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ALUMNI NEWS • DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI • LASTING CONNECTIONS



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Lyman Briggs College

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Cover photo courtesy of Mark Kay

LYMAN BRIGGS COLLEGE

Lyman Briggs College is an undergraduate, residential college founded in 1967 by dedicated individuals hoping to bridge the widening gap between sciences and humanities. The first of its kind, the college has become known as the institution students go to for an excellent foundation in science and mathematics with additional focus on history, philosophy and sociology of science.

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

As we look back with pride on the many successes of the graduating class of 2017 at Lyman Briggs College, we can also look ahead with excitement to celebrating our community's 50th anniversary in October. It is gratifying to see that the college's determination to build strong connections between the sciences and humanities has been sustained for half a century – and to see how this has enriched the lives of those who have joined us as students, staff and faculty over the years.

Named after MSU alumnus Lyman James Briggs, our college was founded in 1967 as an experiment in strengthening the sciences through strong ties to the humanities. As a physicist, I'm always tickled to know that Lyman Briggs identified professionally as a member of my field. But his contributions went well beyond a single field; he was a polymath who made contributions across numerous scientific disciplines and also in the application of science and technology to society's great challenges. And this is what has made him such an appropriate namesake for our community.

Over the last half century, we have found enduring ways to bridge the perceived gap between the sciences and humanities. In part, we do this by actively modeling this “bridging” for our students in our daily work: by having scholars of many disciplines, academic advisors of many backgrounds, and support staff from varying areas of expertise work closely together to support student learning. At the same time, we also achieve this “bridging” by striving to discover the most effective teaching cross-disciplinary methods and incorporating them into our own classrooms, as well as publishing them for others to learn from. Some of these methods still stress Briggs classics such as team-based projects, capstone seminars, and peer learning assistants; others include recent innovations like online office hours, flipped classrooms, and web-based peer feedback.

In honor of our history as a college, we plan to commemorate our 50th year with a host of activities during homecoming week, October 18th-21st, featuring everything from a reception and tailgate to the unveiling of the Lyman Briggs Dairy Store ice cream flavor. These events will give Briggsies a time to re-connect and reminisce about our journey together – and to meet members of the current student cohort.

So along with my heartiest congratulations to our newest alumni, I offer an invitation to alums of every generation, along with other Friends of Briggs, to join us in the fall for the 50th anniversary celebration!

Sincerely,

Elizabeth H Simmons



Elizabeth Simmons came to Lyman Briggs College in 2003 and became dean in 2007. Among other accomplishments, she is credited with leading efforts to increase the student body by 25 percent and renovate the teaching laboratories.

Dr. Simmons is a world-renowned particle theorist, whose research focuses on the origins of mass. She has received numerous prestigious awards in her career, and continues to conduct research in the physics department.

Similar to her dedication to research, Dr. Simmons enjoys teaching physics courses at all levels, and presently teaches a junior level course in mathematical physics.

A central part of her mission as an educator is encouraging more students (especially those from under-represented groups) to consider studies in the physical sciences.

She holds degrees from Harvard and Cambridge, and is well-respected by colleagues and her staff.

LBC NEWS

Alumnus Mark Kay Chosen as Spring Commencement Speaker



Dr. Mark Kay

This year's spring commencement speaker is Distinguished Alumnus Dr. Mark Kay. Dr. Kay graduated from Lyman Briggs College in 1980 with a degree in Physical Sciences, and went on to receive an MD, PhD at Case Western Reserve University.

Dr. Kay is currently the Dennis Farrey Family Professor in the Department of Pediatrics and Professor of Genetics, at Stanford University's School of Medicine. He is the Head of the Division of Human Gene Therapy and the Associate Chair for Basic Research in the Department of Pediatrics.

Coming from a family of physicians but also interested in science, Kay was unsure of his major when he began studying at Michigan State. Lyman Briggs College appealed to him because it allowed him to keep both options open. He was also drawn to the small community feel of the college. He enjoyed surrounding himself with like-minded students and faculty.

As Kay debated between medicine and scientific research, Lyman Briggs gave him the opportunity to explore career choices in both fields. Kay volunteered at a nearby hospital during his undergraduate years while also getting hands-on research experience. The opportunity to work in a real research lab gave him a new perspective on science.

