



SUMMER/FALL 2017

# WALDEN

ALUMNI MAGAZINE

Putting art  
appreciation at  
our fingertips

### Cuba to Cairo

Providing healthcare  
around the world

### Voices of Change

State Teachers of the Year  
mold the future of education

### Dream On

How Walden helps turn  
dreams into reality

# Dear Alumni,

**THE HEART OF OUR WALDEN COMMUNITY** is our global network of graduates—you, our alumni. And as we approach our 50th anniversary at Walden in just over 2 years, I am thinking more and more about the pivotal role you all play in advancing our mission of driving positive social change around the world.

With more than 113,000 graduates, Walden is currently investing in new initiatives and approaches to enrich your alumni experience and to reshape the way you engage with the university.

We're finding new ways of bringing Walden to you.

Beginning with our academic headquarters in Minnesota, we are launching our first local alumni chapters in 2017. Other states and locations, such as Maryland and Georgia, will shortly follow. Your stories—much like the ones in this magazine—and your ongoing participation will continue to serve as our compass. We are excited to see and share how you expand the Walden influence in your hometowns and states.

We are also recognizing the great work of our Walden Ambassador Network by creating a dedicated online platform to connect with one another, exchange advice and professional content, and advocate for the causes that matter most. If you are looking for the alumni leaders who work alongside us every day in the classrooms, at our academic and networking events, and in the local communities, you'll find them here.

But we also ask for a commitment and contribution from you (no, it's not financial). We ask that each of you remain vocal advocates for social change and for the work that we do collectively at Walden to advance social change. Nothing is truer to the Walden mission than the work you are doing as alumni. Be proud of your good work. And please become an Alumni Ambassador and help us establish an even stronger foundation for our next 50 years.

Sincerely,

Jonathan A. Kaplan  
President



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**ON THE COVER:** Dr. Carol Ikard brings big art to small spaces in Austin, Texas.

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Photo by Dennis Burnett



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BEYOND BORDERS

# Bringing Home the Gift of Good Health



**Dr. Jonas Nguh** seeks to improve maternal and child healthcare in Cameroon

By Kristin Hanson

**DR. JONAS NGUH '13, '11 WAS JUST A TEENAGER WHEN HE IMMIGRATED** to the United States from Cameroon, but he lived in Kob Village long enough to realize a troubling truth: Girls in his hometown had few options in adulthood aside from becoming mothers, but childbirth presented serious risks to their health. The World Health Organization estimates that about 830 women around the world die daily due to preventable

pregnancy- or childbirth-related complications—and 99% of those deaths occur in developing countries.

“I had siblings and other family members who didn’t have access to maternal healthcare or who had negative impacts from what we in the West know are easily preventable illnesses,” Nguh says. “I said, ‘One day, I am going to study and come back and address all of this.’”

One day actually turned into several, as the **PhD in Public Health** and **BSN** graduate repeatedly returned to his native country in a service capacity. But the biggest victory for the **Alumni Ambassador** and **2013 Outstanding Alumni Award** winner came in November 2016. That is when Nguh and several colleagues traveled to Kob Village to dedicate a maternal and infant health clinic. Nguh had saved \$1,000 a month for 3 years to bankroll the building’s construction and secured grants and donations of equipment and vaccines to fill it. But it was his education—especially his doctorate from Walden—that provided the foundation for the clinic and its programs.

“I started as a bedside nurse, but as I continued my studies, I realized that I could teach and I could set up a clinic,” Nguh says. “I could provide that health education that was missing in my village.”

But he knew persuading Kob Village’s citizens to buy into new concepts such as vaccination—considered taboo in local customs—wasn’t going to be simple.

Reflecting on what he’d learned in

a Walden health communications course, Nguh developed an alternative way to send his message: theater.

“I had a small team, and we’d go to churches and community organizations,” Nguh says. “We had little skits that had morals like, ‘If I had taken this medicine, my baby would have lived! Or, ‘If my baby had gotten this shot, he wouldn’t have died.’”

His approach bred excellent results. After the clinic opened in November, Nguh and his staff administered measles, mumps, and rubella vaccines to more than 200 children. Women from Kob Village and others nearby now come to the clinic twice a week to be seen by a nurse Nguh hired for the facility.

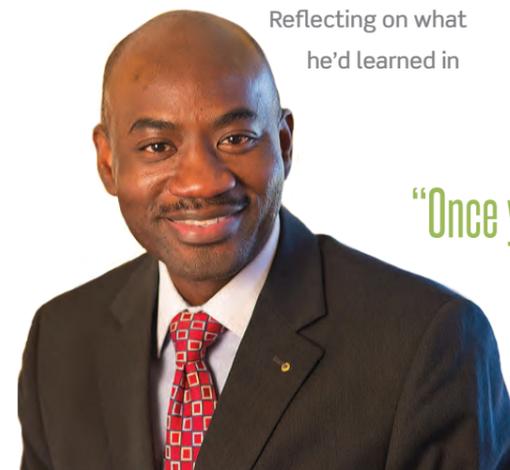
“Our goal is to expand the days we are open, and the bigger goal is to add other services—like cardiovascular and non-communicable disease care—when



we can get more funding,” he says.

Reflecting on all he’s achieved—the clinic’s construction, the vaccine program, and the buzz surrounding both—Nguh is understandably proud. But he emphasizes that it all started with the seed of an idea he honed as a Walden student.

“Walden taught me to think about the mission of everything I do—I want to reduce maternal and infant mortality—and develop my work from there,” he says. “Find your cause, and start small. Even if it’s just an hour a week. Once you get involved, areas of opportunity to create important social change will present themselves to you.”



“Once you get involved, areas of opportunity to create important social change will present themselves to you.”

LIFELONG LEARNERS

# Petri Dishes to Policy



every summer while pursuing a bachelor's in biological sciences from Rutgers University. From there, she would earn a master's in biology from Georgia State.

"I kept learning because I knew what I was interested in," Wright says. "But I wanted to see where I could apply it."

As a research assistant at Howard University, her work focused on the neurochemical effects of stimulant exposure on rodents. Then at a private institute, she conducted research on key agricultural diseases.

After spending years in a lab coat, Wright realized there was a disconnect between the public's understanding of discoveries generated during research in the laboratory and how that science is applied to everyday health issues.

"I saw a lot of great things done in the lab," she says. "I wanted to help others understand how that work relates to policy. The more you get into science, the more you see how it overlaps with healthcare policy."

So she returned to Walden, this time earning a **PhD in Public Health** with a specialization in epidemiology in 2013. During her studies, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) hired her, and she has since worked her way up through several policy-related positions.

"Walden was a great option for me," she says. "I wanted to continue working, but I wanted to continue learning, too."

Today, Wright is a public health analyst in the Bureau of Primary Health Care, one of five bureaus within the Health Resources and Services Administration, an agency of the HHS. Her responsibilities include monitoring federally qualified health centers to ensure compliance requirements.

"The more you get into science, the more you see how it overlaps with healthcare policy."

## How **Dr. Jewel Wright** jump-started her career in healthcare at science camp

By Kevin Thornton

**SHE WAS STARING AT A WORM AND A STARFISH** in the moment that defined **Dr. Jewel Wright's** affinity for learning and healing.

"I was 10 years old, attending a summer science camp," says the two-time Walden graduate. "One of the first things we had to do was dissect a worm and a starfish. I didn't know if I could cut into something.

The instructor said, 'Just try to make one cut,' and then left. By the time he returned, I'd cut that starfish into pieces."

For Wright, that first cut left a mark: an affirmation that she wanted to learn, to dissect things, to find out what makes them work—and use that knowledge to help others.

She hasn't stopped dissecting and examining science since.

Throughout the past decade, Wright has followed an intersecting educational and professional path that has touched both the practical and policy sides of healthcare. Her journey began in earnest when she worked in a molecular biology laboratory at the National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Matthew P. Spangler



True to her nature, Wright wanted to learn more. She enrolled at Walden for a **Master of Public Health**. After graduating in 2008, she got her first taste of policy work as an agriculture specialist with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. She liked it, but she still had a thirst for more.

