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Graduate Alumnus

Graduate School

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Graduate Alumnus: Outstanding Graduate Alumni Awards - Class of 2010

Graduate School of Eastern Illinois University

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*2010 Outstanding Graduate
Alumni Awards*



The Graduate School



EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY™

Sixth Annual Outstanding Graduate Alumni Awards Program
April 16, 2010

Welcome

Greetings from Dr. Robert M. Augustine, Dean, Graduate School

Greetings from Graduate Faculty:

Dr. Lisa Taylor, Council on Graduate Studies

Greetings from Graduate Students:

Meghan Glow, Graduate School Student Dean

Greetings from Graduate Alumni:

Linda Komes, Graduate Alumni Advisory Board

Dinner

Awards presented by

Mr. Jeffrey Lynch, Dean - College of Arts & Humanities

Dr. Diane Hoadley, Dean - Lumpkin College of Business and Applied Sciences

Dr. Diane Jackman, Dean - College of Education & Professional Studies

Dr. Mary Anne Hanner, Dean - College of Sciences



2009 - 2010 Graduate Alumni Advisory Board

Sharon Jackson, Chair

Stan Adkins

Dwight Baptist

Jerry Boyd

John Dively

Michele Heidel

Marilyn Holt

Walter Knollenberg

Linda Komes

Anthony Gilberti

Steven McArthur

Pam Rathjen

Jamie Willis



Chris Bezruki, '85

Nominated by the graduate program in
political science

Chris Bezruki has over a 20-year record of leadership in public service and human resource management. He currently fulfills the role of Director of Human Resources for the City of Champaign, Illinois. In this position since 1994, he is responsible for labor relations and contract negotiations, benefits administration, employee training and development, classification and compensation, recruitment and employment, and employee relations. Before coming to Champaign, Chris worked as the Human Resource Director and later Assistant City Manager for Homestead, Florida. Chris gained experience in disaster recovery during his tenure at Homestead thanks to Hurricane Andrew in 1992. He was nationally recognized for his work after Hurricane Andrew as he maintained a challenged work force during nearly one and one-half years of community rebuilding. Prior to his position for the city of Homestead, he served as the Chief Administrative Officer for Charleston, Illinois. Chris has previously served on the Board of Directors for the Miami Service Corps and is an active member of the International Personnel Management Association and the Society for Human Resource Management. In 2001 he received certification as a Certified Professional by the International Personnel Management Association. He is currently a master's candidate at the University of Illinois Institute of Industrial and Labor Relations. He earned a bachelor's in political science from Southern Illinois University in 1981 and a master's in political science from EIU in 1985 and earned Senior Professional in Human Resources certification in 2003. Chris and his wife Ann Maloney-Bezruki reside in Champaign.

Cherie Cook, '85

Nominated by the graduate program in
historical administration



Cherie Cook considers her application to EIU's Historical Administration graduate program to be one of the smartest decisions she ever made. Upon completion of the program in 1985, Cherie began working in the museum field, a career that has offered her a variety of job opportunities, interesting travel, and lifelong friendships. At the American Association for State and Local History, she currently serves as senior program manager and is responsible for several national initiatives including development of the new Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations (StEPs). Introduced to the museum field in 2009, StEPs is the culmination of more than four years of work and collaboration with 130 project volunteers from across the country. StEPs offers, for the first time, a way for small- and mid-sized museums, historic houses, and other history organizations to not only learn more about national museum standards, but benchmark their current policies and practices within a set of performance indicators identified for each of the 43 standards. Prior to joining AASLH, Cherie served as executive director of the Oklahoma Museums Association from 1993 until 2004 having previously worked as Oklahoma field services coordinator (1988-1993) and curator of the Reno County (KS) Historical Society (1985-1988). Cherie earned a bachelor's in history from Kansas State University in 1982. She is the proud mother of two girls, nine-year-old Amy and six-year-old Mari. The family lives in Jefferson City, Missouri.