After graduating, Kay entered a Medical Science Training Program and received both an MD and PhD, still undecided on which field to pursue. He completed

his residency and subspecialty training as well as postdoctoral research. Early in his career, he saw patients but mostly concentrated on developing his independent research program.

Dr. Kay's research focuses on two main areas of genetics: gene therapy and non-coding RNAs. His group has published over 250 papers in leading journals including 40 in top journals such as *Science*, *Nature*, *The New England Journal of Medicine*, *Nature Genetics*, *Nature Biotechnology* and *Nature Structural Molecular Biology*. He has been a true bench-to-bedside physician-scientist working in basic science discovery as well as clinical gene therapy trials.

Dr. Kay is one of the founders of the American Society for Gene and Cell Therapy and served as the President in 2005-2006. He received their highest honor, the Outstanding Investigator Award in 2013. He is serving his 5th 2-year term on the board of directors of the Oligonucleotide Therapeutic Society. He has been editor and associate editor of several gene therapy journals.

In his address to the spring 2017 LBC graduates, Dr. Kay plans to discuss the importance of truth in science. One of the biggest take-aways Kay received from his HPS classes in Lyman Briggs was the effect science has on society, and the responsibility of a scientist to educate the public.

"Truth," he says, is one of the great things about science."

In a time when truth is often skewed and anti-science mentalities gain momentum, Kay wants to remind students that even science can be corrupted or misinterpreted.

An example he uses with his own students comes from a photo he took. A long-time lover of photography, Kay has an impressive collection of nature photography, including a photo of a large bird holding a duck in its mouth (shown to the left).

Most who see the photo assume that the larger bird is eating the duck, but Kay's next photo reveals that it was actually moving the duck out of its way. Dr. Kay uses this photo to teach students not to make assumptions, and to pay close attention to how well their data supports their conclusion.

Mark Kay has been selected as the keynote commencement speaker and recipient of the Lyman Briggs College Distinguished Alumni award. He will speak at the Spring 2017 LBC Commencement Ceremony in May.



An African Shoebill picks up a duck to move him out of the way. Photo by Mark Kay.

LBC Lasting Connections

From bonding in chemistry labs to gatherings in Holmes Hall, Lyman Briggs College is the perfect place to build lasting connections, including marriages! Over the last 50 years, over 80 couples have met at Lyman Briggs and gone on to get married!

Last issue, we asked our alumni to submit stories of meeting spouses during their time in Holmes Hall. Here are some of the responses we received:

Marshall Fisher ('72 Mathematics) and Suzanne Fisher ('72 Zoology)

Suzanne Ostlund and Marshall Fisher both arrived as freshmen at Lyman Briggs College in the fall of 1968. They met at a Hootenanny in the lounge of East Holmes Hall the weekend before classes started. Their first date was a group celebration of Frodo's Birthday in the woods across Hagadorn Road. Both lived in Holmes Hall all four years, graduated from LBC, married in August 1972 and headed for Urbana, IL for grad school.

Suzanne had a long and fascinating career in molecular biology research and the extramural grants process at NIH in Bethesda, MD and Marshall spent his career managing software engineering and computer systems integration projects in many countries. It has been nearly 48 years since they met at Briggs, and are happily retired in the beautiful mountains of western North Carolina.

Michael S. Richmond ('74 LBC Computer Science) and Susan J. Richmond ('74 Mathematics)

Susan and Michael married while attending LBC, and jointly received the F. B. Dutton award.

Nathan Oien ('07 Chemistry) and Jaime Brozowski ('07 Human Biology)

Nathan and Jaime met during their time at LBC. They have been together for over a decade and married for nearly 5 years.

Jacob Uebler ('13 Chemistry) and Amy Pochodylo ('13 Chemistry)

Jacob and Amy both joined Professor. LaDuca's undergraduate research lab - Amy in 2009, and Jacob in 2011. Despite both being Briggs chemistry majors, they had not met before. From 2011 to 2013, they took more classes together and then began dating officially around October 2012. Both graduated in May 2013, quickly packed up, and moved to Ithaca, New York to attend Cornell University for graduate school. In August 2014, they were married on Michigan State's campus. Professor Rob LaDuca, whom they could never thank enough for having introduced them, helped perform a "Unity Reaction" during the ceremony.

170 LBC Students Invited to Join the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi



This February, 170 LBC students were invited to become members of The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi!