She still thinks about the starfish and the worm as a measure of how far she's come in her desire to learn and have a positive impact in healthcare.

"I sometimes look back on the lab work and research I was involved with earlier in my career," she says. "It was interesting and exciting. But this is the next step. Working with healthcare policy is where a lot of positive public health change occurs. I want to continue to be a part of that."

BROADENING MY HORIZONS



“If they’re reading about the characters in shell holes, we’re going to have them stand in shell holes to grasp the emotional impact of what they’re reading.”

# Teaching Empathy

Historian **Dr. Bill Harris** uses emotional context to bring history to life



By Rebecca Kirkman

**IT’S A BLUSTERY DAY IN MARCH**, and a group of 60 high school students from southwestern Germany gathers on the now-grassy battlefield of Verdun, France. They’re studying *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and the ground beneath their feet remains pockmarked with shell holes and damaged trenches from when it was the stage for one of the longest and bloodiest battles of the First World War more than 100 years ago.

“If they’re reading about the characters in shell holes, we’re going to have them stand in

shell holes to grasp the emotional impact of what they’re reading,” says **Dr. Bill Harris ’16**. As the command historian at Ramstein Air Base in Germany, Harris was invited by local educators to help plan the trip.

Site visits such as these complement Harris’ work at the headquarters for the U.S. Air Forces Europe and Africa. With a team of historians, Harris creates a daily chronology of the command’s actions and oversees several hundred pieces of historic property, ranging from display aircraft to World War II flying jackets.

Harris’ nearly 42 years with the U.S. Air Force included 24 years on active duty, joining front-line troops across Europe and the Pacific to document field conditions, make photographs, and record oral histories. While stationed at Royal Air Force Lakenheath in Suffolk, England, the discovery of sixth-century bones sparked Harris’ interest in constructing meaning through artifacts. This inspired him to earn two master’s degrees, the first in education from National Louis University, followed by one in humanities from California State University, Dominguez Hills.

“I thought I was finished with my education,” Harris says. But in 2010, an assignment to Louisiana’s Barksdale Air Force Base included responsibility for three field museums, none of which had formal education programs. To develop programs that tied into the public school curriculum,

Harris needed a deeper understanding of how teachers approach history. So in August 2011, he began a 5-year journey at Walden to his **Doctor of Education (EdD)**.

Walden’s online program allowed Harris to take classes while stationed in Louisiana and Germany. Although at times he felt like “a fish out of water” among professional educators, the first course showed him a whole wealth of new knowledge that he could apply to his work.

Harris’ doctoral study on historical empathy shaped his approach to educational experiences, from student field trips to Air Force professional development workshops to base visits with military

families. “I wanted to figure out how to best use a site to teach,” he says. “There’s nothing more gratifying than to watch someone make a connection with the material you’re presenting when you’ve

allowed them to learn for themselves and you, as the teacher, are only the facilitator.”

With a doctorate in education, Harris sees his work from a new perspective. “Most people would be winding down their career after 40 years,” he says. “But now that

I’ve completed my EdD, I feel like I’m a 20-year-old kid that has embarked on a new journey. My eyes are opened to looking into challenges, and every day I see my work through a different lens.”



Harris during a recent deployment as a historian



MEET THE FACULTY

# Awakening to Multicultural Feminism

Dr. Nina Nabors,  
School of Psychology

By Kristin Hanson

**AS A TEENAGER, Dr. Nina Nabors** read a book that changed her life. *This Bridge Called My Back*, a classic anthology of multicultural feminism, gave words to the feelings Nabors had experienced as a young African-American woman growing up in the mid-20th century. The volume would provide the inspiration and foundation for her 20-year career as a

therapist and researcher. It would also set her on a path toward her career at Walden, which began in 2001. In 2016, she earned a Presidential Award for Faculty Excellence. Here, the faculty member and program director for academic operations and residency shares her unique lens on current political events and why Walden is the perfect place for her to advance her expertise.

**What is a multicultural feminist therapist?**

Multicultural feminist therapists believe many of the challenges our clients experience can be understood by both

the environment in which they live and their individual makeup. Feminist theory focuses on structural factors, societal expectations and stereotypes, and how the intersections of identity—one’s race, ethnicity, and gender, among others—are influenced by the experiences the person



Getty Images/Cynthia Eodorh

has. All those things influence who we are and how we behave. Feminist therapists are also very aware of the role of power in therapeutic relationships. We try to decrease the power differential between the therapist and client, believing that the client is the expert in their own life.

**What’s your take on the social movements that have followed the 2016 U.S. presidential election?**

It feels like more of the country is awake to the experiences that marginalized groups have been facing for decades—the Women’s March on Washington, for example. To see the intersection of all walks of life, ages, races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, religions—I thought, “This is the kind of movement we’ve been looking for.” It has been heartening. Throughout most of American history, people from marginalized groups, including people of color, immigrants, religious minorities, and the LGBTQ community, have lived at a disadvantage but were told repeatedly that their experiences were not valid. Reaction to the Black Lives Matter movement, Women’s March, and other protests post-election suggests that the country is now awake. People from privileged backgrounds have now witnessed for themselves the social injustices that permeate our society.



Getty Images/Emma McIntyre

**How are you counseling others during this time of societal change?**

I’ve been telling people to take their social media in small doses. It can be incredibly overwhelming—the things that are flung across social networks. I also encourage people to focus on self-care, whether that’s something like meditation, socializing, or journaling. Some people feel better when they focus not on themselves as individuals but on activism: marching, making phone calls, or making donations to organizations at risk. These actions can be helpful when you’re feeling powerless.

**Why has Walden been the right platform for your work?**

When I first heard about Walden, I didn’t know much about distance education. But when I got here and saw how diverse the student body was, it was a completely different experience from my previous faculty positions. Walden allows me to explore my interests around multicultural feminism more in depth. The students I’ve met, the dissertations I’ve mentored—it’s the perfect university for me.

“The students I’ve met, the dissertations I’ve mentored—it’s the perfect university for me.”



LIFELONG LEARNERS



Jessica Deeks

# Developing Expertise in Higher Ed

How one alumna shifted her career path and discovered her life purpose

By Kyra Gemberling

**DR. CAROL ANN SAMHABER HAS ALWAYS HAD A PASSION FOR PEOPLE**, but she spent more than a decade working in a general business capacity in information technology and research. Now a human resources professor and academic program coordinator at Algonquin College in Ottawa, Ontario, her office is filled with Walden University memorabilia. **Samhaber '15, '12** loves being surrounded by items that remind her of the institution that changed her life.

After a stint in the business world, Samhaber decided to pursue teaching in higher education to gain more personal fulfillment from her career. She started teaching part time at Algonquin in 2001, but she knew she wanted to be more involved.

To advance her career in education, Samhaber began researching graduate programs. When she learned about Walden from a colleague, she fell in love with the school's philosophy. The helpfulness of the enrollment advisors in answering her questions didn't hurt, either. She enrolled in the **MS in Higher Education** program in 2011 and graduated 18 months later.

"Getting my master's degree at Walden was by far, without comparison, the best academic experience I have ever had," says Samhaber, who earned a bachelor's degree at Carleton University and a certificate of business administration at the University of Ottawa. "At Walden, I was surrounded by excellence in every capacity. My advisors were attentive, and my faculty members were truly passionate about the course material."

After completing her master's degree, Samhaber wanted to continue her studies and re-enrolled for her **Doctor of Education (EdD)**. During the program, she researched professional development among college faculty and argued that professors should be teaching experts *and* subject matter experts, not one or the other.

"My doctorate was the most invigorating and challenging pursuit I've ever gone through, and it became so meaningful," she says. "I got to really dig into what interested me in my field—how professional development affects teaching—and it showed me my life's purpose. There was no question I would continue to pursue education."

