

2010's Distinguished Service Awardees

Tara Myers Harrison

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award - 2010

Working as the veterinarian and curator of Potter Park Zoo, Tara Myers Harrison has served as a mentor and role model for both graduate and undergraduate students in the MSU Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. She gives her time freely to collaborate on research projects, serves as a guest lecturer for graduate level classes and works tirelessly with Potter Park Zoo volunteers to raise funds for research at MSU. Dr. Harrison has been instrumental in bringing students from different colleges and backgrounds together to take part in research and other activities normally outside their specific fields of study. Veterinary students have been able to learn more about research on wild populations, and wildlife students have been able to learn about veterinary medicine. Dr. Harrison bridged the gap, helping all students to realize their roles in conservation. Dr. Harrison has been the veterinarian at Potter Park Zoo since 2003. Many of her professional honors and associations, such as her selection as a Species Survival Plan veterinarian, have been bestowed upon her because of her expertise in veterinary medicine and wildlife management, and the generosity with which she shares her expertise with others.

Don Howard

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award - 2010

Don Howard is the epitome of an engaged alumnus who supports the agriculture and natural resources industries. He has a long association with Michigan State University and has given back to his university and the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources through hundreds of hours of volunteer support and advocacy. He has served as a faculty member at three universities and has 65 publications in scientific peer-reviewed journals and books. He also served as an assistant dean in the MSU College of Veterinary Medicine from 1977 to 1979 and as an associate dean in the NCSU College of Veterinary Medicine from 1980 until his retirement. Dr. Howard cultivated support for MSU at the national level as a Michigan delegate to the Council for Agriculture Research, Extension and Teaching (CARET) from 2005 to 2009. Each year, he traveled to Washington, DC as a member of CARET, visiting every office of the Michigan congressional delegate to advocate for funding and program support for the college, MSUE and MAES. His varied experiences as a veterinarian, faculty member, university administrator and county commissioner greatly benefited MSU. He delivered particularly effective messages to decision-makers about the importance of MSUE programs and the funding that supports those programs.

Donald W. Nugent

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award - 2010

At age 19, Don Nugent purchased his first farm and entered Michigan State University on the "six-year plan" – taking classes in the fall and winter quarters and farming the rest of the year. He graduated in 1965 with a bachelor's degree in horticulture and has been a successful agribusinessman and loyal Spartan ever since. His wife, Gail, received a bachelor of arts in education from MSU in 1972 and taught at the Frankfort/Elberta Elementary School. In 1963, Don formed a partnership with his father to farm 360 acres of fruit and raise cattle. Over the years they added a number of crops to Nugent Farms, as well as a farm market and bakery. In time, however, the farm came to specialize in apples and cherries. In 1973 he purchased Elberta Packing Company and formed Graceland Fruit Cooperative, Inc. As orchardist and CEO of Graceland, Mr. Nugent has been an industry leader, developing new products and innovative processes for processing fruits and vegetables. Today, the partnership employs 225 people and prepares a variety of cried fruits. Don and Gail have been lifelong supporters of MSU. Don has served as an elected member of the MSU Board of Trustees since 1994, currently serving his second 8-year term. He has supported CANR in many capacities and has been a major donor to AutumnFest, offering up his condo in St. Kitts as an auction item each year. Mr. Nugent has been recognized for his business acumen with numerous awards over the years.

John W. Amos

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award - 2011

John Amos' list of contributions to Michigan State University (MSU) and Extension is endless. After a meeting with Dr. Arthur Mitchell, an MSU Extension fruit production specialist, about operating a fruit farm in the Williamsburg/Elk Rapids area Mr. Amos was hooked. He participated in numerous meetings, workshops and tours provided by MSU Extension and the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station (now called MSU AgBioResearch). He was always actively involved in these events and before long Mr. Amos was offering Amos Farms for demonstrations, hosting tours and participating in advisory meetings. Mr. Amos continuously offered his farm for studies over the years, all at no cost to MSU and has annually contributed to the university's research programs. Mr. and Mrs. Amos hosted numerous foreign university students as interns on their farm over the years to support MSU's international objectives. These students quickly became a part of the family in every respect, from work to trips and exposure to Michigan. In addition, Mr. Amos volunteered for the Weather Service Cooperative Program for 20 years, a member of the Whitewater Township Board for 20 years, a member and chairperson for the Elk Rapids Fire Department for more than 11 years and a long-term active member of the MSU Horticultural Society. Demonstrating a strong sense of business and outstanding horticultural skills Amos has worked with his wife and sons, Dorance and Dieter, to increase his farm from 200 to 1,000 acres. He excels not only in the production of quality fruit but also in developing unique marketing outlets, and he frequently credits much of his success to Michigan State University.

