



**METRO STATE
UNIVERSITY**

A member of Minnesota State

QUIZZ

2023 Alumna of the Year

State Senator Sandy Pappas '86

**A federal grant
propels the
cybersecurity
program forward**



EMPTY PROMISES

Kimber Starnes '17
Acrylic on canvas, 16x16



Photo by Andy King

Office Hours

WITH GINNY ARTHUR //

Dear Alumni,

I hope this autumn finds you well you well and thriving. Recently, I was in conversation with a group of alumni, and the conversation turned to our favorite things about this time of year. Some loved the hearty seasonal food. Others looked forward to the return of football, the opportunity to travel, or a nice cozy sweater. I really look forward to taking the time to stop for a moment to appreciate the view from New Main. The autumn sunset over Saint Paul is spectacular, and this simple joy leads me to appreciate the change of season.

The theme of change has been on my mind. We use the week before the beginning of fall semester classes, the kickoff for the academic year, to come together as a campus community to expand our thinking, learn from each other, and set the tone for the year. This year's theme was "The Power to Change Belongs to Us." We selected this theme in recognition that our world, especially the world of higher education, is rapidly changing. Whether we consider how Chat GPT is changing student learning or puzzle over why attitudes about the value of higher education are changing or deepen our curiosity about how to best serve the changing needs of contemporary students, we know our university will need to adapt and change.

At Metro State University, we believe passionately in the power of change. We recognize our partnership with students who possess the power to change their lives and go on to make changes in our society. Our community comes together to challenge ourselves to rise to the expectations of this profound collaboration between the university and our students to be change agents.

We are not alone in our work. As you will read in this *buzz* issue, we have secured partnerships to create hands-on opportunities for students in our cybersecurity program to help small businesses, non-profits, and school districts protect their data and those they serve. We have also attracted funding to support students in our Urban Education program to ensure that every child can see their experience and identity reflected in their teachers, literally changing the face of K-12 education.

While we are on the topic of change, I am delighted to be able to recognize an alumna who has dedicated her career to advocating for change and helping to create a better Minnesota. Senator Sandy Pappas '86 has served for 38 years in the Minnesota State Legislature and, throughout her tenure, has been an active alumna, hosting events, teaching as community faculty, and advocating for the values she shares with the university. I am proud to recognize her as the 2023 Alumna of the Year.

Our belief in the power of change is infused in everything we do at university. Part of our work is to amplify stories about the difference you, our alumni, are making in the world. I invite you to share these stories. Your story will inspire and encourage a student or someone who has yet to find their way to Metro State to believe in their power to change. Reach out to us at alumni.relations@metrostate.edu. Your story is important, and we would love to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Virginia "Ginny" Arthur, JD
President

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Photo by Jeff Achen

Alumni Association

AMANDA WONG '17

Greetings from the Alumni Board!

I am both honored and elated to address you as the newly appointed president of the Alumni Board here at Metro State. It is with profound enthusiasm and a deep sense of responsibility that I step into this role, committed to supporting Metro State's legacy of excellence and fostering a bright future for our diverse community of alumni.

One of the hallmarks that distinguishes Metro State is the remarkable achievements of our alumni. Their accomplishments stand as a testament to the university's commitment to nurturing talent and fostering a dynamic learning environment. Metro State's alumni, hailing from diverse backgrounds and fields of study, are making strides in sectors that shape our world—from technology and healthcare to business and the arts. These individuals serve as beacons of inspiration, embodying the power of education to transform lives and drive progress.

As we stand at the threshold of a new board year, I am filled with optimism for what lies ahead. The board's collective resolve to act as advocates—helping alumni navigate their personal journeys and meeting them where they are for life—will be the guiding force that propels us forward. With unwavering dedication, we will continue to provide resources and support that empower our fellow alumni to excel personally and professionally.

In the coming year, the Alumni Board will work closely with the Alumni Relations team to enrich the alumni experience. From volunteering at events and supporting upcoming graduates joining the workforce with new degrees and credentials, to fundraising to help support our students and advocating for Metro State alumni in our workplaces, we will be working hard and having fun.

I invite each member of the Alumni Association to join us as we embark on a new board year. Consider volunteering with us to inspire the next generation of upcoming grads. Engage with us and participate in alumni events. Help alongside us as we garner support for Metro State's scholarships, programing, and university services.

Your insights, dedication, and unwavering support will be instrumental in shaping the future of Metro State University and the Alumni Association. Together, we will amplify the impact of Metro State and contribute meaningfully to the broader community.

Sincerely,

Amanda Wong

We are recruiting committee members for the coming year. Committee work is a fantastic way to find out if the alumni board is right for you. Committees meet six times per year with the expectation of engaging in activities outside of meetings. To learn more about opportunities contact Josh Windham at joshua.windham@metrostate.edu.

School of Urban Education renews grant to increase teachers of color in minnesota

Metro State University has been awarded a 2024 **Collaborative Urban and Greater MN Educators of Color** (CUGMEC) grant from the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB). The grant marks the eighth time in as many years that Metro State has been awarded funding from PELSB to advance the recruitment, enrollment, and retention of students of color and American Indian students enrolled in the School of Urban Education (UED).

Metro State's UED is the most diverse teacher preparation program in the state, with the largest total number and percentage of teachers of color and American Indian teacher (TOCAIT) candidates. Metro State is also the only institution of its kind with a teacher preparation program in which persons of color make up the majority of its faculty and staff.