Samhaber also learned how to better apply the principles of designing a rigorous academic course for students using evidence-based practices grounded in literature.

"My instructional strategy has become more elegant because I use my research to bring new ideas into the classroom," she says. "My EdD made me see how to bring technology into my classes and how to create formative assessments. I feel like I have a well-designed tool kit now."

Samhaber graduated with her doctorate in 2015, but learning is still at the core of everything she does.

"Being a student at Walden became such a life force for me, so when I was done, I felt a sense of emptiness," she says. "It unquestionably changed who I am as a person."

It changed her so much that she instills Walden's mission of positive social change in all her lessons so her students will be inspired to be productive community members. As the human resources management program coordinator, she also acts as a liaison for professional associations, industry stakeholders, and advisory committees.

"By being the best I can be, I will give students the knowledge and skills they need to start a career and be more engaged with the community," Samhaber says. "I want my students to become engines for social change, as I hope I have been."



"I want my students to become engines for social change, as I hope I have been."

APPLYING MY RESEARCH

# Trading the Battlefield for the Classroom

**Dr. Velma Layne** helps veterans overcome barriers to higher education

By Susan Walker

**DR. VELMA LAYNE MEETS A LOT OF VETERANS** in his job at the Huntington, West Virginia, Veterans Administration (VA) Medical Center. From time to time, word gets around that he conducts research in his spare time about veterans pursuing higher education. “One veteran recently told me he had started college three times but just couldn’t seem to finish his degree,” says Layne, a 2016 **Doctor of Education (EdD)** graduate. “He had heard that I help veterans get the support they need to finish school and

was hoping I could help him, too.”

Providing that support to veterans is a passion for Layne. “Too many veterans start school and then drop out as a result of the effects of war: post-traumatic stress disorder, brain injuries, loss of limbs, or trouble getting their GI Bill benefits,” he says. “But getting a college degree is one of the keys to being able to get a job that allows them to support their families and build a career.”



As the VA’s minority veterans programs coordinator, the former U.S. Navy fighter jet mechanic saw how veterans struggled to get the education they needed. But in that role, there was only so much he could do to help.

Layne decided to pursue his EdD so he could build a support system that bridged the gap in services. During his doctoral literature review, Layne discovered a deep disconnect between veterans’ needs and the expectations and assumptions of college administrators and faculty.

“Most people in academia haven’t seen the world from a veteran’s perspective,” Layne says. “One veteran I worked with walked out of a history class because a war image the professor showed triggered a flashback. He could never bring himself to go back to class, so he failed.

“Those sensitivities aren’t usually on a professor’s radar,” Layne says. “One professor

I interviewed said veterans should leave the war behind and focus on being traditional students. That shows exactly how wide the divide between the professor’s expectation and the veteran’s reality is.”

Inspired by Walden’s mission of positive social change, Layne developed a program that brings educators and veterans face to face to discuss the issues surrounding the transition from soldier to student.

Veterans share the challenges of entering the role of student, and educators learn about the support veterans need to succeed in the classroom.

Layne also works one-on-one with veterans to help them access the services they need, whether that’s tutoring, referrals to mental healthcare providers, or assistance applying for GI Bill benefits.

He gets the word out about the program, which he works on entirely on his own time, through his website, SupportingMilitaryVeterans.com. His job at the VA also brings him in contact with veterans of all ages who may be seeking help.

“My Walden education gave me the scholarly tools, confidence, and credibility to make a difference in the lives of the men and women who serve our country,” Layne says. “Their sincere thanks is all the recognition I need.”



Rick Lee

BEYOND THE DEGREE



# Big Art in Small Spaces

**Dr. Carol Ikard** searches for ways to put art appreciation at our fingertips

By Kevin Thornton

**WHILE DISCUSSING HER DOCTORAL RESEARCH** on contemporary methods to make art accessible, **Dr. Carol Ikard '16** excuses herself. Her granddaughter's movie is over, and she needs to put another one in the DVD player.

"That's what I'm talking about," she says. "People need art brought to them."

Ikard's passion for sharing the arts is as big as her beloved state of Texas, but she's also a realist. She knows that to reach people, we must find ways to literally put art in their hands.

In 2007, Ikard was designing online training curricula for companies when she read about a Minnesota fiber arts museum. She liked the idea of promoting and educating

about an art form based on natural fibers and decided she wanted to work for the Texas version of the museum. When she realized there wasn't one, she started it herself.

The Texas Museum of Fiber Arts (TMFA) opened in 2009 and reflects Ikard's belief in the value of sharing art. Instead of a traditional brick-and-mortar location, the TMFA has no walls. Like taking a movie to her granddaughter, Ikard and the TMFA take educational activities and art exhibits to where people work and live.

"You have to get people's attention," Ikard says. "Unless art becomes part of the mobile culture like music, movies, and online games, traditional museums may become mortuaries."

When the TMFA opened, it began exhibiting work by Texas artists who use natural fibers from wool and cotton and synthetic fibers from oil. Exhibits were placed in high-traffic areas, from the state capitol to the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center.

They were successful on several levels: When people saw the quilts, tapestries, weavings, beaded art, and even a car artfully covered in yarn, they became

aware of fiber arts, and the art form advanced. That success helped take Ikard's vision to a more focused level.



"I noticed in a downtown office lobby exhibit that people walked through the exhibit but weren't engaging," she says. "A lot of them were

looking at their phones."

How do you bring art to a world driven by smartphones and technology?

Ikard enrolled at Walden for her **Doctor of Education**. Her dissertation, *Aesthetic Experience, Flow, and Smart Technology: Viewing Art in a Virtual Environment*, provides an in-depth look into how to



extend the visual arts through technology. Her research showed art viewed on mobile technologies can produce an aesthetic experience. In other words, if smartphone video games and dating sites can stimulate you to a response, so can art.

Ikard has a broad writing background, from co-authoring the book *Touching Fiber Arts* to completing screenplays and children's books. As such, she's not prepared to develop the next smartphone art app, but she will continue to think, research, and write about it.

"Art is the answer to everything," she says. "We begin to understand each other when we share art. We need to keep working to find ways to bring art to people who look down at their cellphones. Technology is the new vanguard of our culture. The future is literally in our hands."

**"We begin to understand each other when we share art."**



MY MISSION POSSIBLE

# From Cuba to Cairo

Cuban refugee **Alvin Mena Cantero** provides healthcare for the underserved around the world