Charlotte Louise Wenham

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award - 2011

Charlotte Wenham has been an outstanding community leader and committed MSU alumna for more than 30 years. In 1968, Wenham earned a degree in speech, followed by a master's in English in 1979, both from Michigan State University (MSU). She then completed her college career with an Ed.D. in educational administration from Western Michigan University in 1987. Her professional career has been devoted to K-12 education serving in numerous positions from a teacher to assistant superintendent in St. Joseph Public Schools. Wenham currently works as a partner and consultant in her own firm – Wood, Wenham & Henderson – working with Michigan school districts interested in utilizing “interest-based bargaining” in negotiations. Ms. Wenham has generously shared her knowledge and facilitation skills with many non-profits, political organizations, churches and small businesses, including the St. Joseph County MSU Extension. She has served on numerous local and regional boards and commissions impacting agriculture and the greater Benton Harbor and St. Joseph community. Ms. Wenham has received multiple awards ranging from the Outstanding Leadership Award from the Benton Harbor/St. Joseph Rotary Club to the Volunteer of the Year Award from Planned Parenthood of Mid-Michigan. Ms. Wenham is the epitome of an engaged alumna who supports the agriculture and natural resources industries and has given back to her university through countless hours of volunteer support and advocacy on our behalf at the local, state and national levels.

Mark Rey

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award - 2012

Mark Rey is the Demmer Scholar executive in residence at Michigan State University. Mr. Rey leads the William A. Demmers Scholars Program, a summer course in Washington, D.C., where students learn about the federal governments and participate in a paid internship with an agency or organization focusing on natural resources and policy. Students with varied majors participate and of 62 participating students, 13 are currently employed full-time in science policy positions in the D.C. area. Mr. Rey received his M.S. in natural resources policy and administration, B.S.F. in forestry and B.S. in wildlife management from the University of Michigan. In addition to his work at MSU, Mr. Rey serves as a consultant for the Livingston Group. From 2001 – 2009, as undersecretary for natural resources and environment, Mr. Rey was in charge of the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Rey has served as a staff member with the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and as vice president of forest resources for the American Forest and Paper Association. In addition, he has received numerous awards among them the 2008 Distinguished Eagle Scout Award, the 2005 Western Business Roundtable, Defender of Forests Award and the 2004 Combined Federal Campaign, Leadership involvement Award. Mark Rey possesses the unique skill to convene adverse and diverse groups into a unified

coalition. The ability is rooted in the moral high ground and integrity he maintains at all times with a disarming and calming demeanor. Mark has utilized his experience, talents and contacts, and leveraged them together to create a curriculum at MSU unparalleled in the nation.

Patricia L. Birkholz

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award - 2013

Director of the Michigan Office of the Great Lakes, Patricia L. Birkholz served as a member of the Michigan State Senate from 2002 to 2010. In the Senate, she represented the 24th District comprising Allegan, Barry and Eaton counties. Prior to her terms in the Senate, she represented the 88th District in the Michigan House of Representatives from 1996 to 2002. She was the Allegan County Treasurer from 1992 to 1996. She began her career in politics as a trustee for Saugatuck Township. Ms. Birkholz earned a B.A. in speech pathology and completed graduate work in speech pathology and public administration at Western Michigan University. She has worked throughout her career to protect the Great Lakes and all of Michigan's water resources. She championed the adoption of the historic Great Lakes Water Compact and spearheaded passage of the nation's first scientifically based water withdrawal legislation. She also formulated the recently approved Parks Passport program to ensure state parks remain safe and available for future generation. In recognition of her efforts to protect the environment, the Natural Resources Commission named a portion of the Saugatuck Dunes State Park in her honor. Her work with MSU Extension is exemplary. She helped United Growth for Kent County, a committee of rural and urban stakeholders, give their testimony in her Senate Committee on the proposed coordinated land use planning act. United Growth was a project of MSU Extension before it became an independent organization. Ms. Birkholz spent time helping the group craft their ideas and build their capacity and credibility. Because she is so passionate about promoting the importance of Great Lakes protection and land use issues, she has gone outside of her district to give talks on these issues. She's also traveled to other states, visiting Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to learn more about farmland preservation and urban planning tools to protect working farmland. Patricia's professional attitude and innovative thinking has inspired cooperation in creating win-win solutions for environmental and business communities.

