

NEWS OF FACULTY, STAFF, & RETIREE GIVING TO MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

OUR IMPACT

FALL 2019



YOU *are the*
CHAMPIONS

YOUR GIFTS AT WORK • THANKS FOR GIVING LUNCHEON CELEBRATES YOUR SUPPORT

Give Green Day CHAMPIONS

GO GREEN



Muhammad Ali once said of champions: they are made from something they have deep inside them—a desire, a dream, a vision.

George and Janet Eyster surely are champions. And you might be too.

The Eysters, both retired MSU faculty, stepped up to be 2019 Give Green Day Champions to help fund scholarships for students in the College of Veterinary Medicine. The couple have contributed \$7,500 and challenged the alumni and friends of the college to match (and hopefully surpass) that amount to help the next generation of veterinarians.

Give Green Day is an annual 24-hour campaign to engage Spartans and friends of MSU in giving back to support students. Taking place on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving—December 3 for this year—the day will harness the power of social media to raise funds for more than 30 projects across campus.

MSU's current and retired faculty and staff have played a significant role in the success of Give Green Day over the past three years, championing efforts in the areas of MSU that mean the most to them, and also, giving nearly 18 percent of the total dollars raised.

"There's something about this place that gets to you," says George. "I can't imagine being in any place else. And contributions for scholarships is a small way where you can pay back."

Janet agrees, saying "Each of us found careers in this area and we never looked back. This has been our home and Michigan State is central to that."



George and Janet Eyster and their dog Orthus

She recently made a video to show her support and come December 3, she'll be reaching out to her networks to bring attention to a fund to support the museum's outreach.

"The faculty, staff and retirees of MSU are the strongest advocates for all the good that we are capable of as an institution," says President Samuel Stanley Jr. "Through

your philanthropy and your support of the programs and causes that matter to you, you are leading by example, showing the world that you believe in MSU and trust that your treasure will support the greater good in the same way that your time and talents do. For that, I am profoundly grateful."

LEARN MORE about Give Green Day 2019 at givingday.msu.edu.

MSU FACULTY, STAFF *and* RETIREES Give Green Day Hall of Fame



Dawn Baker, MSU's IT Chief of Staff, is another Give Green Day Champion, stepping up for the MSU Museum.

"There' so many reasons to support the MSU Museum," Dawn says.

"Programs like Science on a Sphere make science more accessible for everyone, bringing global data, information, learning and patterns right to your fingertips."



*Gift and participation totals of MSU faculty, staff and retiree donors on Give Green Days since 2016

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INSPIRING *the Aspiring.*

Carol Vermeesch, undergraduate program coordinator and professor in the College of Nursing, has been a guiding force for more than two decades' worth of future nurses, as they fulfill the requirements of their degree and go on to work in the health care field.

And she has watched many of them valiantly balance classes and clinicals with part-time jobs. "I see the struggles when students enter this program—it's an expensive program, and it's an intensive program. Clinicals start at 7:00 in the morning, and it's hard for students to fit in work to pay the bills," Carol says.

It is a struggle both Carol and her husband Joe know well—each were responsible for paying their own way in college and finding practical ways to make ends meet. For Carol, that meant working part-time and commuting from home to save on living expenses. For Joe, it was a co-op program. But for both of them, a strong work ethic and encouragement from their supportive families made the biggest difference.

Now, students in the College of Nursing have support, too—from Carol and Joe Vermeesch.

In 2014, the couple made a \$50,000 gift to create the Vermeesch Regnier Endowed Scholarship to honor Carol's parents, Earl and Angeline Regnier, and Joe's parents, Joseph and Esther Vermeesch. Each year, a student is chosen for an award of more than \$2,500.

Kendall Austin, a senior in the College of Nursing, is the 2019-2020 recipient.

From childhood, Kendall knew two things for sure: she wanted to become a nurse, and she wanted to attend Michigan State. Here, her passion and ambition have flourished as she embraces what it means to be not just a nurse, but a "Spartan Nurse," who demonstrates leadership and has compassion for everyone, regardless of their background.

"I plan to take everything I have learned and make a difference in the world," Kendall says. "I have plans to pursue travel nursing, and cross international borders to help provide health care in areas that may not be as advanced as we are."

As she finishes out her college career, the Vermeesch Regnier Scholarship gives Kendall peace of mind, and allows her to focus on her studies, rather than her finances. But it has also given her something else: inspiration.

"I am so honored to receive this scholarship, and so thankful for the Vermeesch's generosity. It has inspired me to give back to other future Spartan nurses as soon as I am able."