Paul Spies, dean of UED, says the university plans to use the \$1.35 million grant to fund teacher

of color and American Indian candidate recruitment efforts as well as scholarships for enrolled TOCAIT candidates.

"The majority of Metro State's teacher candidates are post-traditional adult students with disproportionately low incomes and multiple work and family responsibilities, so many of them face numerous challenges when choosing to further their education, not least of which is a lack of finances," said Spies. "The funding from this grant will make a significant difference not only for TOCAIT candidates here at Metro State but also for their future students."

According to PELSB, while students of color and American Indian students make up 37% of the K-12 population in Minnesota, only 6% of the state's more than 63,000 teachers are teachers of color or American Indian teachers. Yet studies show that teachers of color can help improve academic

outcomes for students of color by fostering a sense of belonging.

"Through Metro State's UED, we not only ensure our teacher candidates can teach reading, writing, and arithmetic but that they can empathize and connect with their diverse students and their experiences in an authentic way," said Spies. "Teachers who complete our program are often seen in their schools and districts as leaders in closing opportunity gaps and in providing equitable educational experiences to their students."

Metro State's UED offers 15 undergraduate and graduate licensure and degree programs for diverse individuals seeking employment as educators within Twin Cities area schools and school districts. The university and its UED are accepting admission applications for the spring 2024 semester, which begins in January. Visit metrostate.edu/apply to get started.

Metro State receives a \$1.45 million grant from the National Security Agency

Metro State University has been awarded one of just three newly created grants from the National Security Agency's (NSA) National Centers of Academic Excellence in Cybersecurity to establish the Metro State University Cybersecurity Clinic, a pilot program to help protect small businesses, nonprofits, K-12 schools, and local government entities from cyberattacks.

The \$1.45 million grant will allow Metro State to provide free or low-cost cybersecurity services to organizations that face increased cyber threats but lack the resources to mitigate them. These services will include assessing threat vulnerability, developing threat defense strategies, and providing threat mitigation guidance. The clinic will be operated by students enrolled in Metro State's **cybersecurity bachelor's and master's degree programs**, providing them with an opportunity for real-world, client-focused, hands-on experience designed to increase their cybersecurity expertise, effectiveness, and employability.

According to Kyle Swanson, dean of Metro State's **College of Sciences**, which includes the university's Computer Science and Cybersecurity programs, the NSA funding will empower Metro State to uniquely address two pressing societal needs—the need to protect Minnesota's small business community and, as such, the state's economy, and the need to develop a highly skilled future workforce to fill anticipated cybersecurity job openings.

"Small businesses make up 99.5% of all businesses in Minnesota, and estimates suggest that 60% of small businesses hit with a cyberattack will go out of business within six months. So even just a fraction of Minnesota's small businesses falling victim to such an attack could cripple Minnesota's economy. But with this funding, Metro State will help protect the most vulnerable organizations in our state and help prevent the potential for financial fallout," he said.



Prof. Faisal Kaleem and students

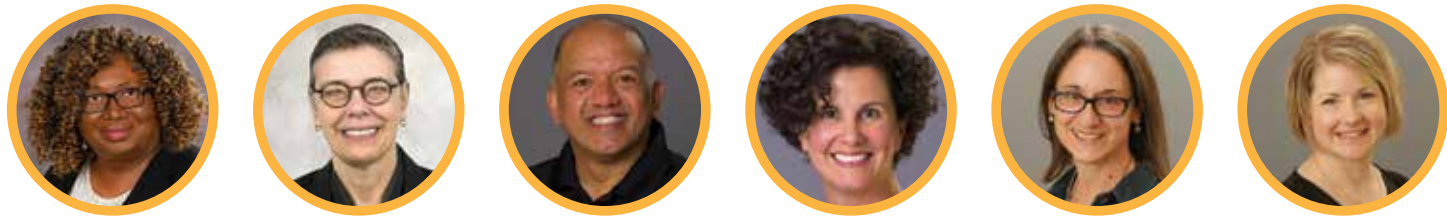
"Additionally, we anticipate the number of cybersecurity job openings in Minnesota will grow by nearly 30% over the next decade. Now, Metro State will be even better positioned to help fill those openings by ensuring our students have the most technically advanced cybersecurity education as well as unprecedented client-based experience."

"This NSA grant will allow Metro State to further fulfill its vision to engage, foster, and support the underserved individuals and businesses in the Twin Cities and the greater metropolitan area," said Swanson, referencing the schools' Community Engage Initiative. "It will also solidify our position as Minnesota's cybersecurity authority and advance our national reputation for providing an innovative interdisciplinary cybersecurity curriculum."

The Metro State University Cybersecurity Clinic is expected to open in mid-2024. Details on qualification guidelines for organizations wishing to participate in the clinic will follow. This funding complements the appropriation of \$5.2 million from the State of Minnesota to fund the new cybersecurity lab on Metro State's Saint Paul Campus. These funds will propel our cybersecurity program and our students studying cyber to achieve great things.

Metro State in the media

Director of Recruitment, Retention and Induction, Victor Cole has been getting the word out about the Urban Teacher Program across the Twin Cities this Fall. You can hear Victor speak about the impact of Metro State's School of Urban Education on KMOJ, WCCO and KSTP.



Teaching and advising awards

At the Spring 2023 Faculty Development conference, President Ginny Arthur announced the Center for Faculty Development’s selection committee’s selections for both teaching and advising awards. Teaching is at the heart of our university mission and these faculty members are leading the way with innovative methods and extraordinary support for students.