Wayne H. Wood

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award - 2013

Wayne H. Wood, dairy farmer, is president of the state's largest general farm organization, Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) and the other family of companies that include Farm Bureau Insurance of Michigan. He has served as the MFB president since December 2000 after serving 12 years as the organization's vice president. Mr. Wood farms with his wife, Diane, brother, Randy, and son, Mark. The 1,600-acre family farm milks 300 cows and grows corn and alfalfa. First elected to the MFB Board of Directors in 1984 as a director-at-large, he later represented Farm Bureau members in Michigan's Thumb region as a District Six director. He served as the Sanilac County Farm Bureau president for five years before joining the state board. He also spent four years presiding over the Michigan Farmland and Community Alliance (MFCA), an MFB-affiliate organization dedicated to farmland preservation. In 1993, Wayne and his father, Harold, and brother, Randy, were honored by Michigan State University (MSU) Animal Science as the Dairy Farmers of the Year. In 2008, Wayne was honored as a Michigan Dairy Memorial Scholarship Foundation Honoree. Mr. Wood has chaired and served on numerous boards and councils over the years. He has been involved with the Michigan Milk Producers Association for more than 40 years and has led trade missions of farmer leaders to China, Australia, Brazil, Europe and Mexico. Through his work at Michigan Farm Bureau, Mr. Wood has been a longtime supporter of the Michigan FFA program, particularly the Washington Leadership Conference, State FFA officers and many sponsored events throughout the years. In 2005, he received the State FFA Honorary Degree and in 2011 he received the National FFA Honorary Degree. He has been an aggressive advocate with the Michigan Legislature and Congress to lobby for resources and special research projects and to communicate the importance of a properly funded land-grant university to the growth of Michigan agriculture. Wayne's leadership was instrumental in the successful introduction and implementation of many model state programs, including the Animal Initiative, Project GREEN (Generating Research and Extension to meet Economic and Environmental Needs), the Animal Diagnostic Laboratory and the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP).

Don Coe

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award - 2014

Don Coe is the managing partner of Black Star Farms in northern Michigan. He graduated from Cornell University and has extensive experience in international trade issues for wines and spirits. He is active in local economic development boards, and industry and agricultural groups where he has held positions as director, board member. Mr. Coe was director of the Traverse City Convention and Visitors Bureau, executive board member of the Traverse Bay Economic Development Corporation, commissioner and chair of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) Commission on Agriculture and Rural Development, policy chair of the Grand Traverse Bay Local Food Network, member of the State Wine Council and a member of the advisory board of the Great Lakes Culinary Institute. On the local level, Mr. Coe was a member of the Leelanau County Economic Development Council. He was formerly an executive with the Hiram Walker Distillery of Canada. He was a member of the State Extension and AgBioResearch Council, District 3 Extension Council and the Leelanau County Extension Council. He was also Michigan delegate to the Council for Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching. Mr. Coe's passionate advocacy for the land-grant system, MSU Extension and research programs is evident when he speaks with state legislators and members of congress. His combination of corporate experience, entrepreneurship and understanding of local foods and agriculture make him a one-of-a-kind advocate for the industry and the state. His service is marked by excellence.