By Kyra Gemberling



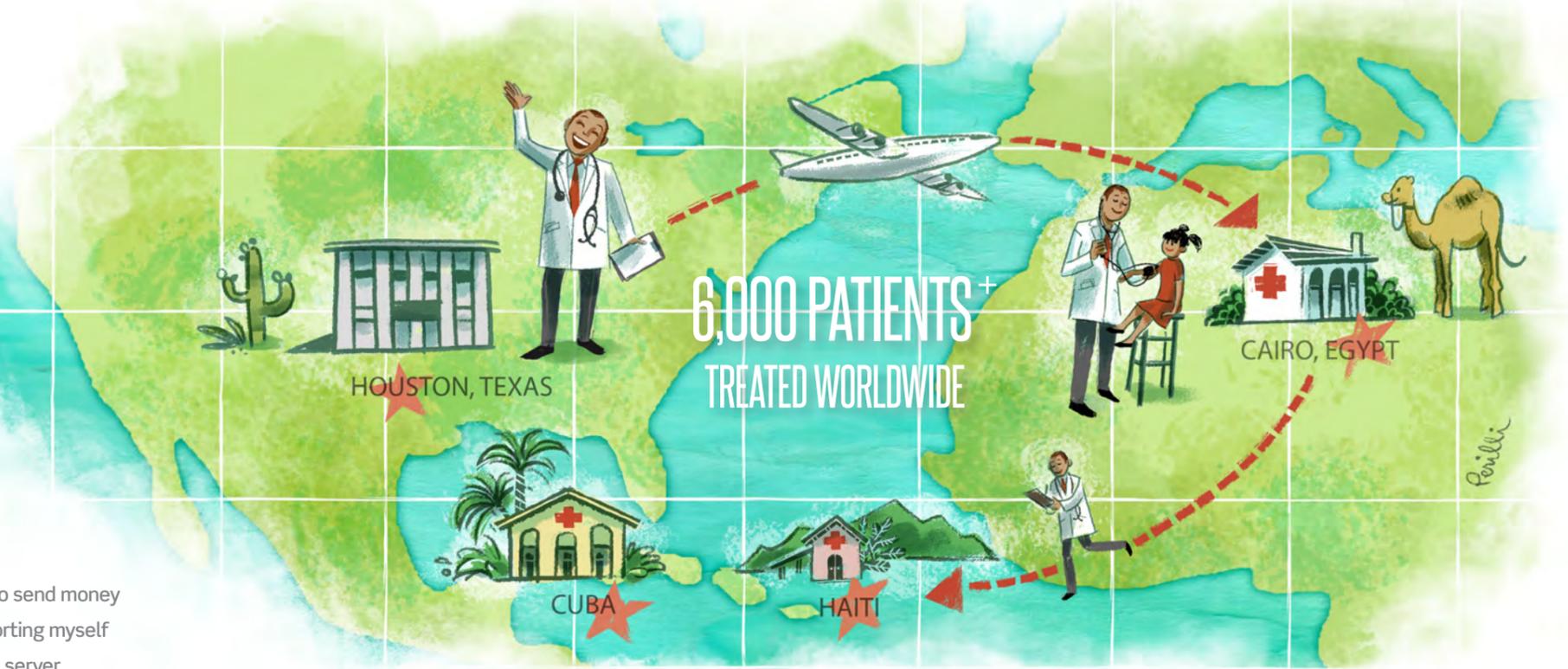
**IN HIS COMMUNITY IN HOUSTON AND AROUND THE WORLD**, nurse practitioner **Alvin Mena Cantero '15** has provided critical healthcare to more than 6,000 low-income patients and has held 20 health and wellness clinics. But Cantero's story begins in his native Cuba, where the seeds for his mission to heal those in need started to grow.

In 2009, Cantero was working as a licensed physician in Cuba when his application for the Cuban Medical Professional Parole Program was accepted, granting him refuge in the U.S. Adapting to a new language and culture were hard, but Cantero had no idea how difficult it would be to revalidate his status as a physician in the States.

"My family depended on me to send money back to Cuba, but I was supporting myself with three part-time jobs as a server, bartender, and medical assistant," he says. "After being denied entry to three physician assistant programs, I felt weak and defeated."

So Cantero enrolled in the nursing program at Sacred Heart University, which he completed in 2012. While working as a nurse for Memorial Hermann and Allergy of Texas in Houston, Cantero had his first experience treating patients who were living in poverty. He wanted to do more to help—and that's when he discovered he could advance his career at Walden.

Cantero earned his **Master of Science in Nursing** in 2015. Just three months later, he enrolled in the **Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)** program so he could provide an even higher level of care to patients in need. In June 2016, Cantero opened Alvin Clinic



*"I'm determined to spread Walden's values around the world by providing health services to vulnerable populations."*

Familiar, which he has been running while working on his doctorate. The urgent care and walk-in clinic provides cost-effective healthcare for patients in Houston's Hispanic and African-American communities.

"Our impact on the community has grown by distributing information on vaccinations, risk factor management, and the importance of early detection of chronic diseases," Cantero says. "We publish in English and Spanish through *La Nota Houston*, letting families know the importance of proper primary healthcare and prevention."

Through traveling clinics, Cantero is expanding his clinic's impact worldwide, from providing home health visits in rural Texas towns affected by flooding to sponsoring a community clinic in Cairo, and meeting with local health providers to educate them on risk factor management for the poorest populations. In October 2017, Cantero will travel to Haiti to provide wellness checks to populations affected by the 2010 earthquake.

As a preceptor at his clinic, Cantero is also serving the next generation of nurses from Walden, South University, and Chamberlain College of Nursing. After completing his DNP, Cantero intends to re-enroll with Walden. He believes a **PhD in Management**

with a specialization in Leadership and Organizational Change will advance his skills in running his clinic and making larger strides toward his mission.

"Walden's social change mission influenced me to adopt a global vision and encourage my students to take their vision, skills, and knowledge to parts of the world where people need us," he says. "I'm determined to spread Walden's values around the world by providing health services to vulnerable populations. Walden not only gave me an opportunity to become the healthcare professional I always wanted to be but also a leader capable of engaging students and organizations to create global impact in healthcare."



WHY I REFER

# Advancing the Success of Others



Matthew P. Spangler

By Kyra Gemberling

**WHEN YOU'VE HAD A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE**, it's hard not to share it with others and want the same for them. This is exactly why **Dr. Lonnie Brinson '13**—a **PhD in Public Policy and Administration** graduate and a 2016 **Outstanding Alumni Award nominee** and **Scholars of Change honorable mention**—referred three colleagues to Walden's graduate programs. He knew the university would be a perfect fit.

**HOW DID YOUR WALDEN DEGREE ADVANCE YOUR CAREER KNOWLEDGE?**

I'm a regional security inspector for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), where I've worked for 15 years. About 8 years into my career with TSA, I decided to pursue my doctorate. My PhD helped me gain a more thorough understanding of how

policies are developed and applied. I deal with a lot of federal regulations in the compliance division, so now I'm better equipped to think of new ideas for implementing procedures that will improve the process of safe travel for the public.

**WHOM DID YOU REFER AND WHY?**

The first person I referred was an independent contractor who works in IT at TSA named Melissa. One day, I called the help desk with a question and ended up in conversation with her about her career aspirations. She had just completed her undergraduate degree and was trying to figure out where to go next. I told her about my great experience with Walden, and after doing her own research, she ended up enrolling in a master's program.

The next person was my co-worker **Sean Harrell**, who works on the same floor as me. He was undecided about whether to pursue his doctorate, so I connected him to my enrollment advisor, Scott Adams, to learn more about Walden. He enrolled in the **Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)** program and is now working on his dissertation.

Then, I referred my co-worker **Jasmine Hardy**. She was working on a DBA at University of Phoenix and, for several reasons, was unhappy with her experience. I told her about Walden and connected her to Scott to see what her transfer options were. The next time I spoke with Jasmine, she told me she was transferring to Walden to finish her DBA. She is now at the tail end of her coursework and will start working on her dissertation soon.

**WHAT CHANGES HAVE YOU SEEN IN THE LIVES OF THOSE YOU'VE REFERRED?**

Since transferring to Walden, Jasmine has received a promotion and is now one of three supervisors I report to daily. Sean constantly comes to me with questions and has me review his Walden coursework,

so it's really strengthened our working relationship. It's clear that they're both very motivated and benefiting from their Walden education.

**HOW DID YOU KNOW WALDEN WOULD BE A GREAT FIT FOR THEM?**

Walden's program was very convenient for me as a TSA employee. I travel a lot for work, and Walden's online format allowed me to work while away from home. I felt empowered to do well because the courses were perfectly geared toward my line of work. Based on those things, I knew Walden would be a good fit for other TSA employees because it advances our knowledge of the field and improves our performance. I recommend Walden to anyone. It doesn't matter if you're pursuing a bachelor's, master's, or PhD. Walden has what you need and will help you succeed.

“I knew Walden would be a good fit for other TSA employees because it advances our knowledge of the field and improves our performance.”



INSIGHTS



“As an educator and administrator, I know just studying and reading about my discipline isn’t enough.”