The **Excellence in Teaching** award was presented to: Queen E. Booker, associate professor, Management Information Systems; Victor Cole, senior community faculty, School of Urban Education; Paul Hyde, senior community faculty, Computer Science and Cybersecurity; and Carolyn Whitson, professor, Literature and Language

The **Outstanding Teaching Award** was presented to: Rose McKinney, senior community faculty, Professional Communication; and Cindy Kaus, professor, Mathematics and Statistics

The **Lifetime Achievement in Teaching Award** was presented to Joel Wilson, professor of Accounting.

At Metro State, advising plays a critical part in the academic success of our students.

Recipients of the **Carol C. Ryan Advising Award** are:

- Angela Bowlus, advising director, College of Management
- Therissa Libby, professor, Human Services, College of Community Studies and Public Affairs

Recipients of the **Donna Blacker Lifetime Achievement in Advising Award** are:

- Kate Southwick, academic advisor, College of Community Studies and Public Affairs
- Tonia Baxter, academic advisor, College of Individualized Studies

Congratulations to our 2023 teaching and advising award recipients who are leading the way to success for our students! We hope that Metro State faculty and advisors will keep on leading the way for individuals to succeed.

Senator Sandy Pappas '86, Metro State's champion at the capitol



Metro State University's Alumna of the Year takes a very Metro State path to her place in state government

Senator Sandy Pappas came to Metro State University in a way that will feel instantly familiar to many of her fellow alumni. “I left the University of Minnesota at the end of my sophomore year, when I was 19, ran away to California, and then I came back as a community activist and got married. When I tried to go back to the U, it wasn’t a super comfortable thing—taking the bus there, being in classes with 100 or more younger students, and I was pregnant at the time.”

Alumni Spotlight

SENATOR SANDY PAPPAS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

At that point, Pappas' husband, Neal Gosman, suggested she try Metro State. "My husband had a connection with the founder of Metro State, David Sweet. I had already been elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives by then, but I did want to finish my degree. At Metro State, I could take evening classes, get credit for things I'd done in my work life, and it really seemed like a flexible place to complete my degree."

Completing her degree in public policy in 1986, then-Representative Pappas continued to grow in her career, being elected to the State Senate in 1990, and having served in that seat ever since. During her time there, Senator Pappas has always championed higher education, culminating in her chairing the Senate Higher Education Committee from 2007-2011.

Senator Pappas' involvement with and advocacy for Metro State has been wide-ranging and constant. Notably, she has served as community faculty many times over the years, been a tireless voice for the university at the Senate and been the long-time host of Metro State's Breakfast at the Capitol. "We love the event, and I think people get a lot out of it," she says. "I really strive to bring in more of my colleagues to attend, because I want them to learn about Metro State, and how unique it is to have a public university in the metro



Sen. Pappas in the Minnesota State Senate Chamber

area, and the importance of having a place for working people to finish a degree, improve their credentials, or transition to a new career without having to pay private college tuition or move out of the metro area to finish."

The senator's support for Metro State has also extended to specific projects the university has undertaken over the years. Psychology Professor August Hoffman points out Pappas' role in the creation of Metro State's GROW-IT Center on the Saint Paul campus. "This defunct greenhouse that had been used by the U of M Extension years before had been sitting idle since then-Governor Tim Pawlenty closed it. It had been slated for demolition, but, because it had been built with bond money, there was a long process to approve that demolition."

Hoffman, who had been trying for some time to get interest in saving the structure and using it

as part of his scholarship focusing on the connection between green space and mental health, met with Pappas several times to garner legislative support for the reuse of the structure. "Senator Pappas was instrumental in gaining both resources and support to begin development of the GROW-IT Center. Over the whole process, taking 4-5 years, it was critical to have the senator helping to organize the university and foundation's efforts; she is very invested in the future of Metro State and helping us fulfill our mission to partner with the community."

It is, of course, for this very dedication that Pappas has been selected as the 2022 Alumna of the Year. "It is a great recognition of my longtime support for Metro State, as a graduate, as a teacher, and as an advocate for higher education," she says. Ryan Ringwelski '21, Metro State Alumni Board Vice-president, Notes that "Senator Pappas exemplifies how an engaged alum

can make a difference for Metro State. When I joined the board and learned that she was so generous with her time to host events like the Breakfast at the Capitol, I was really impressed. She has shown her support in so many ways, hosting Breakfast at the Capitol for more than 20 years, serving on the Alumni Board, leading information sessions to educate alumni about their role in the legislative process, and securing critical partnerships for the GROW-IT Center. I am honored to be able to recognize her for her hard work and her support for Metro State Alumni."

In the words of Metro State President Ginny Arthur, "Senator Pappas exemplifies a Metro State graduate. She is a learner and a doer, continually striving to make the lives of people in both her local

and global communities better. I have long admired her thoughtful approach to issues and her inclusiveness in hearing all points of view. We are deeply appreciative of her advocacy for Metro State so it may better serve its students, alumni, and community."

For Pappas, though, the work continues, and so too does the opportunity to advocate for higher education in general and Metro State in particular. From her vantage, she notes that Metro State has a particular role to play at a time when higher education is having to really examine a lot of its assumptions about itself. "Looking at these new niches and kinds of jobs that our population is going to need to be trained for, we can see Metro State at the forefront in things like the cybersecurity lab.

This is an industry with a lot of need for quality professionals, where Metro State can meet that need."