Todd Forbush

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award - 2014

Todd Forbush is vice president of Techmarks, Inc. Focusing on the post-harvest storage and ventilation of crops, the company improves the profitability of farmers through the proper application of technology and innovations. Mr. Forbush was introduced to ventilation design while an undergraduate student working for Dr. Burt Cargill who conducted research on potato storage and ventilation design. Todd Forbush's drive and experience, along with Dr. Cargill's and Dr. Brook's research, became a cornerstone of the industry's move from producing potatoes for the frozen potato industry to producing them for other uses. Mr. Forbush also promoted a new quality control program, a joint effort between Techmark and the Michigan Potato Industry Commission (MPIC). Mr. Forbush designed the MPIC-funded Burt Cargill Potato Demonstration Storage Facility at the Montcalm Research Center. He is engaged with potato growers and MSU researchers utilizing storage. He is a member of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Alumni Association, serving on the governing Board of Directors and as president in 2001-02. He is also a member of the Alumni Advisory Board for the Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering and a member of the MSU CANR Stakeholder Advisory Board. In 2012, he received the MPIC Distinguished Service Award. He is a long-time supporter of the Michigan 4-H program, and he attends and supports numerous MSU functions. He is a proud supporter of the CANR in all facets of its mission.

Rodney Stokes

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award - 2014

Rodney Stokes career has focused on giving everyone access to the best Michigan outdoor recreation resources. His career included a variety of positions in the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) including director of state parks, chief of staff and director. He currently serves as special advisor for city place making for the Office of Gov. Rick Snyder. Mr. Stokes worked diligently to introduce urbanites to the outdoors, involving youth through education, and making parks and boating access sites accessible to all. He encouraged future professionals to strive for greatness while upholding the value of public service. He has shepherded students into professional careers through support of internship programs for the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Mr. Stokes provided frequent advice and facilitated multiple collaborations with faculty and students in the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Resources; the Department of Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resources Studies and the Department of Community Sustainability. In his administrative roles in the Michigan DNR, he continued the DNR's commitment to the Partnership for Ecosystem Research and Management (PERM), collaboration between the agency and MSU's Department of

Fisheries and Wildlife. He is serving on the East Lansing School Board and East Lansing Planning Commission as well as serving on the Board of Directors for Big Brothers Big Sisters and as chair of the Deacon Board at Paradise Missionary Baptist Church.

Richard H. Lehnert

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award - 2015

Richard H. Lehnert grew up on a dairy and vegetable farm in Sand Lake, Michigan. As a student at Michigan State University (MSU), he worked as a laboratory assistant and as a student writer in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Information Service Unit, writing agricultural news releases. He landed a job with the Jackson Citizen Patriot in 1965 as a police reporter.

That same year, the editor of Michigan Farmer recruited him to be an editorial assistant. A decade later, Mr. Lehnert was named chief editor and remained with Michigan Farmer until 1991. He earned national recognition as well as the Detroit Press Club Foundation Professional Award for his reporting on the “Michigan Issue,” when the fire-retardant chemical polybrominated biphenyl (PBB) was mistakenly added to animal feed, leading to the destruction of thousands of cattle, pigs and chickens. Two years later, he earned second place from the Detroit Press Club Foundation.

In 1991, Mr. Lehnert established his own communications agency. He focused on freelance writing, photography and publication layout. In 2004, Great American Publishing named Mr. Lehnert managing editor of Fruit Growers News and associated editor of the Vegetable Growers News, a Michigan company in Sparta. It was in this role that he developed strong relationships with MSU Extension educators and research faculty. His many articles focused on educating growers in the fruit and vegetable industry.

Currently, Mr. Lehnert is associate editor of Good Fruit Grower, with 11,000 subscribers in 49 states and 50 countries. He covers Michigan as well as the eastern U.S. and Canadian fruit industries.

Mr. Lehnert was a soccer referee and member of the U.S. Soccer Federation for 23 years. He was a member of the St. Johns Public Schools Board of Education for eight years and has volunteered his writing services to several civic and nonprofit organizations.

Richard is married, has three sons, five grandchildren, five stepchildren and 15 step-grandchildren. He lives on six acres in Michigan, surrounded by irrigated farmland, where he maintains a small orchard, a large garden and a small flock of sheep.

William L. Sheridan

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award - 2015

William (“Bill”) L. Sheridan has generously volunteered his time, energy, professional services and leadership to serve his community and the Michigan agricultural industry. An auctioneer and realtor based in Mason, Mich., he established several businesses, including Sheridan Auction Service, Owosso Livestock and Sales Company, the Brokerage Land Company and Sheridan Reality.