Robert Dennison, DMD, '77, '90

Nominated by the graduate program in
business administration

Bob, a native of Springfield, Illinois, received his bachelors degree in zoology from Eastern Illinois University in 1977 and went on to graduate from Southern Illinois University's School of Dental Medicine in Alton, Illinois in 1982. He established a dental practice in Charleston and shortly thereafter returned to EIU and earned his MBA in 1990. Bob taught

sections of business statistics in the Lumpkin College of Business in 1991 and 1992 before joining Delta Dental of Illinois as its dental director in 1994. He advanced to the position of Vice President in 1997 and was named the company's president and CEO in 1999. Under his leadership, Delta became one of the top service providers in its industry and was named a Baldrige National Quality Award finalist in 2008. Bob left Delta in July of 2009 and established a consulting practice, Larboard Enterprises. He also serves as an Account Director for the Taproot Foundation, which provides pro bono consulting services to not-for-profit entities in New York, Washington D.C., Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle. Bob is an accomplished actor and has performed in many local productions including understudying two roles in the Chicago production of *August: Osage County*. He has also been a member of the Jeff Award winning ensemble of *The Kentucky Cycle* and the Jeff nominated ensemble of *Waiting for Lefty*. His wife, Dr. Jane (Dawson) Dennison, is a former Charleston native and his son Taylor and daughter Mary Jane (MJ) are medical students at the University of Illinois and the Medical College of Wisconsin respectively.

Lisa Dieker, Ph.D., '86, '88

Nominated by the graduate program in
special education



Dr. Lisa Dieker is a Professor and Lockheed Martin Eminent Scholar at the University of Central Florida. She coordinates the doctoral program in special education and is Director of the University of Central Florida/Lockheed Martin Mathematics and Science Academy. She received her bachelors's and master's degrees from EIU and her Ph.D. from the University of Illinois. Her primary area of research focuses on collaboration between general and special education at the secondary level with a specific interest in the unique opportunities that exist in urban schools. She is currently on sabbatical to better define the role of the secondary special educator in mathematics and science classrooms and to launch her collaborative work with colleagues in mathematics, computer science and simulation and training, a virtual teacher preparation classroom. Prior to her role at the University of Central Florida, she served for 9 years on the faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee where she chaired the secondary program and co-directed a project that certified over 150 teachers to work in urban schools. She currently serves on numerous editorial review boards and is the Associate Editor for *Teaching Exceptional Children* and past co-editor of the *Journal of International Special Needs Education*. She is the author of two textbooks and of *The Co-Teaching Lesson Plan Book* as well as featured presenter for two videos *7 Effective Strategies for Secondary Inclusion* and *Winning Strategies for Inclusive Classrooms*. She has published numerous articles on reflective thinking, teacher assistance teams, co-teaching, virtual environments and secondary inclusion. During her time at EIU she shares: *I fondly recall my time at Eastern Illinois as being a life-changing event. I attended EIU with my brother, Jeff DeWitt, and we were both Resident Assistants. We were both first generation college students and I found EIU always opened doors for me and continues to do so today to help me personally and financially. I also had the privilege during my master's degree of doing something probably few students at EIU can say they did – I served as House Mother at the age of 21 for the Alpha Sigma Alpha Sorority. I had the privilege of serving in that role when the chapter was reorganized and had never had the opportunity to be a part of a sorority since I could not afford that option. With the chapter reorganizing there were 20 women who worked amazingly hard to recruit fabulous women and we ended the year with a strong commitment on everyone's part including strong support from the national ASA organization to have over 100 women in the chapter. During the reorganization ceremony the national ASA chapter honored me and made me a sister in the sorority and it is one of many highlights from EIU. Shortly after my graduation from EIU, I married my husband Richard Dieker and we actually were the first house parents for the ASA chapter at the University of Illinois while I started my teaching career. During my doctorate at U of I, ASA provided me again with funding to help me financially be where I am today. Today Rich and I live in Oviedo, Florida and have a 14-year old son who is the Florida State gymnastics champion. We have a wonderful healthy and happy life built on a great foundation from EIU. EIU has truly changed my life in so many ways.*