For her fellow alumni, Senator Pappas has many words of wisdom as to how to get involved. "Overall, I think we are in a time of protecting democracy, and so the more civic engagement people have, the better," she says. "It's hard, because we all have busy lives, especially when you're a student. But once you graduate, suddenly you might have a little more time to stay up on the issues.

"It isn't a matter of just sending checks, but taking the opportunity to be engaged in your community—your passion could be in the nonprofit sector, it could be in politics, in local government, on a planning commission, and so on. I think that our democracy really depends on a high level of civic engagement from all of our citizens. You know, I have been available over the years to give people the How to Lobby 101 info, since staying engaged means with your elected officials as well, to let them know what you think and how you feel."

While not every Metro State graduate is likely to serve for decades in the state legislature, Senator Pappas' example shows that the combination of drive and willingness to engage—with each other, with community, with issues—are a powerful force for making lasting change.

"I think that our democracy really depends on a high level of civic engagement from all of our citizens." —Senator Sandy Pappas



From left: Rep. Hodan Hassan '10, Sen. Sandy Pappas '86, Ginny Arthur '17, Sen. Fong Hawj, Rep. Mohamud Noor '09, and Zuki Ellis '11 at the 2019 Breakfast at the Capitol.

Ways to give



Greetings,
My name is Will Ruckel and I am humbled to introduce myself as the new Director of Annual Giving and Stewardship at Metro State University.

While I am new to this role, I am no stranger to Metro State as I am nearing my tenth year of employment at the university. I most recently served as the associate director of Admissions, and prior to that, served as an academic advisor. These positions afforded me the opportunity to connect with students, hear and understand their stories, and support them through graduation. Now, I am eager to engage with our proud Metro State alumni and learn how you are using your degrees to serve your communities.

Metro State is uniquely positioned to partner with our students to provide the education and support they need to be changemakers. For more than 50 years, we have been a leader in individualized education and

experiential learning. We help students identify the skills that will complement their talents and the plans to turn ideas into reality.

I invite you to join me in this work by making a gift to the Metro Fund. Our gifts, combined with the gifts of alumni, friends, faculty, and staff, will be put to work to inspire, empower, and create the kind of change that will lift our community. Giving allows us to expand our reach and create change in ways we never had thought possible.

I am grateful for your partnership, and I look forward to our bold future and all we can achieve together. You can make a gift today at metrostate.edu/giving.

Sincerely,

Will Ruckel
William.Ruckel@metrostate.edu

Year-end giving

A charitable contribution from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) to Metro State University allows you to support higher education, helping students achieve their academic goals and contributing to a stronger community. Directing funds from your IRA ensures that your donation goes directly to the university's mission, benefiting students and educational programs.

By choosing Metro State University as the recipient of your IRA distribution, you align your philanthropic goals with supporting education, research, and community development. You can have a meaningful and lasting impact, ensuring students have access to quality education and fostering innovation and growth within the university. Plus, it allows you to take advantage of tax incentives while making a positive difference in the lives of students and the broader community. Consult your financial advisor to determine if a year-end gift from your IRA is right for you.

President's outstanding graduates

Each semester, members of the faculty and academic advisors nominate undergraduate and graduate students from their respective colleges to be recognized at the President's Outstanding Student Award reception. The students celebrated their awards with family, friends, and the university community at a reception held on April 29, 2023, on the Saint Paul campus.



Back row: Tamzan Miller, Jasmine Norris Wichser, Paul Bruyere, Robert Taliaferro, and Trustee Alex Cirillo
Front row: Imre Szabo, Pres. Ginny Arthur, Trustee April Nishimura, Provost Amy Gort, Janice Hawkins, Mariah Sodren, Augustine Neto, Hussein Santur, and Phoushai Yang

SPRING 2023 RECIPIENTS

Undergraduate Degree Award Recipients

- Paul Bruyere**, School of Urban Education, Social Studies Teaching
- Ahmed Fuad**, College of Management, Business Administration
- Tenzin Gansukh**, College of Nursing and Health Science, Nursing RN to BSN
- Jasmine Norris Wichser**, College of Sciences, Biochemistry
- Mariah Sodren**, College of Community Studies and Public Affairs, Human Services
- Robert Taliaferro**, College of Individualized Studies, Individualized Degree
- Phoushai Yang**, College of Liberal Arts, Professional Communication

Graduate Degree Award Recipients

- Janice Hawkins**, College of Community Studies, and Public Affairs, Advocacy and Political Leadership
- Tamzan Miller**, College of Liberal Arts, Master in Technical Communication and Interaction Design
- Augustine Neto**, College of Management, Master of Business Administration
- Hussein Santur**, College of Nursing Health, Doctor of Nursing Practice
- Imre Szabo, College of Sciences, Cyber Operations

Rise to Shine BREAKFAST

Friends and supporters of Metro State gathered in September to hear from President Arthur, students, alumni, faculty, and staff about the impact of student scholarship at the Rise to Shine Breakfast in support of scholarships. The morning was a success with generous donors making gifts totaling \$46,245 dollars to support scholarships.

Thank you to our sponsors for making our first Rise to Shine fundraising Breakfast a success. For more information about how you can support scholarships at Metro State, contact Melissa Musliner at melissa.musliner@metrostate.edu.