Steve Puppe

# The Transition from Student to Leader

**Dr. Laurie Shanderson** shows how to pave the way for future innovators

**DR. LAURIE SHANDERSON '04 ENJOYS A CHALLENGE.** After building a successful career in the healthcare field, she took the knowledge she gained and used it as the foundation to move into education. Shanderson served as an adjunct professor, then assistant dean and associate dean of the School of Health Sciences at Stockton University. Now the **PhD in Health Services** graduate is tackling her most exciting challenge yet as the founding dean of Northcentral University’s new School of Health Sciences. She shares her advice on making the transition from student to leader to innovator in your field.

**1. CONNECT WITH A GREAT MENTOR.** Find a mentor who not only supports and guides your work but who also challenges you to go beyond the requirements of your degree and build your credentials and contacts within the profession. My mentor at Walden, Dr. Robert Hoye, helped me get my research

published in a peer-reviewed journal during my first semester as a doctoral student. That helped build the credentials and the confidence I needed to move into higher education and administration.

**2. HANDS-ON KNOWLEDGE OF YOUR FIELD IS KEY.** As an educator and administrator, I know just studying and reading about my discipline isn’t enough. You can’t teach what you don’t know. It’s important to have experience in the field as a foundation for your teaching. Look for opportunities to gain hands-on experience, whether that’s through your job, authoring or co-authoring research, presenting at conferences, volunteering in your field or with professional organizations, or being a mentor.

**3. RELATIONSHIPS MATTER.** Build networks by participating in professional organizations in your field and

attending meetings with groups pursuing the same research areas you’re interested in. It’s also helpful to participate in research with colleagues from other institutions, which, in turn, helps you connect with more people in your field. In addition, stay in touch with your fellow alumni and faculty members.

**4. KNOW WHAT YOU NEED TO MASTER TO REACH THE NEXT LEVEL.** When I take on a new position, I always make sure I know what skills I need to master to not only succeed in this position but also to be prepared to move to the next level. Build relationships with people in your field, both at your alma mater and in the profession, who can help you understand what’s needed to move forward in your field and who can provide opportunities for you to gain those skills.

— As told to Susan Walker

# Inspire Others



Join our worldwide network of more than 900 ambassadors.

Alumni Ambassadors can now interact 24/7 via the new social sharing platform, Walden Ambassadors Network. Are you ready to step up as a leader in the Walden alumni community to increase outreach and amplify Walden's mission of social change?

**BECOME AN ALUMNI AMBASSADOR TODAY.**

**AS AN ALUMNI AMBASSADOR, YOU CAN:**

- Share your Walden experience in publications, videos, or media outlets;
- Help current students gain experience in your field or industry;
- Be recognized for your professional achievements; and,
- Get invitations to special university events in your area;
- Partner locally and online for research, speaker, and professional opportunities.

Sign up to become a Walden Alumni Ambassador at [myWaldenAlumni.com/ambassadors](http://myWaldenAlumni.com/ambassadors).

**HOW IT PAID OFF**

## From Administrative Assistant to Elected Official

**NAME:** Jennifer McBride '12

**DEGREE:** BS in Business Administration

**TITLE BEFORE MY DEGREE:** Administrative Assistant to the Zoning Administrator, LaGrange County (Indiana) Plan Commission

**TITLE AFTER MY DEGREE:** LaGrange County Recorder

**THE WAKE-UP CALL:** I'd heard about the possible elimination of our department. I didn't want to be without a job, so I knew I needed to get my degree. While I worked on my degree, I was approached to join the Recorder's Office to take the position of a retiring deputy recorder. As the register of deeds, we handle all land transactions such as mortgages, when people sell or split property, and more. Realtors, surveyors, mortgage and title companies can't do their job without us. In 2012, I ran for county recorder and

won. Coincidentally, that was also the year I graduated from Walden.

**A FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS:** The human resource classes I took at Walden have helped me with payroll and privacy issues. I also took as many political science classes as I could because they interested me.

They've become really useful because I have a much better understanding of how government works.

**A MARRIAGE OF HISTORY AND BUSINESS:** I'm very interested in history and genealogy. The Recorder's Office is the oldest elected office in Indiana. We have handwritten records from when LaGrange County was founded in 1832, so a lot of people who do genealogy research come to us. On top of the land records, we also keep the county's military



Grace Pulver

"If there's any way I can use my knowledge or experience to help and protect the citizens of LaGrange, I will."

records. We also offer alerts and programs for people to help them identify and prevent property fraud. We have a lot of history here. This is a field I love.

**GIVING BACK TO THE VOTERS:** When you're an elected official, the community chooses you. Thanks to my Walden education, the community had confidence I could do my job well. Throughout my year of

campaigning, I made sure to appeal to the groups within our community I knew would be voting and spent a lot of time working on my speeches to make sure I addressed their specific concerns. They put their faith in me, so if there's any way I can use my knowledge or experience to help and protect the citizens of LaGrange, I will.

— Kristin Hanson

■ Tell us how your degree paid off at [myWaldenAlumni.com/shareyourstory](http://myWaldenAlumni.com/shareyourstory).



# Voices *of* Change

Shaping Educational Policy  
One Voice at a Time

How two state Teacher of the Year award winners are using their Walden degrees to mold the future of education

By Susan Walker

All illustrations: Roy Scott

**A** LOT IS CHANGING IN GOVERNMENT as the new federal administration outlines its policies and priorities for the next 4 years, particularly in education policy. Significant changes in the approach to how public schools are funded, evaluated, and run are on the horizon. Many of those projected changes have educators, parents, and students concerned about the ramifications these new policies will have.

# Speaking Truth to Power

When **Dr. Derek Olson '15** was named **Minnesota Teacher of the Year in 2008**, he realized he had been given a unique opportunity. He would soon be able to make a difference not only for the sixth-graders in the Stillwater Area School District where he's taught for 17 years but also for students across the state and the country.

"At the beginning of my teaching career, my approach was to close my classroom door and teach, putting 100% of my focus and effort on my students," Olson says. "My goal was to make a difference in the world one child at a time through teaching. But being Teacher of the Year thrusts you onto a different stage and gives you the chance to speak truth to power."

Since 2008, Olson has testified on numerous occasions at the Minnesota Senate and House on a range of issues, including teacher evaluation, the subject of his dissertation.

"I have had the opportunity to advocate with policymakers and give them a glimpse into the trenches where their policies play out," he says. "They need teachers at the table to ensure that the policies they create will work in the real world of our schools and have the desired effects. They need to hear our voices."

At one hearing on a plan to institute a new teacher evaluation tool he had researched for his dissertation, Olson knew the way the policymakers planned to implement it was not the way it was intended to be used. The Minnesota Teacher Development and Evaluation Plan (TDEP) is based on the Framework for Teaching, an instrument created by internationally recognized teacher effectiveness expert Charlotte Danielson that is used around the world.

Danielson and the creators of the Minnesota TDEP intended for their tools to help teachers become better teachers. The plan provides a common language for educators and the administrators and instructional coaches who evaluate and work with them to identify specific areas where a teacher's skills are weaker. Those areas can then be targeted and improved through professional development and with the support of trainers, mentors, or administrators. The policymakers, however, planned to use the tool to make high-stakes decisions about hiring and firing teachers.