Barbara Fecso, Ph.D., '77, '78

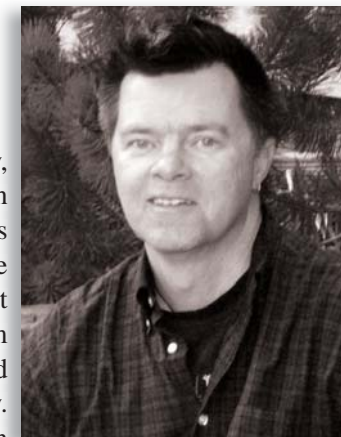
Nominated by the graduate program in economics

Dr. Barbara Fecso is an economist on the Dairy and Sweeteners Analysis Staff in the Farm Service Agency with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Her main focus is on administering the domestic sugar program. She provides guidance in the formulation and implementation of national sugar policies and procedures, as well as economic and budgetary impact analysis of programs relating to sugar and

honey. She also implements sugar-related disaster plans. Barbara has over sixteen years of government service in USDA with an emphasis on program analysis, operations and budgetary analysis. She initially spent five years with the Natural Resources Conservation Service as a program analyst for conservation technical assistance, watershed, and animal waste management programs. She then spent two years as a wheat analyst at the Farm Service Agency before shifting to sugar. Barbara earned both her bachelor's and master's in economics at EIU and received a Ph.D. in agricultural economics from Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana in 1994. Born and raised in Chicago, she lived nearly twenty years in central Illinois and now lives in Arlington, Virginia with her husband and the youngest of her three children.

Donald Finan, Ph.D., '89, '90

Nominated by the graduate program in communication disorders and sciences



In his junior year at Eastern Illinois University, Don Finan visited with program leaders in the Communication Disorders and Sciences program at EIU on a quest for a major. Little did he know then how much that brief visit would impact his life. With support from enthusiastic EIU faculty, he became intrigued with the scientific art that is speech pathology. Two years later, he had earned a bachelor's in speech pathology and audiology and embarked on a career in the speech and hearing sciences. After earning a master's in speech pathology from EIU, he completed a doctorate in speech physiology and neuroscience at Indiana University, Bloomington. Along the way, Don married the love of his life, Paula, who he met while they were both undergraduate students in speech pathology at EIU. Don is currently a professor of Audiology and Speech-Language Sciences at the University of Northern Colorado. Don has authored or co-authored 30 articles and book chapters and has presented over 60 research papers at scientific meetings. Don's research interests are in the development of orofacial/speech motor control and the use of technology to enhance clinical practice. His doctoral dissertation focused on the response properties of human infants to rhythmic stimulation during feeding behavior. Advances in technology developed for this project have yielded two patent applications (NTrainer and Actifier) and the genesis of a start-up company to produce the NTrainer System®; a device to improve the feeding behavior of newborn infants who demonstrate difficulty with oral feeding at birth. Outcomes of the NTrainer System® include faster transition to oral feeding (from tube feeding), increased rate of weight gain, and shorter hospital stays for neonates with feeding problems. Don has directed speech science programs for the Conference on Motor Speech and the International Conference on Spoken Language Processing. He is currently on the steering committee of the Speech Science and Craniofacial Disorders Special Interest Division of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Don and Paula have two sons, Sean and Benjamin, and they reside in Loveland, Colorado.



Bruce David Janu, '90, '91

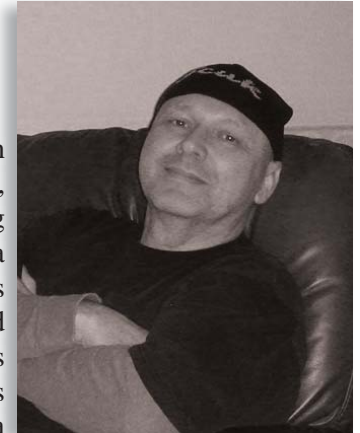
Nominated by the graduate program in history