Photos by Andy Bernt



Tracy Jones and Kourtney Eichten (student)



Derrick Crim '97

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Laughlin Company Services
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Ryan Companies
Charlie and Joy Shepard
TurnSignl



Mohammad Zafar '08



Back: Santiago Villanueva-Montoya (student), Elias Montoya, Stephanie Villanueva-Montoya, Arianna Villanueva-Montoya (student), and Mikaela Villanueva-Montoya **Front:** Santistevan Villanueva-Montoya

“I stand in front of you as a guy whose parents got him to the U.S. for a better future, a veteran who like many felt lost after getting out. I found a home at Metro State. I can tell you that every scholarship at Metro comes with a story. Every one of you here comes with a story, many involving people who have paved the path for you, believed in you unconditionally, and gave with no strings attached. I might not have met all the generous donors, but I know that it strengthens the foundation of our human hearts in a way that scholarship becomes part of their legacy.”

—Mohammad Zafar '08, from his remarks at the Rise to Shine Breakfast

Making a gift

There are many ways to make a gift to the Metro State University Foundation. Choose what works best for you.

Online: Make a gift online with your credit card at metrostate.edu/give/give-now. You can make a one-time contribution or set up a monthly gift.

Check or EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer): Send a check for a one-time gift or a voided check to set up a monthly gift via electronic funds transfer (EFT).

Legacy Giving: You can make sure your family is taken care of while also making a significant gift to the Metro State University Foundation. To learn more about leaving a legacy, visit metrostate.giftlegacy.com.

News and notes

Edited by Padra Lor

CCSPA—College of Community Studies and Public Affairs

Ali Ali '07, Fridley, has been appointed as the Financial Assistance Department director at Ramsey County after serving as the interim director since last year. With more than 20 years of experience as a financial service worker, supervisor, and section manager, he has proved that he has the knowledge, leadership, and management skills to invest in the growth of the FAS, the department that provides programs supporting single adults and families meet their basic needs.

Joshua Goetze '12, Woodstock, Georgia, has spent 12 years in the U.S. Air Force Reserve in Minnesota and Georgia. This past January, he was hired by the U.S. Secret Service and passed their training program. He currently conducts fraud and cryptocurrency investigations.



Brandon Jones '11, Cottage Grove, executive director for Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health, was featured as a guest discussing the historical and cultural context of Juneteenth on 'Paces Connections' History. Culture. Trauma. Podcast.'



Pamela Michelli '20, Maple Grove, published a Spanish children's book titled "Daniela y Mateo viajan a Argentina" that celebrates the uniqueness of Argentinian culture through vibrant illustrations and fun rhymes, available through Amazon.

Joseph Neufeld '02, Coon Rapids, was promoted to sergeant. Joseph has received three awards of merit for exceptional service and his peaceful negotiation conclusion with an armed barricaded suspect. He has proved his commitment to his community, earning the name "Father Joe," and he is excited for his new position.

Gregg Nordby '22, Champlin, was promoted to sergeant. Nordby was hired as a Brooklyn Center officer in 2013 and joined the Coon Rapids department as a patrol officer in 2020. He has made great steps in implementing a new outreach initiative that provides a mentorship program in partnership with the Coon Rapids High School and has received three chiefs' commendation awards and one medal of valor for selflessly putting himself in harm's way to save a citizen.

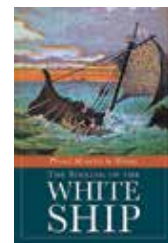
Mu Lay Paw '23, Saint Paul, worked as a human service intern at the Karen Organization of Minnesota; she has made

invaluable contributions to the organization. She promoted and nurtured the elderly and caregivers' programs that help ensure members receive the care and support that they need.

Ekta Prakash '07, Minneapolis, after serving at CAPI USE, an immigration opportunity center, for 16 years, was named the office of public engagement director at the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). She has been involved with many nonprofits and will make a good fit for DEED, working to connect with communities most impacted by racial and other disparities in employment.

Brandon Silgjord '18, Sartell, has been selected as the next police chief in the city of Sartell. He has been with the St. Louis County Sheriff's Department since 2009, with eight years of supervisory experience, and oversees 70 staff members.

CIS—College of Individualized Studies



Kevin Cannon '11, Saint Paul, recently released a book titled "Pivotal Moments in History: The Sinking of the White Ship." He had a book signing in Minneapolis in early July and hopes to educate others on historical

topics that range from sports to exploration, to fiction, and warfare.



John Lee Clark '16, Hopkins, is the winner in the Poetry section for the Minnesota Book Awards 2023. "How to Communicate," a poetry and prose collection embracing new linguistic possibilities that mirror his unique perspective as a deafblind poet, activist, essayist, and translator.



Laura Gilbert '78, Saint Paul, has published her latest book titled "My One and Only Love—A Big Band Story" based on her mother's 80-year journey as a musician, building her career against societal expeditions.



Dr. Michael O'Connor '92, Grant, has been inducted into the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering (AIMBE) College of Fellows, which is a nonprofit with the goal of advocating for biomedical engineering innovation through public policy initiatives. AIMBE fellows represent the top

2% of the most accomplished medical and biological engineers.

Carolyn Wiger '10, Hugo, was a finalist on the CBS television reality show "Survivor." Wiger, an addition and recovery counselor, was a fan favorite for her candor and empathetic presence.

CLA—College of Liberal Arts

Dea Cortney '11, Eagan, started as a criminal defense attorney at Sieben Edmunds Miller. Through exploration, networking, and mentorship opportunities, Dea has found something that keeps her on her toes. She hopes to bring about justice for her clients.



Suzanne Nielsen '97, Saint Paul, Metro State associate professor, and Community Faculty Belo Cipriani, publisher and executive director of Oleb Books, were featured on WCCO-TV's Midmorning show on Thursday, April 6 (appearance streamed on YouTube), discussing Nielsen's poetry collection "Face Up: A Collection of Outlaw Poems," winner of the 2021 Oleb Books Poetry Prize.