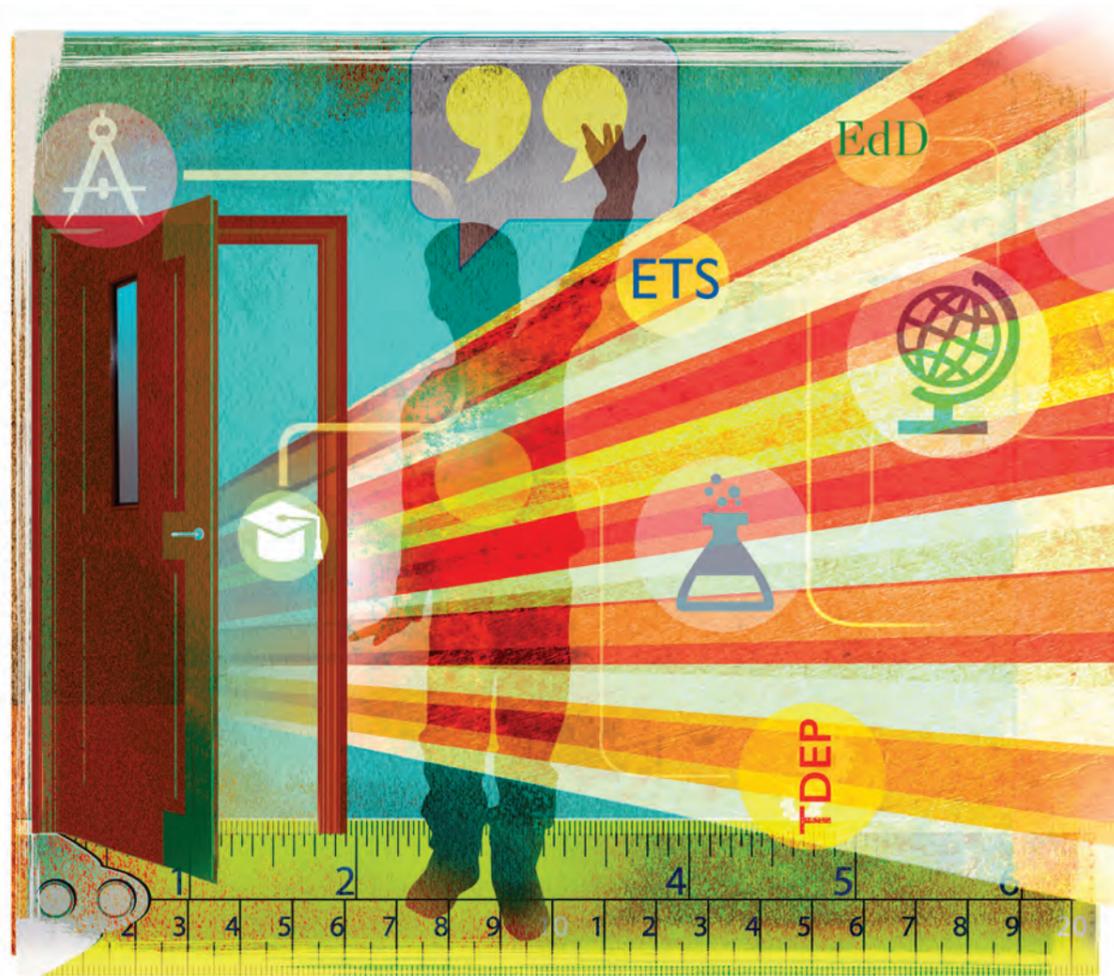
During his doctoral research, Olson had been in contact with Danielson, so when the opportunity to testify came up, he called her to explain how the state intended to use the instrument. She was not comfortable with this use of the tool and affirmed that was not why she created it.

"The tool simply doesn't have the reliability or validity to compare the results of one teacher to another without a significant amount of training for the policymakers, administrators, and teachers," Olson says. "That training—and the funding for it—wasn't being considered by policymakers."

When Olson testified, he shared both Danielson's input and his perspective based on his research. The flawed bill did not pass.

In addition to lobbying and testifying to state legislators, Olson continues to contribute to the body of research on effective teacher evaluation and development, which, in turn, influences policy.

"Policymakers need teachers at the table to ensure that the policies they create will work in the real world of our schools." —Derek Olson



He co-authored a study on the subject, “From Good to Great: Exemplary Teachers Share Perspectives on Increasing Teacher Effectiveness Across the Career Continuum.” One of the key findings of the study was that not only do programs such as mentoring and instructional coaching help novice teachers become better, but they also help the experienced teachers providing the mentoring or coaching improve their practice. The study, which was named one of *Education Week’s* top 10 educational research studies of 2014, resulted in policy recommendations to support funding for mentoring and coaching programs across the country.

Olson is also a co-author of the larger follow-up study, “Great to Influential,” which focuses on the supports and barriers teachers encounter as they progress in their careers from great classroom teachers to influential teacher leaders. He was recently asked by the American Institutes for Research to co-author a new study with Educational Testing Service (ETS), the nonprofit organization that develops and administers educational tests, including Praxis, the industry standard for teacher evaluation.

One of the things that makes Olson such an effective advocate is his EdD.

“It opens doors and adds credibility,” he says. “When I’m in front of policymakers, I can speak with real authority and confidently state, ‘This is what the current research says.’ I have evidence-based support for what I’m saying and am able to keep research in the forefront of how policy decisions are being made at the state level. That will make a big difference in the lives of the students in my state.”

# Helping Educators Find Their Voices



There are a lot of places you might find **Dr. Maryann Woods-Murphy ’16**. She could be teaching gifted and talented students how to become 21st-century thinkers and doers at five public elementary schools in Nutley, New Jersey. Maybe she’s sitting down with former U.S. Secretary of Education John King and Sens. Cory Booker and Bob Menendez to discuss the Every Student Succeeds Act. Perhaps she’s chairing a session on education innovations as one of the teachers selected to sit on the National Education Association Foundation (NEAF) board of directors. Or she could be giving a keynote speech to achievement coaches for the New Jersey Department of Education.

“We need teachers in every decision-making situation that impacts how we educate students, what resources we have access to, and how we measure our students’

“Successful educational policy and reform cannot emerge from corporate boardrooms or politicians’ offices. It must come directly from those who serve our children, our educational experts—the teachers.” – Maryann Woods-Murphy

growth,” says Woods-Murphy, the **2010 New Jersey Teacher of the Year**. “Teachers know the most about students and how to successfully run schools. It’s their knowledge that should be the driving force to lift up students and create energy in the classroom. But that doesn’t happen as often as it should.”

Woods-Murphy takes every opportunity to make sure that state and national policymakers do get the benefit of teachers’ perspectives and experiences. She also works to ensure her fellow teachers get opportunities to take on leadership roles,

such as mentoring colleagues, designing curriculum, or leading professional or strategic committees.

In addition to her work on the NEAF board, Woods-Murphy was also a U.S. Department of Education Teaching Ambassador Fellow, in Washington, D.C., where she honed her policy advocacy skills and traveled around the country gathering input on key educational issues from other teachers and sharing those insights with policymakers. An additional fellowship at America Achieves from 2011 to 2015 led her to expand her extensive teacher leader network.

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SHARE HOW YOU **FOLLOWED YOUR WHY**  
[myWaldenAlumni.com/shareyourstory](http://myWaldenAlumni.com/shareyourstory)

## VOICES OF CHANGE

“When I was a Washington Teaching Ambassador Fellow from 2011 to 2012, we traveled all over the country talking to groups of teachers about what they cared about most,” she says. “They raised a wide range of issues, such as having the chance to use their skills to solve problems their schools faced, making sure policymakers were aware of their underserved students’ needs and the solutions that could help them, and having the confidence to do what they believed would benefit their students most.”

“In every group, one of the participants cried,” Woods-Murphy recalls. “When I asked why, they answered that nobody had ever asked for their opinion or input on their profession before. They were overjoyed to finally have their voices heard.”

Woods-Murphy was also involved with the groundbreaking RESPECT Project, which became Teach to Lead, a joint initiative of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and the U.S. Department of Education. Now supported by 146 key organizations, Teach to Lead brings together educators in regional teacher leadership summits and local teacher leadership programs. Woods-Murphy also gives presentations throughout New Jersey about teacher leadership, the subject of her dissertation, and leads workshops and webinars on the topic. She has even shared her insights on local and national television.



“Under the past federal administration, there was a shift in policy,” she says. “Policymakers started to recognize and harness the power of teachers’ voices and expertise. With a new administration in place, we need to work hard to make sure that our voices continue to be heard and valued.”