Mr. Sheridan was nominated for this award for the impact and positive contributions he has made to Michigan State University (MSU) as well as Michigan agriculture. He attributes much of his success to the work ethic and fond appreciation for the livestock industry from four of his mentors at MSU: Drs. Ron Nelson, Harlan Ritchie, Dave Hawkins and Byron Good. Mr. Sheridan was named Michigan Cattlemen’s Association Member of the Year last year and was recently inducted into the National Auctioneers Association Hall of Fame. He was appointed by Gov. Engler to the Michigan Beef Industry Commission, serving as chair from 1998 until 2006.

Maintaining strong ties to the Department of Animal Science, Mr. Sheridan serves on advisory and scholarship committees. He was also a member of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Alumni Association board and annually serves as an auctioneer at AutumnFest. Since graduating from MSU in 1972, he has

returned to the university to be a guest lecturer in both the Department of Animal Science and the Institute of Agricultural Technology.

Bill and his wife, Sally, have three grown children: Doug, Stacy and Neil.

David L. Smith

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award - 2015

David L. Smith has been an essential informational bridge and contributor to Michigan State University (MSU) Extension since he became executive secretary of the Michigan Vegetable Council in 1998. He currently holds the position as executive director of the Michigan Vegetable Council.

He has been an advocate for the industry he serves and for Michigan agriculture in general as well as for MSU. Mr.

Smith provides much-needed support and guidance to MSU as an industry connection.

Mr. Smith began his career in St. Paul, Minn., with the St. Paul Bank of Cooperatives but returned to Michigan where he served in a variety of roles including Michigan's representative on the National Potato Promotion Board.

Since 1998, Mr. Smith has launched the merger of the annual conference of the Michigan State Horticulture Society and the Michigan Vegetable Council to start the Fruit, Vegetable and Farm Market Expo.

In addition, he has helped secure grants of more than \$2 million for research on major disease problems in the vegetable industry. He is also the primary industry contact for MSU researchers and Extension educators working on these issues.

Aside from collaborating with the college, Mr. Smith is a member of the Michigan Farm Bureau, Monroe County Extension Council and the Board of Review for Erie Township and an active member of several community organizations.

David lives in Erie, Mich., with his wife, Sue. The couple enjoys spending time with their three children and eight grandchildren.

John Bakker

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award - 2016

For more than two decades, John Bakker worked as a pest and fertility crop consultant and field researcher for fruit and vegetable growers. Currently, he serves as executive director of the Michigan Asparagus Advisory Board, the Michigan Onion Committee and the Michigan Carrot Committee.

In those roles, he has been an advocate for the agriculture industry and for Michigan State University, where he studied soil science, horticulture and entomology.

In addition to his executive director roles, Mr. Bakker is manager of the Michigan Asparagus Growers, Inc. He established and manages the Michigan Asparagus Industry Research Farm and is president of the National Asparagus Council. He has also held leadership roles on the Michigan Vegetable Council and the Michigan IPM Alliance, and is a member of the MSU Extension and AgBioResearch Council.

Mr. Bakker led the effort to secure two federal grants for asparagus growers – a \$7.5 million grant from the Asparagus Market Loss Program and a \$2 million grant from the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program. He was recognized with the MVC Master Farmer Associate Award in 2014 and the Friend of Oceana Agriculture Industry Award in 2009.

Additionally, Mr. Bakker has played a vital role in the community as president of the Hart Public Schools Foundation, a member of the Hart Public Schools Board of Education for a decade and a member of the Hart United Methodist Church. He was named Grand Marshal of the National Asparagus Festival in Shelby, Michigan.

Don Sklarczyk

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award - 2016

Don Sklarczyk ran a seed potato farm and potato seed greenhouse operation throughout his professional career — and he changed an industry's practices.

His high-tech business of producing tissue culture involves knowledge of potato varieties, greenhouse production, pathology, entomology, nematology, economics and logistics. In 2003, Sklarczyk Seed Farm (SSF) started to focus on the tissue culture lab and hydroponic seed potato production. Since then, the SSF has grown from producing 1.5 million seed potatoes in the greenhouse to more than 6 million in 2015.

