*Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar*

A few years after completing a BA in history from Princeton University, Kate Thirolf travelled to Southeast Asia to teach at a university in Malaysia. The result was profound. Teaching English “to hundreds of amazing students,” Kate fell in love with the classroom. “I realized that working in higher education is where I belong.”

Kate then earned a master’s degree at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and became a fellow in Harvard’s University Management Program, designed to recruit talented students to careers in higher education administration. From her studies, Kate learned the importance and complex challenges of effective college leadership.

Kate also realized that she was most interested in the world of community colleges. “Ever since my mother worked as an adjunct at a local two-year college, I have been a strong advocate of our country’s community colleges and the open access they provide to students of all backgrounds.” Kate is now a doctoral student at the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education in UM’s School of Education, a perfect place for her to concentrate her research on two-year colleges.



With support from the Raoul Wallenberg Endowment at the University of Michigan, Kate spent the summer of 2008 creating and running a summer youth program at two orphanages in southern Vietnam. As another part of her studies, she’s been an executive intern in the office of the President of Washtenaw Community College. When Kate graduates, her goal is to be a community college administrator and to research ways colleges can better support adjunct faculty.

Her academic advisors and colleagues unanimously believe that Kate is destined for greatness. She is, says one of them, “a rising star on the way to a brilliant career at the highest levels of leadership in the nation’s community colleges.” With gratitude for her commitment to the future of higher education, CEW names Kate Thirolf a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.

AMORITA VALDEZ *Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar*

“In 2005, I was called to a North Carolina birth center, where I volunteered as a childbirth doula for women who otherwise could not afford such services. I was asked to assist a young woman who’d arrived at the hospital alone.” This is the story Amorita Valdez tells to explain her decision to pursue graduate studies in anthropology.

At the birth center Amorita realized that, because she spoke Spanish, she was able to intervene for the 18-year old who’d arrived from Guatemala only a few weeks before and “preserve her right to information and authority regarding her own body.” The experience, says Amorita, “underscored serious problems related to diversity in the U.S. healthcare system.”

Amorita had already earned a BA in anthropology from Stanford when she arrived on the University of Michigan campus. She is now a PhD student in the Department of Anthropology. Her dissertation explores factors that influence eldercare in an era marked by rising incidents of chronic diseases such as Type II diabetes. “My research is set in northern New Mexico, among low-income families providing full time care to elders while also managing multiple chronic health conditions among the household’s younger generations. The financial, emotional and physical burdens that these families negotiate can have a significant impact on the quality of eldercare.” Furthermore, says Amorita, the frequency with which these families seek medical services often leads to strained relations with healthcare providers and insurance carriers.

When Amorita completes her doctorate, she will become a university professor, imparting critical thinking skills that enable her students to address medical and social questions similar to those she herself has encountered.

One of Amorita’s advisors describes her as a “conscientious, well organized, self-motivated and intelligent individual who can be counted on to raise critical ethical concerns.” In support of her commitment to understanding and teaching complex social issues, CEW names Amorita Valdez a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.

DEBORAH VALLIE *Lucile B. Conger Alumnae Scholar*

Though Deborah Vallie enjoyed her long-time career as an income tax practitioner/bookkeeper, she left the business to raise her children and volunteer at their school. There she discovered the most gratifying experience she had ever had: Working for 19 years as a classroom paraprofessional, particularly tutoring struggling readers and writers.

“Adam,” says Deborah, “is the student who convinced me of my ability to make a difference in a child’s life and motivated me to become a teacher.” Earning Adam’s trust and guiding him to “use his strength to overcome his weaknesses with reading,” Deborah delighted in watching his confidence blossom and overflow into the classroom. “At Christmas, I received a small angel ornament from Adam. Little did he know that he was as much an angel in my life as I was in his.”

Now Deborah jokes about “adjusting my hearing aids and grabbing my reading glasses” as she heads out to classes at the University of Michigan-Flint. “I’m not your average college student, but I’m more determined than ever to finish.” After earning her undergraduate degree in elementary education, Deborah will become a K-8 teacher.

“Watching young minds develop has captured my heart,” says Deborah. Those who know her are confident that Deb will be a wonderful teacher. One of them praises her academic skills and motivation to learn as well as her genuine passion for literacy and learning. Given her “persistence, wisdom and fire, we are extremely fortunate to have someone of Deborah’s caliber and expertise to assist us in the education of our youth.” Grateful for the impact she will have on future generations of students, CEW names Deborah Vallie a Lucile B. Conger Alumnae Scholar.



MARIA WATHEN *Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar*

Maria Wathen majored in sociology for her BA from Wheaton College. As part of her studies, she spent a semester in Vienna and travelled to the Soviet Union for the first time. She then married, had two children, earned an MA in English from Northern Illinois University, and devoted herself to volunteer work. “From delivering meals-on-wheels to coordinating group visits to nursing homes, I realized that social issues were not just theoretical constructs but challenges of real people.”

In 1997, Maria returned to Russia with her husband and children. She spent ten years teaching English at Moscow State University and doing volunteer work. Living there raised a host of sociological questions for Maria about “the challenges of aging, homelessness, and family breakdown” in Russia. Maria also realized that she loved teaching.



Maria is now a PhD student in the University of Michigan’s joint program in social work and sociology. She is also doing advanced Russian language study, in preparation for returning to Russia. “Social work is an emerging field there. My dream is to teach at a Russian university, training students in both sociological inquiry and social work practice.” She also plans to research that country’s social problems and establish a welfare organization for disadvantaged women and children.

Accolades from Maria’s professors stress both her academic strengths and her compassion for others. One advisor describes her as “dedicated to making a difference in the lives of families, especially from the cross-cultural perspectives of poverty and racism.” Inspired by the impact her work will have on both US and international social welfare, CEW awards Maria Wathen a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholarship.

JEMINA WILLIS *Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar*

“As a mother,” says Jemina Willis, “my main focus and priority has always been my children and, while trying to be an involved and active parent, school was not an option for me.” The “opportunity of a lifetime” came, says Jemina, when she was accepted into the SOAR program at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. Jemina is now working on a BA degree in behavioral sciences at UM-D. She then plans to earn an MSW and advocate for families and youth, specializing in counseling those who have been abused.

Jemina is determined to “make a better life for myself and my family.” She and her husband work hard to provide health care and better educational opportunities for their four children, but Jemina realizes that the key to their financial security is a college degree. As Jemina explains, “A job is just a job, and I desire to have a career.”

Jemina has another goal as well: Having experienced abuse in her own life, she is well aware that “the long term effects on victims are far too often overlooked, and I want to make a difference.” She envisions opening her own home for troubled and abused youth. As Jemina explains, “I want my story to be a reminder to young people that they are not alone. Graduating from the University of Michigan-Dearborn and fulfilling my goals will be proof that, in spite of whatever one may endure, anyone is capable of accomplishing their goals and reaching their dreams.”



While Jemina says “I had no idea that I could be a high achieving student,” her success is no surprise to her professors, who tell us she has an aptitude for learning and is thriving academically “with a smile and an unfailingly positive attitude.” With respect and admiration for Jemina Willis, CEW names her a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.

*Thank you!*