She believes that earning her EdD has put credibility behind her ideas. “We’re frequently influenced by trends and buzzwords in education,” Woods-Murphy says. “But now, with a researcher’s mindset and skills, I look beneath the buzzwords at all sides of the story to form my own opinion and advocate

for teachers to have the opportunities and support needed to become leaders.

“After more than 30 years in public education, I have seen too many initiatives fall flat because implementation was top-down,” she says. “Teachers who work side by side with their students every single day need to finally be treated as professionals who are ready, willing, and able to use their power to help students achieve. Successful educational policy and reform cannot emerge from corporate boardrooms or politicians’ offices. It must come directly from those who serve our children, our educational experts—the teachers.”

# Speak Up

## Your voice has the power to inspire change

Derek Olson and Maryann Woods-Murphy agree that one of the most powerful resources for change is grassroots advocacy. Whether you're working to effect change in education policy, areas of social justice, or any other issue that has an impact on you and your community, making your voice heard by local, state, and national policymakers can make a real difference. "There's always a way to get involved," Olson says. "You just have to look for it."

Olson and Woods-Murphy share their suggestions from the education policy front lines. You can adapt these suggestions to help you become an effective advocate on the issues that matter to you.

**LEARN ABOUT THE ISSUE.** Talk with other teachers, administrators, parents, and students in your local schools, and find out what challenges they face. Engage in productive conversations to learn how these issues are affecting teaching and learning, and find out what you can do to help. That may mean speaking at town hall or PTA meetings, testifying to policymakers, or helping create programs to address the root causes.

**BE A RESEARCHER.** The more teachers who do research, the more opportunities there will be to add the teacher perspective to educational research, which often becomes the foundation for legislation. "Rigor is extremely important in both research and public discourse," Woods-

Murphy says. "What we say must be embedded in fact to develop best practices and move them forward."

**SPEAK THE POLICYMAKERS' LANGUAGE.** Policymakers don't want to just hear you complain about what's wrong in your school system; they want to hear the problem logically described with a succinct, effective solution offered.

**BE FEARLESS.** For some people, speaking out and being an advocate feels a bit scary. You worry what others will think: Will your family disagree with you? Will your co-workers think you're out of line? But if you're sincere and admit you don't have all the answers but care very much and want to make a

difference, you may be surprised by the opportunities and encouragement that come your way. If you need to start small, you can expand your reach by using your social media presence to advocate for the issues you're passionate about and see who else agrees with you and might want to help.

**ENGAGE WITH YOUR NETWORKS.** Meet with other stakeholders who are interested in the issue to talk about next steps and potential solutions. That could be talking with two or three other teachers or bringing the topic to the attention of the school administration, local school board, or a professional association or national advocacy organization.

**SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING.** Don't keep your thoughts and ideas to yourself. Write a one-page document that sums up your best thinking on the topic so you're ready to succinctly and persuasively share your thoughts when the opportunity arises. Your thoughts should be expressed in accessible, non-emotional language and supported with research whenever possible.

**BUT DON'T WAIT FOR A BIG AUDIENCE.** Look for that opportunity to speak up, whether it's at a community meeting, your place of worship, or a staff meeting or in a school or community newsletter. There are often more opportunities to share your point of view, advocate, and start building solutions at the local level. Just because you're not testifying in front of Congress doesn't mean you aren't making a difference.

## HONOR ROLL

### Celebrating Walden's impressive roster of State Teacher of the Year award winners

Derek Olson and Maryann Woods-Murphy are in great company among Walden's 45 graduates who have received State Teacher of the Year honors. We applaud them for their continued dedication to the future of our schools.

#### Class of 2017

Karen Toavs - 2011 North Dakota

#### Class of 2016

Megan Allen - 2010 Florida  
Luajean Bryan - 2009 Tennessee  
Stacey Donaldson - 2009 Mississippi  
Diana Fesmire - 2011 New Mexico  
Paul Gray - 2008 Arkansas  
Louise Lindskov - 2014 South Dakota  
Elizabeth Miner - 2014 Colorado  
Karen Morman - 2012 Texas  
Jennifer "Buffy" Murphy - 2007 South Carolina  
Beth Oswald - 2008 Wisconsin  
Melanie Park - 2012 Indiana  
Carol Scholz - 2008 Idaho  
Maryann Woods-Murphy - 2010 New Jersey

#### Class of 2015

Holly Boffy - 2011 Louisiana  
Allyson Chick - 2013 Tennessee  
Cara Heitz - 2012 Alaska  
Eric Langhorst - 2008 Missouri  
Nanette Lehman - 2013 Oregon\*  
Derek Olson - 2008 Minnesota  
Shannon Shanning - 2013 Maine  
Ryan Vernosh - 2011 Minnesota  
Barbara Walton-Faria - 2009 Rhode Island

#### Class of 2014

Charity Campbell - 2012 Iowa  
Byron Ernest - 2010 Indiana  
Pamela Harman - 2008 Alabama  
Andrew Mogle - 2008 Iowa  
Katy Smith - 2011 Minnesota

#### Class of 2013

Alvin Davis - 2011 Florida  
Chandra Emerson - 2008 Kentucky  
Murali Gopalan - 2009 American Samoa  
Laurie Graves - 2011 Wyoming  
Eric Kincaid - 2008 West Virginia  
Alice King - 2009 Wyoming  
Daniel Leija - 2011 Texas  
Kelly Nalley - 2011 South Carolina  
Lori Neurohr - 2009 Wisconsin  
Mary Schlieder - 2008 Nebraska  
Ann Marie Taylor - 2008 South Carolina  
Deborah Tonguis - 2009 Louisiana

#### Class of 2012

Steve Gardiner - 2008 Montana  
Kristi Luetjen - 2010 Connecticut

#### Class of 2008

Kim Zeydel - 2015 Idaho\*

#### Class of 2007

Laura Drake - 2013 Wyoming\*

#### Class of 2006

Melyssa Ferro - 2016 Idaho\*

\* Lifelong learners who have earned more than one degree from Walden or are currently enrolled in a second degree program.



# Making dreams come true

**Dr. John Anner**, CEO of The Dream Corps,  
reflects on what he found at Walden

As told to Lindsay Eney

## IN JANUARY, AN OLD FRIEND REACHED OUT TO ME FOR HELP.

Benjamin Jealous, a partner at Kapor Capital and the former president and CEO of the NAACP, was looking to me for some inspiration as he finished the winter 2017 commencement address he would be giving to many of you in a few short days. I knew exactly what to tell him.



BENJAMIN JEALOUS



DR. JOHN ANNER

Prior to enrolling at Walden, I had worked overseas and raised three children. As my kids were growing up and going off to college, I decided to come back from abroad, but I was still unsure what to do next. I'd always been deeply involved in

social enterprise and impact investing, but I needed to figure out how to pull all these pieces together in my next chapter. I didn't really need any more career help—I came to Walden strictly out of intellectual curiosity.

My Walden experience was much different from what I expected. It was by far the most diverse educational environment I've ever been in. In my time at Walden, I can tell you what I found: A large number of African-Americans, an equal number of veterans, a majority of parents, lots of folks from overseas. Every single student I met was motivated by a passion for social justice. I met a crosssection of America—and of the world—that I hadn't expected.