COM—College of Management



D.A. Abrams '95, Orlando, Florida, released his most recent book "Where is Your Why?" unpacking the thinking behind his well-reasoned and inspiring formula for success. It lays out clearly for you how to develop and execute your personal plan of attack for achieving the things that are important to you and ensure that all you do supports what you want out of life.

Steven Lacher '93, Hugo, has been appointed to the leadership team as the president of the employee pooling insurance division. Bringing over 25 years of experience, Steven will oversee operations, manage 160 national account relationships, and increase sales.

Jeff Olson '99, San Diego, California, recently purchased a Minnesota-based company. Hearing that the soap company was shutting down, he took a chance, and now the future is bright as he has plans for moving the operations to International Falls and opening a storefront. His journey has been published in the local newspaper, and he hopes to bring back the Minnesota roots for the company.

Share your news

Starting a business? Getting a promotion? Retiring? Share your big news with us, and you may see yourself in *buzz* magazine. Email your news item and a photograph of yourself to alumni.relations@metrostate.edu.

Congratulations to Metro State University’s **Spring 2023 Emeriti** honorees. The following individuals have demonstrated continued dedication to Metro State and a willingness to go above and beyond. They leave powerful legacies of service and selflessness.

Rebecca Atchison—Staff Emerita
Jodi Bantley—Staff Emerita
Barbara Beltrand—Professor Emerita
Thomas Boylan—Staff Emeritus
Steven B. Creason '02—Professor Emeritus
Pauline Danforth—Advisor Emerita
Cynthia DeVore—Staff Emerita
Kamal Elbasher—Director Emeritus
Dotty Farley '05—Staff Emerita
Russell Fraenkel—Staff Emeritus

Stanley Hatcher '93—Advisor Emeritus
Laura Jensen—Staff Emerita
Katherine Johnson—Professor Emerita
Elizabeth Keeler—Staff Emerita
Nantawan Lewis—Professor Emerita
Deborah Matthias-Anderson—Professor Emerita
John Schneider—Professor Emeritus
Francis Schweigert—Professor Emeritus
Carolyn Whitson—Professor Emerita
Gayle Yamry—Staff Emerita

Professor Monte Bute

By Jennifer Pennington '08

Monte Bute wasn’t just a brilliant professor, he was someone who *knew* that each of his students could be greater, even if we didn’t know it ourselves. He showed us we could do things we didn’t know were possible. As Nadja Berneche shared, “... he knew how to make a lasting impression and inspire passion.”

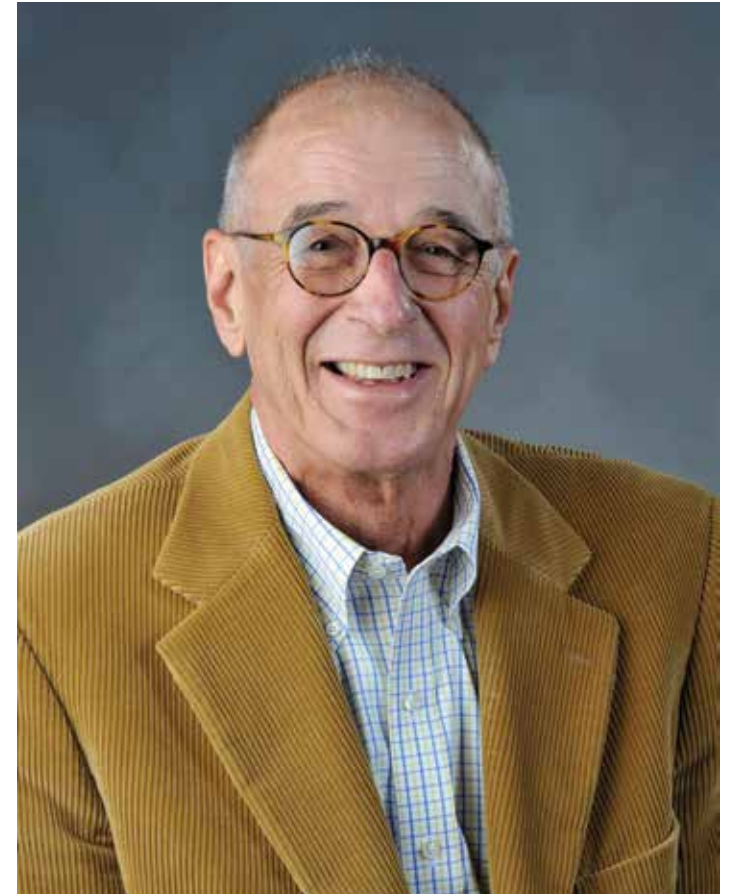
Monte’s education philosophy was that teaching is liberation, that most people are sleepwalking through life; he felt his purpose in life was to wake us up. Alecia Dirks shared an exchange she had with Monte where he wrote: “I wanted to help people liberate people from all the brainwashing they had experienced. I did not want them to do or become something; I just wanted to free them so they could make free choices about what they wanted to become.”

I believe all of us who learned from Monte did wake up! Travares Harris '08 shared his memory of Monte with me recently:

“I turned in my first paper to him, which I believed would be an astounding piece of work.” Instead, he said Monte told him, “Don’t put so much energy into sounding good but baseless; instead, get to the deeper layers and let people know what needs to be truly heard. Stop bullshitting and write something worth reading.”

