



NEWS

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2009 MSC Distinguished Alumni announced

Grand Junction – An influential author; a cancer researcher; an award-winning journalist; an internationally known producer, director, choreographer, and actor; and an acclaimed painter. What do they have in common? They are all Mesa State College alumni who will be recognized as the Mesa State College 2009 Distinguished Alumni

The Distinguished Alumni Award is the highest honor the MSC Alumni Association can bestow on an individual. The recipients are richly deserving of this tribute, carrying on a tradition that began in 1963. Recognizing these individuals not only brings attention to their high achievements, but also displays the quality of education provided by Mesa State College.

Special recognition will also be given to Distinguished Faculty Award winner, Kristine Reuss.

The awards banquet will be Friday, Oct. 2, at Two Rivers Convention Center with a reception at 5:30 pm and the dinner and awards presentation beginning at 6:30 pm. The banquet is sponsored by Bank of the West. Tickets \$50 per person and may be purchased by phone, 970.248.1525 or online at www.mesastate.edu/alum. Proceeds benefit the Alumni Association Scholarship Fund

The 2009 Distinguished Alumni are:

Marilyn Ferguson - Posthumous Award

Associate of Arts, 1957

Although her formal education essentially concluded at Mesa College, Ferguson eventually received numerous honorary doctorates and befriended some of the world's top theorists and academicians. Her large and diverse circle of friends, influences and admirers included the Nobel laureate chemist Ilya Prigogine, former U.S. Vice President Al Gore, physician and author Deepak Chopra, inventor Buckminster Fuller, author Arthur Koestler and commentator Arianna Huffington, among many others.

Ferguson began her writing career as a short fiction author and poet during her marriage to fellow Grand Junction native Don Renzelman. She began her academic writing career with *The Brain Revolution* in 1973. Two years later she launched *Brain/Mind Bulletin*, the well-regarded

small journal in which she interpreted scientific theory and research, particularly in neuroscience and psychology, in the context of human potential, spirituality and society at large.

Building on these insights, Ferguson achieved her greatest fame in 1980 with *The Aquarian Conspiracy*, in which she profiled an under-the-radar network that was effecting change in society. The book was widely hailed, and its impact was powerful and lasting. It eventually became a New York Times bestseller, and the title phrase entered the lexicon. The Times described the worldview of *The Aquarian Conspiracy* as “working its way increasingly into the nation’s cultural, religious, social, economic and political life,” while USA Today described the work as “the handbook of the New Age.” The book was ultimately translated into some sixteen foreign languages, and Ferguson lectured worldwide and gained an international following.

In 1987, Ferguson returned her primary focus to reporting on scientific research in *Brain-Mind Bulletin*. There she continued to explore the links between body and mind and new theoretical models in neuroscience, physics, psychology, education and health until the newsletter ceased publication in 1996. Her long-awaited final work, *Aquarius Now*, was published in 2005. Ferguson moved to Banning, California, where she died in October 2008. *The Aquarian Conspiracy* was reissued in 2009.

Michelle Ozbun, Ph.D

Associate of Science, 1985

Dr. Ozbun received her B.S. (Microbiology, Minor Chemistry) from Colorado State University in 1987. In 1988, she entered the Ph.D. program in Molecular Virology at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas studying the role of tumor suppressor p53 in early breast cancer. Ozbun won the 1992 University of Texas Medical Branch Cancer Center Award in Oncologic Research and went on to earn a Ph.D. from Baylor College of Medicine in 1994. Ozbun completed her training with a National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Cancer Institute-funded postdoctoral fellowship at Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine, where she began investigating the replication of human papillomaviruses (HPVs), the causative agents of cervical cancer and some other skin-related cancers.

