Mathematics Awards for Outstanding Students

The faculty of the Mathematics Department annually selects outstanding students in mathematics and the elementary math specialty for recognition of their achievements. This year’s Outstanding Senior Awards go to Jennifer Glenski, Andria Kelly, Megan Nygaard, Megan Toepke, Brittany Valentien.

Jenny Glenski is the daughter of Susan Blass of Auckland, New Zealand. Jenny is very active on campus. In addition to her Math major, she is a Spanish minor, the president of Math Club, a member of Spanish Club, the secretary of Green Dragons, and a volunteer math tutor. Jenny has also been a Resident Assistant, a Dragon Mentor, a member of the College of Social and Natural Sciences Advisor Board and an Assistant in the Psychology Office. After graduation, Jenny plans to travel the world and gain some experience in industry before pursuing a graduate degree.

Andria Kelly is the daughter of Jeanne and Marcos Carreon of Corpus Christi, TX. Andria has a previous degree in Art History and will be completing a Mathematics Education degree. She has presented research at the Minnesota Council of Teachers of Mathematics in Duluth and at the Student Academic Conference at MSUM. Andria also assisted with the Tri-College Mathematics Competition. She plans to work as a teacher.

Megan Nygaard is the daughter of Thomas and Lisa Nygaard of Henning, MN. Megan is a Mathematics Education major, and worked as a tutor in our Math Learning Center. Megan also served as Math Club Treasurer. She plans to teach mathematics in a high school and eventually earn a master’s degree in Mathematics or Education.

Megan Toepke is the daughter of Kirk and Debra Toepke of New Salem, ND. Megan is a Mathematics Education major with a Coaching minor. Megan has been an active tutor on our campus, at Moorhead High School and at Horizon Middle School. She plans to teach junior high school math and coach basketball, track, or cross country for a few years before pursuing a Master’s degree in education. She hopes to receive a coaching position and start a family of her own.

Brittany Valentien is the daughter of Terry and Gwen Valentien of Cold Spring, MN. Brittany is a Math Education major and a Coaching minor. Brittany is an active member of MSUM’s Circle K. Brittany plans to be a math teacher at a high school or middle school in central Minnesota and coach Cross Country or Track.

Junior mathematics major Josiah Reiswig has been awarded the Rothmann Family Scholarship. Josiah is the son of Kim and Cheri Reiswig of Moorhead. Josiah is an active tutor in the Mathematics Learning Center. He is also very involved with Chi Alpha campus ministries. Josiah plans to pursue a graduate degree in Mathematics or Economics or pursue a career in Actuarial Science.

The Wallen Scholarship has been awarded to junior mathematics education major Michael Erickson. From Ada, MN, Mike is the son of Tammy and Bruce Sargent and Roger Erickson. Mike plays Club Baseball.
Faculty & Department News

Tri-College Mathematics Competition Held at MSUM

The Mathematics Department hosted the Tri-College Mathematics Competition on March 13. The event attracted over 2,000 students from more than 50 local high schools and middle schools. Mathematics majors past and present helped support this event, and we are grateful for their participation. The Math Department invests a great deal of time to make this competition a success. A special thank you goes to Wally Sizer for his tremendous work on this project.

New Faculty this Year

The Mathematics Department welcomed Dr. Erdenebaatar Chadraa for a one-year appointment during 2012 – 2013. In his time here, Dr. Chadraa has helped our many actuarial science majors establish an actuarial science club, and taught a course to help students prepare for the Financial Mathematics Exam, sometimes referred to Exam 2. We look forward to seeing Dr. Chadraa next year.

The Mathematics Department welcomed Dr. Jessie Lenarz for a one-year appointment during 2012 – 2013. Dr. Lenarz covered many of the upper level math courses in the absence of faculty who were on sabbatical during this academic year. We were glad to have her as a part of our department this year.

Actuarial Program Growth

We are always thought of as a program that prepares teachers for the classroom, but as of late we are seeing a surge in students interested in pursuing careers as actuarial scientists. Our current group of students is so enthusiastic that with the help of Dr. Chadraa they have started an Actuarial Science club on campus. Furthermore, during spring semester 2013, Dr. Chadraa taught a course to help students prepare for the Actuarial Exam 3.