The seed potato farm grew to 200 acres of certified seed each year; rotation crops make the farm a total of 1,000 acres. His self-taught knowledge of potato greenhouse agronomy makes him a strong research advocate for the industry.

Mr. Sklarczyk has served the industry in several roles, including as president and vice president of the National Potato Council, and chair of the science section at the World Potato Congress. He was a member of the MSU Extension Advisory Council and chair of the research committee of the Michigan Potato Industry Commission.

William E. Moritz

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award - 2016

William E. Moritz is director of the Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), where he is responsible for oversight of Michigan's natural resources with a goal to conserve, protect and manage for use and enjoyment. He was named to this post in January 2016.

He holds a doctorate in zoology from Southern Illinois University, where he also completed the coursework for a master's degree in public affairs. He received his master's degree from Montana State University and his bachelor's degree from Iowa State University, in fisheries and wildlife management and biology, respectively.

Before his appointment as director, Dr. Moritz was deputy director of the MDNR. He also served as executive director of Safari Club International and the Safari Club International Foundation. Before that, and since 1993, he has worked in a variety of roles within the MDNR.

Dr. Moritz represented the MDNR in a recent overhaul of the Partnership for Ecosystem Research and Management (PERM), and has served as co-chair of the PERM board of advisors since 2013.

His leadership has led to resolution of controversial land management issues related to natural resource extraction to provide a suitable balance of sustainable resource use and economic opportunity. He led the structuring of the listing of the northern long-eared bat as a federally threatened species to ensure sustainable forest management while protecting this species.

He provided key leadership in MSU-MDNR efforts to manage bovine tuberculosis in Michigan during the late 1990s and early 2000s. He is an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife and serves as a mentor for several students.

Darwin Booher

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award - 2017

State Senator Darwin Booher was re-elected to the Michigan Senate in November 2014 representing the 35th District, which includes Benzie, Crawford, Kalkaska, Lake, Leelanau, Manistee, Mason, Missaukee, Ogemaw, Osceola, Roscommon, and Wexford counties.

He chairs the Senate Banking & Financial Institutions Committee, and serves as a member of the Agriculture and Education committees for the 2014-18 legislative term. Sen. Booher also serves as a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, where he chairs the Capital Outlay and Community Colleges subcommittees. In

addition, he serves on the Appropriations subcommittees for the departments of Natural Resources (DNR), and General Government.

Sen. Booher serves as Assistant Majority Caucus Whip for the Republican Caucus.

Sen. Booher has long been a proponent of MSU Extension and its many services to the community. While his children were involved with 4-H, Sen. Booher was then a banker who worked to ensure support of the Osceola County Fair.

Sen. Booher was instrumental in passing legislation that provides resources to struggling homeowners – an aspect of that bill includes asking MSU Extension to provide a large amount of resources to individuals and families across the state. Since that bill was enacted, 11,574 Michigan residents have received counseling from the MSU Extension Financial and Homeownership Education team.

Sen. Booher annually hosts young visitors to the Capitol from 4-H during the Michigan Youth Conservation Council and Capitol Experience.

Sen. Booher and his wife, Jan raised four children and now enjoy spending time with their six grandchildren. They have also hosted 10 exchange students from all over the world.

William A. Demmer

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award - 2017

William A. Demmer CEO of Demmer Corporation, a manufacturer of large military and construction equipment components. He is also CEO of River Caddis Development, LLC. In addition, Mr. Demmer is President and CEO of Demmer Properties, Airport Realty, Demmer Investments and Palmer Engineering. Mr. Demmer is a 1970 graduate of MSU, with a degree in engineering. The College of Engineering awarded him its Claude R. Erickson Distinguished Alumni Award in 2011. The CANR awarded him the Honorary Alumnus Award in 2009.

He is president of the Boone and Crockett Club, the largest Wildlife Conservation organization in the world, organized by Theodore Roosevelt in 1923.

Mr. Demmer has translated his love of the outdoors into gifts to MSU as well. He established an endowed chair position in the name of Boone and Crockett, the oldest conservation organization in North America. He additionally established a Boone and Crockett Endowed Wildlife Extension program at MSU.