Harris shared, “At that moment, I realized that Monte’s approach of tough love followed by gentle correction seems to be the perfect combination to bring out the best in individuals hungry enough to earnestly and honestly pursue it.”

Monte was a great mentor and had numerous lasting friendships with students that went well beyond when a semester class had ended. We all could count on him to continue to push us, give us an honest critique, and share resources with us. As Melissa F. Weiner shared,



“While I’m surrounded by brilliant scholars in academia, none have measured up to Monte’s breadth and range when it comes to sociological (and interdisciplinary for that matter) theory ... he was an icon and role model for justice, inside and outside of the classroom. I wouldn’t be the scholar I am now without him.”

When he was diagnosed with cancer, I started the Monte Bute Fan Club Facebook Page. People from all over came to the page to tell Monte how much he meant to them. It was truly inspiring to witness the numerous lives he had changed for the better, and everyone was eager to let him know how much he meant to them. Christine Natarajan shared, “He was a force to be reckoned with. His care for his students and his passion for teaching was immense. His departure from this earth leaves a gaping hole.”

In Memoriam

- | | |
|---|---|
| David Binczik '95 , Coon Rapids | Paul Holmlund '82 , Prior Lake |
| Monte Bute '91 , Woodbury | Abigail McDonald '96 , Watertown |
| Marguerite Daly '90 , Burnsville | Thomas Mullin '16 , Eagan |
| Mildred Eifert '99 , Little Falls | Nancy Reichow '83 , Woodbury |
| Aina Essig '82 , Andover | Earl Sorenson '87 , Fridley |
| John Fasching '73 , Salida, Colorado | Roy Struble '80 , Roseville |
| Mary Griffin '94 , Minneapolis | Paul Wentzel '94 , Savage |
| Gretchen Helkamp '87 , Woodbury | Lois Young '73 , Glendale, Arizona |
| Ann Herdina '90 , Olivia | |

How a book club provides healing

By Padra Lor

Renee Oliver '23 started working as an advocacy specialist at Ascension Place while still a student majoring in social work. Oliver managed a caseload of 10 or fewer residents at Ascension Place, one of the Haven Housing locations that provided sober transitional supportive housing, collaborating with residents to set goals and identify resources to achieve them. Recognizing the trauma and challenges residents face, Oliver wanted to create a space where they could come together for mutual support, be transported to different dimensions, explore their stories in the community, and grow and move toward their goals.



Michelle Filkins, Renee Oliver '23, and Alison Skoglund.

Why not a book club? “Instead of scrolling on their phones the whole day or night, they can read and feel more productive,” Oliver shared. She reached out to Michelle Filkins, a Metro State University faculty librarian well-versed in facilitating book clubs, including the highly popular Dayton’s Bluff community book club. Filkins embraced Oliver’s idea, citing research that book clubs, when carefully crafted and supported, can contribute to healing from trauma.

They received a small grant to support the initiative, and after thoughtful planning to tailor the book club to the interests of residents, Oliver and Filkins launched the new Ascension Place book club in the fall of 2022.

At their first meeting, 15 residents were present. “They were excited,” Oliver said. In transitional housing settings, that number varies over time as residents transition in and out of the shelter. Oliver and Filkins have provided continuity for residents in the club, establishing a solid foundation for them to build relationships with one another, which is vital to building trust.

“Our residents here want to make friends,” commented Allison Skoglund, then program manager of Ascension Place. “That’s kind of what the book club has been able to do for our residents.” Residents with very different personalities now refer to themselves as “book buddies,” and these types of relationships can be so healing, Skoglund said.

Stemming from their shared love of literature, Oliver and Filkins designed an approach that worked: providing residents reflective journals and copies of books for their personal libraries and using these texts to build new relationships, grow residents’ self-confidence, and promote healing. Though the book club is no longer active, this does not reflect the amazing work that Renee has done and the women she has impacted through the book club.

Editor’s note: Since writing, all the women in Haven Housing’s Ascension Place transitional housing program have moved to their next homes. Haven Housing continues to operate emergency shelter for families in Hennepin County. Learn more at [havenhousing.org](https://www.havenhousing.org).

The Metro State Library and Learning Center

Library Services for Alumni

The Metro State University Library and Learning Center welcomes alumni. In addition, in a unique partnership, we share our building with the Dayton’s Bluff Branch of the Saint Paul Public Library. You are welcome to use the services and resources of both libraries. Visit metrostate.edu/about/locations/library-and-learning-center for hours of operation.

Privileges

As an alumni user, you may take advantage of many of our services, including:

- Check out books and other resources (with card)
- Interlibrary Loan services, up to five items per month. (Please inquire about this when you request your card.)
- Reference and research assistance
- Computer workstations (with card)
- Printing and photocopying (for a fee)
- Public study tables and seating
- Study rooms

Cards

An alumni community card is available to persons who have graduated from Metro State. You will need to show your photo ID or Metro State student ID, and we will verify your alumni status.

Computer workstations

Designated computers are available for community and alumni use on the first floor of the library. Community users are allowed two logins to these computers daily, each for up to one hour.

Database access

Alumni may access Metro State online databases from workstations in the library. Current database license agreements do not permit off-campus access to alumni users.

The State of Minnesota offers remote access to many online databases through the Electronic Library of Minnesota (ELM) visit elibrarymn.org for more information.

Events

Game Night at the Library, Library and Learning Center Lounge, Third Wednesday, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Whether you want to try out a new video game or show off your gaming skills, Metro State invites you to join the third Wednesday of the month.