Dr. Chadraa expects many of our students to take their first actuarial exams this summer, and feels that they have a strong chance of passing. In fact, our students pass Exam P on the first try at a rate of 60%. This is well above the national average of 29%. In addition to our great Exam P pass rate, we have a nearly 100% success rate in employment for our students who do pass Exam P.

We are still the only university in the Moorhead-Fargo area that offers a program specific for actuaries, and we attract students from all over the country for our program.

Holly Sullivan (co 2015) travelled from Montana to study actuarial science with us. After researching programs all over the country, she says, “Looking into the MSUM A.S. program in depth, it really stood out from other schools’ programs. I was excited to see that I could get a math degree that includes economics, finance, accounting, and computer science classes as part of the actuarial science emphasis. Having a sense of business really makes a math degree that much stronger and more versatile- something that would make me unique to insurance companies looking for actuaries. Also, after taking these business-related classes, it has inspired me to minor in Computer Science and Finance since I enjoyed the introductory classes so much.”

We are hoping to expand our reach and give some incentives to students who do succeed in our program. We are establishing a fund that would help students who pass the actuarial Exam P pay for their exam costs.
Faculty Professional Activities

Tim Harms and Alison Wallace serve as Co-Principal Investigators for a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant they received. This is a $262,808 NSF Capacity Building Noyce Grant for 2012-2014 with outcomes of this planning effort to include the following:

1) the establishment of strong partnerships between the grant recipient university, three 2-year institutions, a regional service cooperative, and a number of local high need school districts, 2) the development and piloting of a STEM major recruitment plan to consider teaching, and 3) the design of mentoring, administration, and evaluation plans in anticipation of the submission of a phase I teacher scholarship proposal in 2014.

Professor Tim Harms attended the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, NTM, 2013 Research Presession and annual Conference in Denver this April.

Ellen Hill, Kristine Montis, and Justin James attended the Joint Mathematics Meetings this January in San Diego California. This is the largest meeting of mathematicians in the U.S., and takes place in January.

Justin James and Walter Sizer attended the fall MAA regional meeting in Duluth.

Sayel Ali, Damiano Fulghesu, Justin James, and Wally Sizer, Mathematics, attended the spring section meeting of the Mathematical Association of America April 26-27 in St. Peter, Minn.

Damiano presented joint work with student 2015 Seth Meyer on Generalized Peano Functions.

Adam Goyt gave the talk “Pattern Avoidance in Ordered Set Partitions” at the Tenth Annual Permutation Patterns Conference in Glasgow, Scotland in June 2012. He was invited to give the talk “The Magic of de Bruijn Sequences” at Valparaiso University in October 2012. He was also invited to give the talk “A Stanley-Wilf type result for ordered set partitions” at NDSU.


Adam Goyt had the paper “Avoiding colored partitions of two elements in the pattern sense” published in the Journal of Integer Sequences. This was joint work with Lara K. Pudwell of Valparaiso University. He also had the paper “Statistical Distributions and q-Analogues of k-Fibonacci Numbers” published in the Electronic Journal of Combinatorics. This paper was joint work with alumnus ‘2011 Jonathan Rue and student ’2014 Brady Keller.

Ellen Hill (Spring 2013): Dedicated many hours to committee work at the University level. She sat on two hiring committees, continued to maintain her role as faculty athletic representative, and served as chair of the Individual Review Committee.

Kristine Montis (Spring 2013): Put MATH 105 online so online programs would have a LASC math course online to choose from. This included 154 pages of guided notes with connections to instructional videos and practice problems with solutions available online. There will be about 84 instructional videos (average 10-15 minutes long) that are keyed to the guided notes explaining them and working examples for the students.

Justin James (Spring 2013): Developed a course on Problem Solving, which will be piloted during fall 2013.

Sabbatical Spectacular

Many non-academic people assume that a sabbatical leave is a sort of vacation for people lucky enough to get into academic careers. Yes, there is some rest from the challenges of teaching, but it allows time for faculty members to do research without the distraction of classroom life, and to develop new courses or discover new mathematics.