Nationally, he helped create the Demmer Scholars Program which has exposed MSU students to an array of natural resource management challenges and introduces them to a range for working professionals in Washington, D.C. The summer program provides hands-on internships with a resources policy course taught by Mark Rey.

The members of the Demmer family are also major contributors to the multipurpose shooting facility that bears their parents' names: The John and Marnie Demmer Shooting Sports Facility.

Ray VanDriessche

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award - 2017

Ray VanDriessche grew up on a family farm in south east Bay County and farmed full time in a partnership with his brother, Gene, from 1967 until 2005 at which time he went to work full time for Michigan Sugar Company as the Director of Community & Government Relations.

Mr. VanDriessche and the Michigan Sugar Company have contributed to efforts to resurrect the sugar beet industry by working with producers, university researchers and MSU Extension to create the Michigan Sugar Beet Advancement Program. He supported the establishment of an MSU Extension educator position devoted to sugar beet production.

Mr. VanDriessche has worked closely and cooperatively with MSU Extension, AgBioResearch, and the CANR to develop the Saginaw Valley Research and Extension Center near Frankenmuth.

The Michigan Sugar Beet Advancement Program's efforts in research, development and education have developed improved production practices leading to increased yields and higher sugar content. As a result, Michigan is now the nation's third or fourth leading sugar beet producer, depending on the year.

In 2014, he was presented with MSU Extension's Key Partner Award for his role in advancing Michigan's sugar beet industry.

Mr. VanDriessche is still involved in the family operation and helps out on the farm during the peak busy seasons. He and his wife, Geri, have two daughters and two sons. The couple's two sons are now part of the family farm operation.

Jim Nugent

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award - 2018

James Nugent has spent his five-decade career in service to Michigan's fruit growers, from his early years as the MSU Extension director Leelanau County to his current role as chairman of the board of the Michigan Tree Fruit Commission.

Nugent retired from MSU in 2006, but his dedication to Michigan's fruit industry never abated. His leadership, first at the Michigan Cherry Committee and now at the Michigan Tree Fruit Commission, has seen new investment in research to support fruit growers from state, federal and industry sources.

Named one of the most influential fruit extension agents of the twentieth century by American Fruit Grower magazine and honored with Distinguished Service Awards from seven agricultural groups and by a joint resolution of the State of Michigan House of Representatives and Senate, Nugent's efforts have helped Michigan fruit growers remain national leaders.

For 37 years, Mr. Nugent has grown tart and sweet cherries on his farm, Sunblossom Orchards, where he lives with his wife Rosaline.

Keith Creagh

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award - 2018

Keith Creagh has spent more than 40 years working on behalf of Michigan's farmers and natural resource managers. He has served as director of the state Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and is now the director of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

At the height of the Flint water crisis, Mr. Creagh stepped in as acting director of the state Department of Environmental Quality. Since returning to the DNR, he has continued to be a critical thought leader on water quality issues.

Throughout his career, Mr. Creagh has tackled many issues related to agriculture and natural resources, including bovine tuberculosis, chronic wasting disease in the state's deer herd, and preventing the spread of Asian carp into the Great Lakes.

Mr. Creagh has led many MSU initiatives that have benefited Michigan agriculture, particularly as a member of the first Directors Action Team for Project GREEN (Generating Research and Extension to meet Economic and Environmental Needs). Project GREEN is a key partnership between MSU, the State of Michigan and Michigan's plant agriculture industries. He has also served MSU students as both a guest lecturer and a mentor. "I have witnessed firsthand his ability to help coalesce the capabilities of multiple agencies and organizations while addressing an emergent public health crisis and rebuilding relationships and confidence among local citizens," Jeff Dwyer, director of MSU Extension, said. "Rarely in my 25 years in academic administration have

I know an individual who has made a greater impact on multiple organizations across so many domains over such an extended period,"

Allyn Anthony

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award - 2018

Allyn Anthony grew up on a 180-acre fruit and vegetable farm near Hartford, Mich., graduated from Michigan State University in 1966 and has remained a leading figure in Michigan agriculture ever since.