Bruce David Janu's first feature documentary, *Facing Sudan*, hit the festival circuit in 2007 and garnered two best documentary awards. He followed up with *Crayons and Paper* featuring one of *Facing Sudan's* subjects: Dr. Jerry Ehrlich. Over the last several years working on *Facing Sudan*, Janu has become passionate about Darfur and, in particular, about the fate of children in conflict zones. *Crayons and Paper* focuses on the plight of children in two

of the world's most violent places: Sri Lanka and Darfur. Janu often speaks to organizations and schools about the conflict in Darfur and uses music and images from his two films to help raise awareness about the situation in Sudan. A teacher by trade, Janu earned both a bachelor's and master's in history from Eastern Illinois University. While at EIU, he dabbled in theatre and that background gave him a unique approach to the way he approaches history instruction. He often dresses up in costume and can be sometimes heard singing original songs about various historical events and people. In 1992, he gained short-lived notoriety with his "Frank Sinatra Detention Club." An avid Frank Sinatra fan, he created a unique way of making after-school detentions more enjoyable for himself: 30 minutes of Sinatra music. Even today, Janu puts extra credit Sinatra questions on every test. He began an educational supply company in 1999 which featured demonstration videos of two of his products: *Bring Out Your Dead: Recreating the Black Death in the Classroom* and *Mouldering in the Grave: a Dramatic Approach to Teaching about John Brown*. Several educational videos followed and soon Janu was producing videos professionally, both in the educational field and for corporate and wedding clientele. After finishing *Facing Sudan*, Janu was ready for another documentary. His wife wasn't, however. The long hours Janu put into the making of *Facing Sudan* was difficult, especially since the couple has two small children and Janu works full time as a teacher. So Janu decided to incorporate the new film into a master's thesis he was completing at the University of Chicago. Parts of the film were presented along with a cultural analysis of Dr. Ehrlich's drawings in early 2009. When he is not making films, Janu teaches history and sociology at John Hersey High School in suburban Chicago and is currently working on his first novel.

Richard D. Morris, Ph.D., '89, '90

Nominated by the graduate program in English



Richard D. Morris grew up and worked on the family farm in southern Illinois. In 1987, he left the farm to attend college, earning a bachelor's in education in 1989 and a master's in English from Eastern Illinois University in 1990. He eventually attended Purdue University, where he received his Ph.D. in English in 1996. Since 1997, he has lived in Champaign, Illinois, where he is a professor of English at Parkland College, teaching composition, reading, literature, and a liberal arts and sciences seminar, working both in the classroom and online as well as tutoring in the Writing Lab. Rich has served as the Director of Composition, Coordinator of LAS 189, Coordinator of the college-wide mentoring program, and Parkland Coordinator of the Eastern Illinois University English Graduate Assistant Teaching Internship. With Michelle Sidler, he wrote the article "Writing in a Post-Berlinian Landscape" for *JAC: Journal of Advanced Composition*. With Michelle Sidler and Elizabeth Smith, he assembled the edited collection *Computers in the Composition Classroom: A Critical Sourcebook* (Bedford/St. Martin's Professional Resources), which was awarded the best book by the Computers and Writing Conference in 2009. Rich wrote four short plays while on sabbatical from Parkland College in 2006. One of these plays, *Visiting Hour*, was performed at Parkland Theater in Champaign, Illinois, in February 2007. His full-length play, *Memorial Day*, was given a staged reading in January 2009 at the Parkland Theater as a benefit for the theater.



Mary Murimi, Ph.D., '92

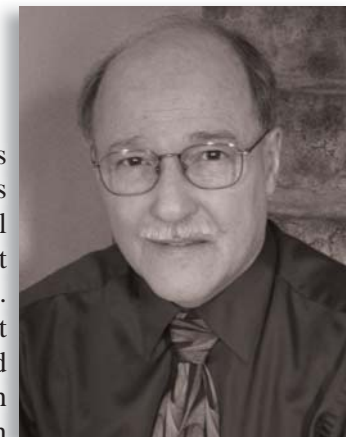
Nominated by the graduate program in dietetics