The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi is the nation's oldest, largest, and most selective all-discipline honor society. Membership is by invitation only to the top 10 percent of seniors and graduate students and 7.5 percent of juniors.

Six LBC Faculty Coauthor Article on Interdisciplinary Work at LBC

Lyman Briggs Faculty members Sean A. Valles, Douglas B. Luckie, Georgina M. Montgomery, Elizabeth H. Simmons, Ryan D. Sweeder and Aklilu Zeleke published an article together in December.

The article, entitled "Updating the Two Cultures: How Structures Can Promote Interdisciplinary Cultures," was published in *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning* and can also be found on the LBC website at www.lbc.msu.edu/LBCcultures.cfm.

The article discusses the ways LBC faculty and staff work to promote interdisciplinarity and bridge the gap between the sciences and the humanities.

3 LBC Students Nominated for Nationally Competitive Goldwater Scholarship



LBC juniors Victor Ramirez (physics), Abigail Shotwell (microbiology) and Marilyn Werner, (microbiology) were nominated for the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship for their undergraduate research work in STEM-related fields.



The Goldwater Foundation seeks scholars committed to a career in science, mathematics, or engineering who display intellectual intensity and who have the potential for significant future contribution in their chosen field. MSU has produced 43 Goldwater Scholars since the scholarship program was established by Congress in 1986. The scholarship provides funding for undergraduate tuition and living expenses.



Alumni News

Alumni Updates

DAVID A. CLEGG ('71 MATHEMATICS) is working part time in preparation for retirement. Still a computer programmer after all these years!

MICHAEL R. GOLD, PH.D. ('78 PHYSICS) is a professor and Head of the Department of Microbiology & Immunology at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, BC.

TONI LYN MORELLI, PH.D. ('01 ZOOLOGY) received her doctorate in Ecology and Evolution from Stony Brook University in 2008. She has worked for the U.S. Forest Service both in California and as the Central Africa Technical Advisor in the Democratic Republic of Congo and as an NSF Bioinformatics Postdoctoral Fellow at UC Berkeley. Her current role is as USGS Research Ecologist with the Northeast Climate Science Center and Adjunct Assistant Professor at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. Her research focuses on understanding the impacts of climate change on wildlife and natural ecosystems, including projects focused on moose, lynx, red squirrels, sugar maple, montane meadows, and invasive species. She has published nearly 40 scientific articles and her research has been featured on numerous media outlets, including NPR and Mother Jones.

MICHELLE L. SMITH ('01 ZOOLOGY) is a Biology Professor at Solano College in Fairfield, CA.

CHAD SUSOTT D.D.S. ('07 PHYSIOLOGY) received his Doctor of Dental Surgery degree from Indiana University in 2012 and started work as a staff dentist with the Veteran's Health Administration. In June of 2016, he was promoted to Chief of Dentistry at the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center in his hometown of Iron Mountain, MI. During his time at MSU, Chad portrayed Sparty from 2005-2007 and was the 2007 UCA (Universal Cheer Association) National Champion Mascot as Sparty.

KELLY J. O'DONNELL, M.D. ('11 MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY) received her Doctor of Medicine degree from Michigan State University in 2015. She is a resident physician with Grand Rapids Medical Education Partners in Grand Rapids, MI.

Did you move to a new city or get a new job? Let us know! Send your updates to lbcadvan@msu.edu and we will include them in our next newsletter and on our website.

In Memoriam

JASON H. BRAZEE, M.D. ('73 Biology)

JAMES L. NADLER M.D. ('76 Physical Science)

PAUL G. BANDER ('77 Computer Science)

JENNIFER A SORDYL D.V.M. ('02 Human Biology)

TARIK F. IBRAHIM M.D. ('04 Human Biology)

BRIAN R. WLOSINSKI D.O. ('10 Human Biology)



STAY CONNECTED ON FACEBOOK

LBC has created an official Facebook group for LBC alumni and friends! Connect and network with LBC and with other alumni, and stay up to date with upcoming events and opportunities.

You can request to join the group at:
www.facebook.com/groups/LymanBriggsAlumni

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East Lansing, MI 48825-1107

Save the Date

The LBC 50th Anniversary celebration will be taking place this October during Homecoming week!

Invitation with official dates and events to come.