Following the passing of his father, Mr. Anthony returned to take over production on the family farm. In 1980, he, along with his family, received MSU's award for Farm Manager of the Year.

Mr. Anthony has served Michigan's farming community and fruit and vegetable industries his entire career. As a leader in multiple Michigan agricultural groups, most recently as executive director of the Michigan State Horticultural Society, his work supported farmers throughout the state.

In concert with the Michigan Vegetable Council, Mr. Anthony helped transform the Great Lakes EXPO into the premiere venue for Extension educational programs for fruit, vegetables and greenhouse crops in the Midwest. A supporter of MSU research, Mr. Anthony facilitated the awarding of specialty crop grants to MSU, supported MSU faculty and Extension educators and was instrumental in the creation of the Michigan Tree Fruit Commission. He served in many MSU College of Agriculture and Natural Resources programs, particularly those supporting the Department of Horticulture and AgBioResearch fruit research centers, as well as helping develop MSU faculty positions to benefit Michigan fruit and vegetable farmers.

Noel and Sandra Stuckman

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award - 2018

Noel and Sandy Stuckman have been tireless supporters of youth and agriculture for over 30 years.

In 1960, Mr. Stuckman began serving Michigan farmers with the Michigan Farm Bureau. Later he was instrumental in founding the Michigan Agricultural Cooperative Association, and served as that organization's general manager until his retirement in 1990. He played a central role in developing landmark marketing-bargaining legislation in Michigan that became a model for other states, and served as a leader in the MACA national bargaining conference.

Ms. Stuckman began her MSU career as an MSU Extension home economics agent, later serving as a regional Extension director and the director of Michigan 4-H Youth Development. During her tenure as state 4-H leader, she ushered in new international partnerships such as the Michigan 4-H China Project and the 4-H Chinese Art Exchange. She also oversaw the opening of the Michigan 4-H Children's Garden.

"Noel and Sandra are tireless supporters of youth and agriculture, and have contributed both time and treasure to important MSU initiatives and to county-level Extension programming," Carl Bednarski, president of Michigan Farm Bureau, said in support of their nominations. "Noel's pioneering efforts have often been duplicated in other states, and Sandy's leadership of 4-H at the state and local level is commonly understood and greatly appreciated."

The Stuckmans have been major financial supporters of Michigan 4-H and the Great Lakes Leadership Academy for many years.

Robert G. Lambe

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award – 2019

Robert G. Lambe is the executive secretary of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC). He has had a significant impact not only on the programs in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and MSU, but also on the conservation of the state's aquatic ecosystems resources and habitats. His leadership has been instrumental in facilitating effective cooperative fisheries management in the Great Lakes basin.

He works to ensure coordination of management among federal and nonfederal agencies in enhancing the state's valuable fisheries resources and in preventing the spread and invasion of non-native species.

Mr. Lambe has obtained increased funding from both U.S. and Canadian governments to develop innovative responses and solutions to cross-border fishery management challenges. Through the GLFC's mission and vision, he supports research by engaging with university faculty and students across the state and at MSU. He has championed support for the Partnership for Ecosystem Research and Management, a program between MSU and the Fisheries and Wildlife Division of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and continues to be an advocate for faculty and students working in the Quantitative Fisheries Center.

Gordon Wenk

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Award – 2019

Gordon Wenk recently retired as director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD). He was pivotal in helping MSU Extension address mental health issues in agriculture. When he saw an uptick in the number of farmers who died by suicide in Michigan, he immediately asked MSU Extension to help find out why. His quick response led to MSU Extension's creation of two curricula that are used to teach farmers, farm families and those who work with them to recognize signs of depression and learn how to access services.

He has been active in the Plant Coalition, creating a vital link between state government, industry leaders and MSU. He has been instrumental in the partnership between MSU and MDARD through Project GREEN (Generating Research and Extension to meet Economic and Environmental Needs).

Mr. Wenk began his career with MDARD in 1978, working with Michigan's Soil and Water Conservation Districts. He spent many years in the Environmental Stewardship Division, traveling all over the state. He became the driving force behind the Michigan Energy Conservation Program, which promoted implementation of farming best management practices that resulted in improved production and environmental protection, as well as energy efficiencies.