This year many of our faculty took sabbatical leave to expand their mathematical lives. Here are some short explanations of what some of them did with their sabbaticals. Let us know if these sound like vacations to you.

Sayel Ali (Fall 2012): Continued to work on the Phi-Ratio Tests. These are tests that are used to determine whether infinite series are convergent.

Adam Goyt (Fall 2012): Published two papers, one whose research was predominantly with students. Developed new research topics to be done with students. He also gave a talk at Valparaiso University.

Wayne Chen (Fall 2012): Learned how to offer courses online. He will use his new knowledge to offer two math courses online starting fall 2013.

Kristine Montis (Spring 2013): Overhauled his online Geometry textbook. This included many hours of editing and rewriting. He also spent many hours recording and rerecording videos to go along with the Geometry topics.

Tim Peil (Spring 2013): Developed a course on Problem Solving, which will be piloted during fall 2013.
‘60, Frank Franson resides in Tower, is 80 years old and has been retired from teaching math and science for 21 years. The second science lab for studying the neutrino has been completed. Two different companies are exploring and drilling a huge deposit of copper, nickel (sic), cobalt, gold and platinum. It already is in the three largest deposits in the world and it looks like it will be the largest. It will provide many hundreds of good paying jobs.

‘61, Jon Olson taught high school math and science from 1961-1967. He received an M.A. in Physics from USD in 1969, and was a Hughes Aircraft engineer and project manager from 1969-2002, retiring in 2002. Now Jon continues to be Mr. Mom as wife Queena still works full time. He has grandpa duties, golfs (his first and only hole in one was in 2012), and recently, line dancing occupies much of his time. Jon’s recent travel was to South America (Brazil, Argentina and Chile) his first time south of the equator; and then Spain, Portugal and Morocco in 2012. <jqolshen@aol.com>

‘66, John W. Anderson taught math in Warren from 1966-1975, then started farming at the family farm in Hallock in 1975. He retired from farming in 2012. John has been a County Commissioner since 2000. <jqlolshen@aol.com>

‘68, David L. Jacobson and wife Carol, who live in Shoreview recently returned from a cruise in the western Caribbean. Their plans for this year include a Memorial Day weekend reunion in Miltona of the descendants of Iver and Carrie Jacobson, his grandparents. Carol and David will travel to Disney World in early December. He sings with the adult choir at St. Timothy Lutheran Church in St. Paul, as well as plays golf during the spring and summer months in an informal league. During the fall and winter, David typically cries over the lack of fortune of the University of Minnesota football and basketball teams. Carol and he also spend considerable time with her parents and her siblings’ families. <djacob46@yahoo.com>

‘70, Sylvia (Dahl) Scott resides in Brooklyn Park. She taught math (also music, French and physics) in Rhode Island and Minnesota for about 10 years. She then went back to MSU in 1979 for a degree in Computer Science, and did computer programming and analysis until 1989. Sylvia retired to fish salmon/halibut in Alaska in the summers, ski race giant slalom in the winters, and hunt each fall. In 2009, her mother and she set up their Dahl/Scott Education Endowment Fund at the Newfolden high school, a scholarship program for exceptional high school graduates in math, science and/or engineering. Their first scholarship recipient is working towards her Veterinary degree at UND in Grand Forks. <sylviascott3271@gmail.com>

‘71, Vince Felchle resides in Dallas, Texas, and retired from Texas Instruments in 2004 after 31 years of service. He has worked in Addison, Texas, as a wine consultant for a retail store named Sigel’s for 5 years, but has cut back to 20 hours per week and is enjoying more of his retirement days. Vince reports that he visited with Doug Peters, Matt Baasch, and Edna Szymanski when they were in Grapevine, Texas, this January for the NCAA convention. <vfelchle@swbell.net>

‘71, David Thordal retired from Minnesota State Community and Technical College- Moorhead Campus in 2007. He taught Mathematics in the Moorhead public school system from 1972-1978, and coached in the school system 1972-1985, transferring to the Technical College in 1978. Dave and wife Vonnie (Nystad) live in Moorhead. Vonnie (MSUM ’72) retired from the Moorhead public schools in 2005. They spend the school year with their four grandchildren as both daughters teach at Moorhead High – Suzanne (MSUM ’99) and Katherine (MSUM ’01). Dave and Vonnie are enjoying retirement, and spend most summer days at Lake Lizzie. They are also looking forward to having four more Dragons in the family. <thordal@midco.net>