In 1998, Ozbun joined the faculty as an assistant professor of Molecular Genetics and Microbiology at the University of New Mexico (UNM) School of Medicine where her main focus continues on researching HPV infections using skin culture models. Her research is funded through competitive grants from the NIH, the American Cancer Society, and the Komen for a Cure Foundation. In 2004, Ozbun was promoted to associate professor with tenure. Ozbun regularly attends and chairs sessions at international research conferences, and recently gave an invited Plenary Lecture at the 25th International Papillomavirus Conference in Malmö, Sweden. Ozbun enjoys and spends the majority of her time in training undergraduate researchers, graduate students, and postdoctoral scientists in laboratory research. She also is responsible for lecturing to UNM medical students on the topics of virus structure and classification, as well as infectious agents as causes of human cancers. Ozbun developed and teaches a graduate-level course in molecular virology, and lectures in other team-taught graduate courses at UNM.

More recently she founded and chairs a mentoring group for more junior women scientists. The group is known as UNM-WISDOM (women in science dedicated to optimize mentoring). Ozbun also spends time as a volunteer for the American Cancer Society, where she speaks frequently at fundraising events about her research program and acts as a lobbyist for cancer-related bills at the state and national legislatures.

Walter “Dusty” Saunders

Attended, 1950-51

After graduating from the University of Colorado in August 1953, with a B.A. in journalism, Saunders joined the Rocky Mountain News where he spent 54 years. Beginning as a copy boy he began his writing-reporting career on the police beat and then worked as a general assignment reporter. He also covered Denver’s City Hall where his work included an award-winning series of articles about the start of Denver’s Urban Renewal projects.

Saunders was promoted to assistant feature editor for the lifestyles and entertainment sections of the paper. He also created TV Dial, a Sunday magazine which featured television listings and features. In the early ‘70s, Saunders became the paper’s full-time television and radio columnist-critic.

In 1980, Saunders was one of the founders of the Television Critics Association, a national group made up of broadcasting writers from leading newspapers and magazines in the U.S. and Canada. He served as the organization’s third president. During his career as a broadcasting writer, Saunders interviewed and spent time with numerous personalities – Bob Hope, Mary Tyler Moore, Carol Burnett, Bob Newhart, Alan Alda and Dennis Franz to name a few. Always interested in covering the news side of television, he spent time with such notables as Charles Kuralt, Tom Brokaw, Charles Gibson, Ted Turner, Bob Costas, Katie Couric, Peter Jennings, Ed Bradley and Tim Russert.

As a long-time member and past-president of the Denver Press Club, Saunders has been primarily responsible for getting Turner, Brokaw, Costas, the late Bradley and the late Russert as speakers for the club’s Damon Runyon Award Dinner, the club’s major annual fund-raising event. Saunders, a member of the club’s Hall of Fame, also hosts their annual banquet.

Saunders also has hosted several Denver radio shows about the media through the years. The station list includes KOA and KHOW. Saunders has been honored as Journalist of the Year by University of Colorado and has received awards from the Colorado Press Association, Colorado Broadcasters Association and the Society of Professional Journalists. In 2005, he received an honorary Emmy Award for his contributions to the television industry.

Saunders retired from full-time duties at the Rocky Mountain News in 2007, but continued to contribute stories and columns until the paper folded in 2009. He currently writes a TV-radio sports column for The Denver Post.

Anthony “Tee” Scatuorchio, Jr.

Associate of Arts, 1972

Scatuorchio is the co-owner of Tee And Jam, Inc., a production company based in New York City. It has produced, conceived, directed, and choreographed high quality entertainment for trade shows, product launches, video, a Presidential Inauguration (Bush ’04), and commercials. Scatuorchio has worked for Fortune 500 companies providing creative solutions for product branding and sales meetings in cities throughout Asia, the Middle East, Europe and Australia, as well as throughout the United States and Canada. Scatuorchio’s work, along with his business partner Mike Levesque, has been honored with three gold medals at The New York Film Festival, Non-broadcast and a silver medal at the World Media Awards for the video

commercial, "The Future In Motion" for Panasonic that ran for two years in five languages. Additionally, they have provided creative for the launch of new television series for Nickelodeon, Fox TV, Lifetime Network, NBC, Disney, and Telemundo. Their commercial work has included spots for Denny's, Panasonic, Mercedes, and the US Postal Service.