Dr. Mary Murimi takes her research into the community and works directly with students, parents, and peer leaders. Throughout her career at Louisiana Tech beginning in 1998, Mary has worked to secure both external and internal funds for research. From 2005 to 2008, Mary led her research team in a project funded through the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services called the Dubach Health Outreach Project

(DUHOP). She has had a direct impact on the lives of North Louisiana adults and teens with successful results in reducing risk factors for chronic illness through healthy eating, physical exercise, nutrition education, and health screenings. Mary is currently conducting a diabetes research project funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. She and her team are organizing and training leaders in the African American churches in North Louisiana to provide diabetes education in their communities. Her DUHOP project, with its train-the-trainer model and comprehensive program targeting a rural community with limited access to health care and health and fitness facilities, has received national and international attention. She has been invited to present her research design and findings at numerous national conferences and internationally in Canada and France. In addition, Mary is sought as an expert by program officers at the U. S. Department of Agriculture and as a collaborator by established researchers at institutes such as Yale University. Past projects have taken her to Kenya, China, and India. In addition to conducting research that improves the health and quality of life for many, Mary is passionate about mentoring both faculty and students. In the past several years, she has supervised numerous graduate students who completed their master's theses using data from the DUHOP project. Mary earned her bachelor's in 1990 from Mundelein College, her master's in home economics with a dietetics option from EIU in 1992 and a Ph.D. from Iowa State University in 1996. She and her husband Sammy, along with their four children, reside in Ruston, Louisiana.

Terry Rotsch, Ph.D., '68, '71

Nominated by the graduate program in chemistry



Upon retirement from Abbott Laboratories in 2007, Dr. Terry Rotsch returned to his first love of teaching and taught high school chemistry and physics for one year at Harvard High School in Harvard, Illinois. He has since embraced full retirement after a career that spanned teaching and research. Terry's most recent position with Abbott Laboratories was that of Research Investigator, a title given only to those who have distinguished themselves in science. He began his career with Abbott Laboratories in 1983 as an Analytical Chemist and advanced to Research Analytical Chemist and Senior Research Analytical Chemist before working the last nine years as Research Investigator. He has authored numerous publications and presentations in his field. Terry earned his bachelor's in chemistry from EIU in 1968 and taught high school in Edwardsville, Illinois for two years before returning to complete a master's in chemistry at EIU in 1971. Following his master's program he returned to high school teaching for three years at The Elgin Academy in Elgin, Illinois. From there, he entered graduate school at the University of Iowa, receiving his Ph.D. in analytical chemistry in 1979. Terry, and his wife Alison's, three children have carried on the EIU tradition; their son David graduated from EIU with a degree in chemistry, son Adam earned an EIU degree in psychology and daughter Kathryn attended EIU for two years before transferring to another university closer to home.



Beverly Turkal, '79, '86

Nominated by the graduate program in
educational leadership

When asked about her career, Bev Turkal responded, “what a wonderful life, I can’t begin to put into words the many great experiences I have had, first and foremost the opportunity to be involved in education for over 55 years.” Bev first began her commitment to education with her studies at Eastern Illinois University in 1950 on a teacher’s scholarship. After marrying,

moving to the Chicago area, and raising four children, she returned to her studies and completed a bachelor’s degree in education from Benedictine College in 1973. Upon moving back to southern Illinois, she returned to EIU and earned a master’s in educational administration in 1979. That degree led her to become principal for two different schools in the Jasper County School District. Her completion of the specialist’s degree in educational administration at EIU in 1986 preceded her role as assistant superintendent and, in 1991, superintendent of the Robinson School District. From 1996 to 1998, she assumed the duties of student teaching coordinator for EIU. Bev also fulfilled the role of superintendent for the East Richland School District from 1991 to 2001. She served on the Illinois State Board of Education from 2001 to 2004 working on the Governmental Relations Committee, Finance Committee, as well as serving as vice chair of the board. In 2006, Bev assumed the role of president for Lincoln Trail College, a role she continues to fill today. A love of travel, as well as having eight grandchildren scattered across the U.S., keeps Bev busy in addition to her duties at Lincoln Trail.



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