‘72, Don Karlgaard retired in 2006 after 34 years of high school mathematics teaching, eight at Pipestone, 26 at Brainerd. In 2012 he quit training for T^3, Texas Instruments “Teacher Teaching with Technology”; and in 2012 Don was honored to be inducted into the MSU Moorhead Athletic Hall of Fame as a member of the 1972 Track & Field Team. He has been a Nisswa Guide since 1989 and continues to do that in addition to helping his sister with the sugar beet harvest and a lot of hunting pheasants each fall. Don and wife Cheryl have four children, all
married, and five grandchildren. Two of their children are teachers, one an operations manager for a small industry, and the other an electrical engineer. Don resides in East Gull Lake.

ljhansen53@gmail.com

'75, Julie (Davies) Hansen teaches math at the Aitkin Alternative School, assisting high school students and adults in getting their high school diploma.

www.nisswaguides.com

'80, Dave Jacobson is in his 30th year as a Senior Quality Engineer at IBM in Rochester. The last 20 years, he has been an adjunct professor in the Graduate Management and MBA program at Saint Mary's University teaching three statistics courses per year. His wife Deb is a biostatistician at the Mayo Clinic. They have two children: Justin is an analyst at Wells Fargo in Minnesota; and Emily is a medical student at Dartmouth College in Hanover, N.H.

djake@us.ibm.com

'81, Claudia (Brainard) Wiebold resides in Shoreview, and is in her 32nd year at Securian Financial Group, St. Paul, where she is a Senior Systems Analyst. She supports actuarial financial reporting and claims payments for the Individual Insurance strategic business unit. Claudia is in her 32nd year of marriage to Don Wiebold (MSUM ‘82, Computer Science), who is a software engineer at Trane.

dwiebold@visi.com

'83, Ilo (Lewis) Myhra after living in Rochester for 20 years, she and husband Jim moved back to Clay County. Ilo has been working as a technical support specialist for Vision Solutions for 10 years, the first nine of those years in the Rochester office. She now works remotely out of her home office in Moorhead, providing support to large corporation's IT departments from around the world, for MIMIX high availability and disaster recovery software.

ilomyhra@gmail.com

'85, Peter Ringdahl is enjoying his third year at Old Dominion Freight Line, Inc. in Thomasville, N.C., as their Director of Yield Management. His wife Susan (MSUM ‘86, Accounting) is an Accounting Manager at Nederman LLC. Their daughter Morgan will be graduating from the University of Minnesota with her masters in psychology with emphasis in human resources. Their son Mitchell is a Hair Hustler and Beauty Expert at Ulta in Roseville. Peter and Susan are enjoying the warm winters in North Carolina, noting that “trading in my snow blower for a riding lawn mower was a bonus.” He also adds that playing golf 12 months of the year is great. He thanks Moorhead State for his quality education and to his favorite teacher Don Mattson.

lippyringdahl@yahoo.com

'86, Kathryn Noel “Carlson” is the Director of the Harlem Senior Center in Harlem, Mont., where she also resides. She retired in 2011 after 25 years of teaching math at Harlem JR/SR High School. Kathryn’s son Trent is 17 and is scopeing out colleges. They still live on their 25-acre farm with two dogs, two horses, one donkey and numerous cats. Life is good in Big Sky Country.

fishdon@scicable.com

'86, Rebecca (Lewin) Ledocq is a full professor in the Mathematics Department at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, in La Crosse, Wis. This December, she was elected Chair of the department, which consists of approximately 30 faculty members. Rebecca is looking forward to the challenge of this new position. The department recently hired another MSUM graduate, Eric Eager (2008), Eric is finishing his first year as the newest assistant professor in the department.She has been happily married to husband, Mike, for over 15 years and they have two wonderful children: Ben - who turns 13 in April, and Ella who just turned 11.