Enjoy free snacks, board games you can check out, and video games for the Nintendo Switch and PS4. Game night is sponsored by the Metro State Library and the Saint Paul Public Library.

The Eastside Seed Library

The East Side Seed Library is located inside the Dayton’s Bluff branch of the Saint Paul Public Library. It is operated in partnership with the Metro State University Library and Learning Center and Urban Roots.

How it Works

Borrow

- Take a seed packet (up to five).
- Take an information sheet.
- Check out at the desk.

Grow

- Plant seeds at home.
- Check out gardening books for more information.

Share

- Share your bounty with your neighbors, friends, and family.
- Let us know what you learned and enjoyed.

Visit libguides.metrostate.edu/EastSideSeedLibrary for more information.

We hope to see you on campus this winter!

Each year Metro State holds dozens of lectures, panel discussions, celebrations of culture, and volunteer opportunities. You can stay up to date by subscribing to the alumni e-newsletter. Visit metrostate.edu/alumni to stay up to date.



From the Director

KRISTINE HANSEN '07

There is something special about the beginning of the Fall Semester. Some will argue that Summer is Minnesota's best season, but I find myself energized by seeing students and faculty return to campus. It has been an especially sweet return for the last two years as we steadily get back to embracing in-person activities and greeting each other face to face. The theme for our opening week of learning and celebration was "The Power to Change Belongs to Us" and included workshops and learning sessions around this theme. This theme resonates with me.

When I talk to alumni about what Metro State has meant to them there are two common themes. The first is that graduating from Metro gave them the tools and confidence to change their lives. They tell me stories about feeling stuck or dissatisfied. They tell me how they had dreams and ambitions that couldn't break through until they earned a degree. They tell me about gaining better careers and a wider range of options.

I also hear from alumni who are actively creating change in our community. Through its alumni, Metro State has been a catalyst for change across our community.

The other theme in my discussion with alumni is the impact of their professors. The faculty members who challenged their thinking opened the door to new knowledge and helped point them in an unexpected direction. Many of us have traveled along a circuitous road to a degree. Faculty who listened to us and encouraged us, particularly those who were also Metro State alumni, were important to our journey.

I first met Sen. Sandy Pappas as a student in her Citizen Lobbying class held at the Minnesota State Capitol. Learning about the influence that regular citizens have on their elected officials was a mind-expanding moment for me. Learning that she was also a Metro State alum was also inspiring. Over the years Sen. Pappas has been gracious with her time and a vocal supporter

of Metro State's mission. Throughout her career she has created change and empowered others to make their voices heard. We are proud to be able to recognize her commitment to Metro State and grateful for her ongoing partnership in promoting the values we share.

Another member of the faculty who looms large in the memories of alumni is Monte Bute, who died over the summer. Years before I came to work at Metro State, I happened to see a LinkedIn poll asking alumni to name the most influential faculty member at Metro. The response was Monte in a landslide. Although I never took a class from him, I was the beneficiary of his informal teaching, his wit, and some outrageous email exchanges. I knew him as a co-worker but even in that role, he was a teacher, and he will be missed.

Take Care ,

Kristine Hansen '07
Director of Alumni Relations

Master's Programs

Are you ready to take the next step? Metro State's master's programs include a wide range of professional and technical programs, as well as programs in the liberal arts. All programs share a commitment to quality and accessibility, and most degrees may be earned through evening and weekend classes.

For more information visit metrostate.edu/apply/get-started/graduate.

- Advocacy and Political Leadership MAPL
- Business Administration BS+MBA (Combined BS + MBA)
- Business Administration MBA
- Co-occurring Disorders Recovery Counseling MS
- Computer Science MS
- Computer Science PSM
- Criminal Justice MS
- Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Schooling: Urban Education MS
- Cyber Operations MS
- English as a Second Language with K-12 Licensure: Urban Education MS
- English Teacher Preparation for Grades 5-12 Licensure: Urban Education MS
- Individualized and Interdisciplinary Master of Arts or Master of Science (MA/MS)
- Liberal Studies MA
- Life/General Science Teacher Preparation for Grades 5-12 licensure: Urban Education MS
- Master of Nonprofit Leadership and Management MNLM
- Master of Public Administration MPA
- Master of Public and Nonprofit Administration MPNA
- Master of Science in Management Information Systems MS in MIS
- Mathematics Teacher Preparation for Grades 5-12 licensure: Urban Education MS
- Nursing Entry Level MSN
- Nursing, Post-Master's DNP
- Psychology MA
- Social Studies Teacher Preparation for Grades 5-12 licensure: Urban Education MS
- Special Education with K-12 Licensure: Urban Education MS
- Technical Communication MS

Readership survey

Thank you to the readers who took the time to complete the *buzz* magazine readership survey. Your feedback helps us consider how you like to receive information about Metro State and how you like to engage with the university.

We learned that you want to learn more about alumni and their careers, university history and traditions, faculty research and student research, and community issues. You are also interested in seeing your own experience reflected in our stories. Moving forward, we will look for ways to share stories that reflect a diversity of identities and experiences. We appreciate your candor and will use your feedback to guide our future choices.

We were also gratified to learn that most respondents feel that *buzz* strengthens your connection with Metro State. We will continue to work to publish a magazine that meets your expectations.

Follow the Metro State Alumni Association on Facebook facebook.com/MetroStateAlumni/

Connect with us on LinkedIn linkedin.com/groups/12522694/



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