Scatuorchio went on to the University of San Francisco to receive his bachelor's degree in theatre. While in San Francisco he was admitted to American Conservatory Theatres (ACT) acting conservatory. He was later accepted to the Neighborhood Playhouse in NYC where he graduated in 1976.

While there, he was encouraged to dance by Tony Award-winning choreographer, Peter Gennaro. Dancing became his passion that led to his start in the theater having danced for many well known choreographers on national tours. As a director and choreographer he worked on Broadway with Arthur Laurents on the revival of *Gypsy* starring Tyne Daly and *Nick & Nora* starring Barry Bostwick and Joanna Gleason. At Off Broadway's acclaimed Circle Rep, he collaborated with Craig Lucus to direct and choreograph the revival of *Three Postcards*, as well as directing other works.

While working his way to Broadway, Scatuorchio directed and choreographed over 20 full scale, popular musicals at North Carolina Theatre. For six years Tee also directed the live portion of the CBS special, Arthur Ashe Kids Day, which kicks off the US Open in New York City.

Scatuorchio will be unable to attend the banquet but a video of his acceptance will be shown. Bill Robinson will accept the award on Scatuorchio's behalf.

Daniel Sprick

Associate of Arts, 1973

Sprick was born in Little Rock, Arkansas and studied at the Ramon Froman School of Art, The National Academy of Design in New York City, and the University of Northern Colorado, where he received his B.A. in 1978. He is an accomplished artist of national standing. His art is in the permanent collections of museums that include the Denver Art Museum; the Hunter Museum of Art in Chattanooga, Tennessee; and the National Museum of Art at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

He was commissioned to paint the portrait of former Colorado Governor Roy Romer for the State Capital in Denver. His art can also be found in the Ninth District United States Court of Appeals building in Denver. Corporations are also collectors of his work. The Denver Post, U.S. West Communications and North American Equities are a few that have his paintings in their collections.

Solo exhibitions of his work have been held at numerous museums and galleries across the country. The Denver Art Museum, the Aspen Art Museum, the Arcadia Gallery in New York City, and the Louis Newman Gallery in Beverly Hills, California are included on that list. The list of group exhibitions he has been a part of is long and prestigious. The Taos Art Museum in Taos, New Mexico, the Colorado History Museum, the Denver Museum of Art, the Smithsonian Institution, the Minnesota Museum of Art and Gerald Peters Gallery in Santa Fe, New Mexico are some of the locations he has exhibited his art as a part of a group.

While his fame is national, he continues to participate in the art scene of western Colorado. He contributes his time and efforts to benefit the Johnson Art Gallery at Mesa State College and the Western Colorado Center for the Arts.

2009 Distinguished Faculty Award

Kristine Reuss, Ph.D, RN

Dr. Reuss currently serves as head of the Department of Health Sciences at Mesa State College, a position she has held since 2002. Her nursing preparation includes a BSN, MSN, and Ph.D. in Nursing from the University of Colorado. Since assuming leadership, she has implemented an online RN-BSN program, a new career ladder for nurses and EMTs in Western Colorado, and secured more than \$1.1 million in external funding for new health professions initiatives.

Prior to assuming the position as Department Head, she taught community health nursing, home health nursing, research, and alternative healing courses. Dr. Reuss's community and professional service include Mesa County Board of Health, Colorado Nurses Association Board of Directors, Governor's Rural Taskforce on Healthcare Reform in Colorado, Governor's Taskforce on Nurse Staffing and Patient Safety and St. Mary's Hospital Board of Directors. She is a member of the American Nurses Association and Sigma Theta Tau. Her research and scholarship focuses on the developmental process of undergraduate nursing education and therapeutic touch.

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