rledocq@uwlax.edu

'86, Mary (Johnson) Townsend is working on her doctorate in Teaching & Learning at the University of North Dakota after completing a master’s of education with a major in mathematics in 2012. She taught mathematics at the middle and high school grades for many years in small public schools and small private schools in Minnesota and a large private Christian school in California. Mary wants to thank Dr. Midgarden for selflessly giving time to students and for inspiring her to be a dedicated teacher.

rledocq@uwlax.edu

'86, Dudley Wells moved from Moorhead to a trailer (“Pod”) on his daughter Kaila’s (MSUM 2001, Economics) property near Twin Valley. He is renting his house to an art professor at MSUM who now has a 400-foot commute to the Art Department on campus. Dudley has been enjoying the rural quiet, and being closer to his daughter’s family, which includes two granddaughters. He has quit teaching in classrooms, and started collecting Social Security, but still tutors mathematics and science four days a week in the MSCTC (M-State) Learning Center in Detroit Lakes.

'89, Beth (Bauman) Thompson lives in Fargo and teaches 8th grade mathematics at Ben Franklin Middle School. Beth is married to Bruce Thompson (MSUM 1988, Economics), and they have three children, Morgan 18, Jack 15, and Sophia 10.
90, Veronica (Johnson) Lunde has been teaching math at Apollo High School in St. Cloud since 2006. Prior to that, she taught math at Gibraltar High School in Fish Creek, Wis., for five years. Veronica has three sons, ages, 17, 14, and 8. Her husband, Heath, is also a graduate of MSUM. Veronica is on her second year of grading Advanced Placement (AP) statistics exams and has met some wonderful colleagues across the country. She tells us that though she's not sure if any of her professors are still there, she really enjoyed her advisor, Don Mattson, as well as Dennis Rhoads, and Fike Zahroon, and all the other helpful professors at MSUM.

Veronica.Lunde@isd742.org

90, Russ Opdahl lives in Brentwood, Calif., and is the Senior Director of North America Sales Consulting at Oracle Corporation in San Francisco. His wife, Jane, is a graduate of the University of Minnesota in psychology and is a professional photographer. They have two children, Aaron 10 and Kylin 7. The entire family enjoys golfing, snowboarding, photography, and art.

russ.opdahl@oracle.com

93, Debra (Frank) Haglund moved to Denver, in August 1993, and married Dave Haglund. She was hired by the Colorado Department of Transportation in December 1993; and is assisting the Human Resources office as a Technician III. Debra’s duties include updating their website, data analysis, and monitoring Performance Appraisals in SAP. She also assists with testing CDOT’s configuration of SAP HCM. They live in Parker, Colo., and have two cats.

Deb.Haglund@comcast.net

94, Connie Skarphol-Oleson has been working at South Central College in North Mankato for the past 13 years. She’s taught some adjunct college readiness math classes in the past, but spends most of her time in the Math Center as the coordinator and the peer tutor coordinator for the college. Connie has been married to husband Eric Oleson, an NDSU alum, for 17 years and they have two boys, Carter 13 and Caden 9.

Connie.Oleson@southcentral.edu

02, Angie Hodge is in her sixth year as an Assistant Professor of Mathematics, and second year at the University of Nebraska Omaha. This year Angie also took on a leadership role with the Academy of Inquiry-Based Learning as a Special Projects Coordinator. With this role, she’s co-leading an effort to make the calculus series more of a hands-on, minds-on learning experience for students. Her other big accomplishment this year was to help start/lead a camp for middle school girls to help interest them in the STEM fields. In what free time Angie has, she’s developed a love of trail running and ran her first ultra-marathon this past year. Angie resides in Elkhorn, Neb.

amhodge@unomaha.edu

04, Udip Rayamajhi has been working for UnitedHealth Group since 2010 and holds the title of Senior Software Developer. He’s been working from Omaha since last year as a full time telecommuter. He got married last year and his wife is finishing college in Nebraska.

udip_rayamajhi@yahoo.com

06, Jon Nilson has been working with Towers Watson as a retirement actuary since graduating. He received his Fellowship in the Society of Actuaries in 2010, and is also an Enrolled Actuary with the IRS. Jon and wife Michelle recently moved to Bloomington and have a white German shepherd named Samantha that keeps them both young. His wife is an M.D. and is doing consulting work around the country.

jman142@hotmail.com

07, Brittany (Walter) Peterson resides in Garvin and is substitute teaching in the surrounding districts of Tracy, Slaton, and Westbrook-Walnut Grove.