LEARN MORE about supporting the College of Nursing by contacting Development Director Eric Sturdy, Jr. at sturdyjr@msu.edu or by calling (517) 432-5033.



Nursing faculty member Carol Vermeesch (far right) and her husband Joe surround Kendall Austin, the recipient of their scholarship.

"I am so honored to receive this scholarship, and so thankful for the Vermeesch's generosity. It has inspired me to give back to other future Spartan nurses as soon as I am able." —KENDALL AUSTIN

ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS.

Faculty leave performance legacy.

When Namjoo Oh takes her place as a new member of the Suzhou Symphony Orchestra in China this year, her achievement as a violinist will reflect not only her musical training at MSU but also the Romeo Tata Graduate Fellowship in Music.

The fellowship bears the name of a giant in MSU strings history, supporting a student who shows promise of distinction as a violinist. The fund recently received a major boost with a \$242,000 bequest from another giant of the MSU faculty: C. Maureen Sander, who died in May.

For Namjoo, the fellowship was a life changer, providing a financial lifeline that allowed her to accept the Suzhou's invitation to audition earlier this year.

“It was a great honor and big opportunity to receive this fellowship. Without it, I wouldn't have been able to achieve my dream.” —NAMJOO OH

Maureen Sander was a pathologist at MSU—establishing a placenta registry that played a significant role in broadening understanding of birth defects and other medical conditions. She grew up in the Lansing area and earned her undergraduate degree at MSU. She returned after completing a medical degree at the University of Michigan, a pathology residency at Massachusetts General Hospital and serving as a Fulbright scholar in England. During her long MSU faculty career, she transitioned to Maureen through gender affirmation surgery, becoming a pioneer in the MSU community. She also was an accomplished violinist.

She studied violin with Romeo Tata for many years, culminating in recitals by classical composers, including Brahms, Chausson and Mozart. She

was one of only a few non-music faculty to perform full recitals on campus and did so on an annual basis for some 20 years. She also played with the Lansing Symphony Orchestra (LSO), and in annual music festivals in Aspen, Colorado and Interlochen. She continued to play for personal enjoyment in her retirement.

Maureen began making annual gifts to MSU music programs in the 1970s and was among the first to support the Romeo Tata Fellowship when it was created in 1990 following his death.

Romeo Tata was often the face of MSU strings during his lifetime. He served as a violin and music theory professor for 35 years, including as the chairperson for the string area and conductor of the MSU Orchestra. He helped mold the LSO in its early stages, conducting for 21 years and serving for an additional five years as concert master.

The Tata Fellowship was started by his family with a \$20,000 gift to honor his commitment to string music and teaching. Over the years, family, former colleagues, students—and always Maureen—collectively gave more than \$57,000 to the endowment, which had grown in market value to \$115,000. With Maureen's bequest gift, the endowment has tripled in value to more than \$350,000 and will continue to grow from investment income.

It is a fitting tribute for Maureen, says her close friend of nearly five decades, and fellow musician Hari Kern.

“I know Maureen thought the world of Romeo Tata and was very devoted to the violin,” Hari says. “She was such a generous and thoughtful person. Making that transition from male to female as a professor at MSU was not for the faint of heart. To know that so many MSU violin students will be beneficiaries of her estate would have made her so delighted and happy.”

LEARN MORE about supporting the College of Music by contacting Senior Director of Development Rebecca Surian at surian@msu.edu or by calling (517) 353-9872.



Namjoo Oh

THE SEASON OF GIVING.

And giving thanks.

The annual **Thanks for Giving Luncheon** was held November 7, 2019, at the Kellogg Center, and nearly 2,000 MSU faculty, staff and retirees were invited.

The event is underwritten by the MSU Federal Credit Union to thank those who have given \$1,000 or more during the previous fiscal year, or are members of a lifetime giving society.

Carrying on the momentum from the *Empower Extraordinary* campaign, faculty, staff and retirees contributed \$20.6 million this year—marking just the second time in the last five years that their total exceeded \$20 million.

A reason to celebrate, indeed.



FACULTY, STAFF, AND RETIREE GIVING *by the Numbers*

5,798 DONORS

\$20.61 MILLION

Participation from
18 degree-granting units and
25 non-degree-granting units

7th
in giving participation among
reporting AAU universities

2nd
in giving participation among
reporting Big Ten* universities

*Behind University of Minnesota-System



Current and retired faculty and staff reconnected at the annual Thanks for Giving Luncheon. Student Jasmine Jordan (center, top photo) spoke on how contributions to a student emergency fund allowed her to complete a life-changing summer internship supporting refugee families in New York City.



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