Kishor.Devkota@noridian.com

08, Eric Eager recently received his Ph.D. in Mathematical Biology from the University of Nebraska in August 2012 and is now an Assistant Professor of Mathematics at the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse (which named’86 MSUM grad Becky LeDocq Chair of the Mathematics Department). Eric really enjoys the blend of teaching, research and service that is included in his job, as well as the city of La Crosse in general. He and wife Stephanie just welcomed their first child, Madeline, into the world Feb. 6.

eags8231@hotmail.com

08, Kishor Devkota resides in Moorhead, and is working as a Senior Statistical Analyst at Noridian Administrative Services, LLC in Fargo.

Kishor.Devkota@noridian.com
’11, Anthony Batesole received his commission in the United States Marine Corps after graduating Marine Officer Candidate School on March 31, 2012. He then attended the Basic School in Quantico, Va., from June to December. Anthony is residing in Pace, Fla., near the Naval Air Station in Pensacola awaiting flight school. He reports that with flight school being bottle-necked, he spends his free time at a local school tutoring high school students with math homework.
<tbatesole@gmail.com>

’11, Paula Holm got a job two months after graduating MSUM at Circle of Life Academy, Minnesota, teaching mathematics for grades 7 through 12. She notes that the students can be difficult at times, but knows she made the right decision pursuing this career. She is pursuing her Master of Arts in Mathematics Education for grades 5 through 12.
<stevenpaula@arvig.net>

’11, Andrea Korczak-Adrian substitute taught in the area schools and was able to figure out what schools she really loved. She is now a Mathematics Teacher-District Assessment Coordinator at Climax-Shelly School. She is also the advisor for the sophomores, advisor of the student council, and coach for the science Olympiad. Andrea resides in Buxton, N.D.
<andrea.j.adrian@gmail.com>

’11, Jeffrey Moe is working as a mathematics teacher at the Maddock Public School in Maddock, N.D. Jeffrey teaches 7-12 grade, covering a variety of courses from pre-algebra to algebra 2 including general mathematics, consumer mathematics and geometry. He also coaches football and basketball for the school. Jeffrey got married after graduating and his daughter is 8 months old. Jeffrey also states that MSUM is a great school and he enjoyed the teachers. “They took the time to prepare me for my career as well as preparing me for what to expect when I got my job. The mathematics professors as a whole gave me the tools to succeed at what I want to do for my career.”
<Jeffrey.Moe.2@sendit.nodak.edu>

’12, Brandi (Slosson) Franck lives in south Fargo and reports that less than two months after her graduation, she got a job teaching high school math at Shanley High School in Fargo. Brandi teaches geometry and pre-algebra; her employer is JP2 Catholic Schools.

’12, Zachary Morseth resides in Durham, N.C., and is a graduate student pursuing a Ph.D. in physical chemistry at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. Aside from teaching multiple undergraduate laboratories each semester he has been engaged in several research projects. Zachary’s research has primarily focused on using ultrafast laser spectroscopy to study excited state chemical dynamics in condensed phases with applications to solar energy. He has been enjoying the warmer weather but does miss the snow and faculty in the mathematics department.
<morsetza@mnstate.edu>

’12, Rachel Thysell is completing her first year, teaching 7th and 8th grade math at Ellicott Middle School, near Colorado Springs, Colo.
<thysell@gmail.com>
Retired Professor Shelda Warren was honored as a Distinguished Alumna. Shelda Warren grew up in Ada, Minn., and graduated from Borup High School. She earned degrees in mathematics and physical education at Moorhead State Teachers College (MSTC) in 1948 and taught at Ada and Waubon High Schools. In 1955, she was one of three members of the first class of MSTC students to earn a Master of Science degree in education. She later earned an educational specialist degree from Vanderbilt University.

Shelda joined MSTC’s Campus School in 1955 and was hired full time in the university’s mathematics department in 1968. After a 38-year teaching career, she retired in 1993.

She continues to volunteer with Moorhead Adult Education, area nursing homes and Churches United for the Homeless. She lives in Moorhead.