It turns out Walden is for people who share the same sensibilities as me, but come from backgrounds very different from mine. My classmates were not the children of elites; they were the offspring

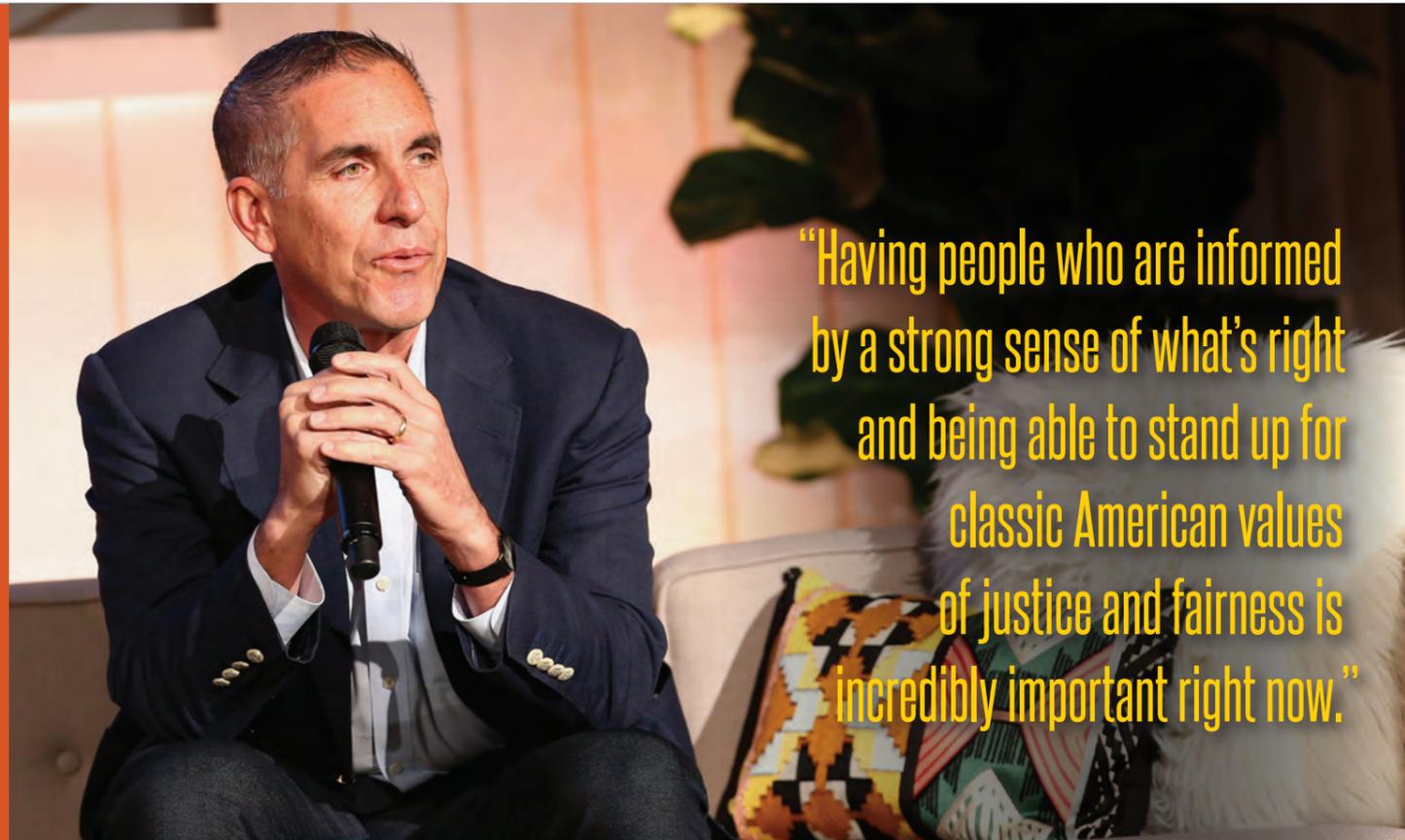
of middle America, the South, flyover country—all striving to learn, to grow, and to make something better of themselves and of society.

As an online university, Walden offers working people a way to get advanced degrees. These folks have to work really, really hard to stay in school. It's not expensive compared to a year at Yale, but it's very expensive in terms of time and commitment.

Walden takes real grit, real determination, and real courage to stick it out to get an advanced degree. Many folks fall—and get back up again. I thought I had to work hard to get my PhD, but not compared to my classmate with a kid in prison who was caring for elderly parents on one income in Biloxi, Mississippi.

For my colleagues, social justice is not an abstract element that would be nice to have; it's the essence of how their communities will succeed. They see themselves as models (as do I for my kids and my staff at The Dream Corps) and believe there is nothing you cannot achieve if you put your mind to it.

During my final months in the doctoral program, I had lunch with activist, attorney, author, commentator, and regular CNN contributor



“Having people who are informed by a strong sense of what’s right and being able to stand up for classic American values of justice and fairness is incredibly important right now.”

Getty Images/Tommasso Boddi

Van Jones. As the co-founder of The Dream Corps, Jones wanted to discuss the possibility of me joining the social justice accelerator as its CEO. I knew this was a way to make a massive contribution to America and to people like those classmates of mine who were working to make their own dreams come true.

I was a volunteer with the Peace Corps in the 1980s, and to this day, I meet Peace Corps volunteers who are bringing those experiences to the workplace. The same is true of my colleagues at Walden.

I found my Walden classmates to be very sophisticated and nuanced in their ways of looking at the world. They’re captivating individuals. I expect that soon, agencies, companies, and nonprofits across the country will have people working for them with the ideological foundation instilled in them at Walden. Walden graduates are going to improve society at all levels.

It’s so deeply embedded in the Walden DNA to work toward social justice, and that dovetails so nicely with my work at The Dream Corps. Having people who are informed by a strong sense of what’s right and being able to stand up for classic American values of justice and fairness is incredibly important right now. People are going to carry that foundation with them for the rest of their lives. That’s how Walden is making a difference, how Walden makes all this possible.

*Dr. John Anner '16 is a PhD in Public Policy and Administration graduate and the CEO of The Dream Corps, a social justice accelerator founded in 2014 by Van Jones. Anner has been working in social justice and international development since the late 1970s. From 2003 to 2015, Anner led Thrive Networks, an international development agency implementing large-scale projects in healthcare, education, and clean water across Asia and Africa. He was also the founder and executive director of the Independent Press Association, a membership organization of social justice periodicals, from 1996 to 2003.*

## Gates Millennium Scholars Program awards over \$180,000 to Walden students

The Gates Millennium Scholars (GMS) Program—funded by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation—has awarded a total of more than \$180,000 in scholarships to 12 Walden students this year.

The goal of the GMS program is to promote academic excellence and to provide an opportunity for outstanding minority students with significant financial need to reach their highest potential. Since GMS began in 1999, the program has produced

more than 20,000 Gates Millennium Scholars who have attended more than 1,700 institutions of higher education.

The scholarship funds students’ unmet needs and is renewable for up to 5 years at the undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels in the disciplines of computer science, education, engineering, library science, mathematics, public health, or science.

With more than \$1 billion in scholarships awarded to date, coupled with the leadership development services the GMS Program provides, Scholars have achieved a 6-year graduation rate of over 90%, double the national average for students of similar backgrounds.

Walden is proud to have 12 students named Gates Millennium Scholars this year, and wishes them the best of luck as they continue in their coursework.

## Counseling Programs Earn CACREP Accreditation

Walden’s MS in Addiction Counseling and MS in School Counseling programs have received accreditation by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the recognized standard of excellence in professional counseling and education. These programs—along with the previously accredited MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling, MS in Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling, and PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision programs—have been granted accreditation through March 31, 2025.



Dr. Savitri Dixon-Saxon

“CACREP accreditation allows our master’s and doctoral graduates to work in the field with more credibility as well as maximize their impact on their communities and profession,” said Dr. Savitri Dixon-Saxon, dean of the School of Counseling. “We are pleased that through the successful accreditation review process, two additional Walden counseling programs are now CACREP-accredited, further solidifying that our full suite of counseling programs meets the national standards of quality and relevance to the counseling profession.”



To learn more about CACREP-accredited counseling degree programs at Walden, go to [WaldenU.edu](http://WaldenU.edu).

# Alumni Association Events Schedule



## Network with your fellow alumni

at face-to-face and online events. Save the dates and be on the lookout for invitations via e-mail. If you have questions about an upcoming event, please e-mail [alumni@mail.waldenu.edu](mailto:alumni@mail.waldenu.edu) or call 1-877-235-3561.

**September 13** | 12:00 p.m.  
College of Management and Technology Alumni Online Networking Event

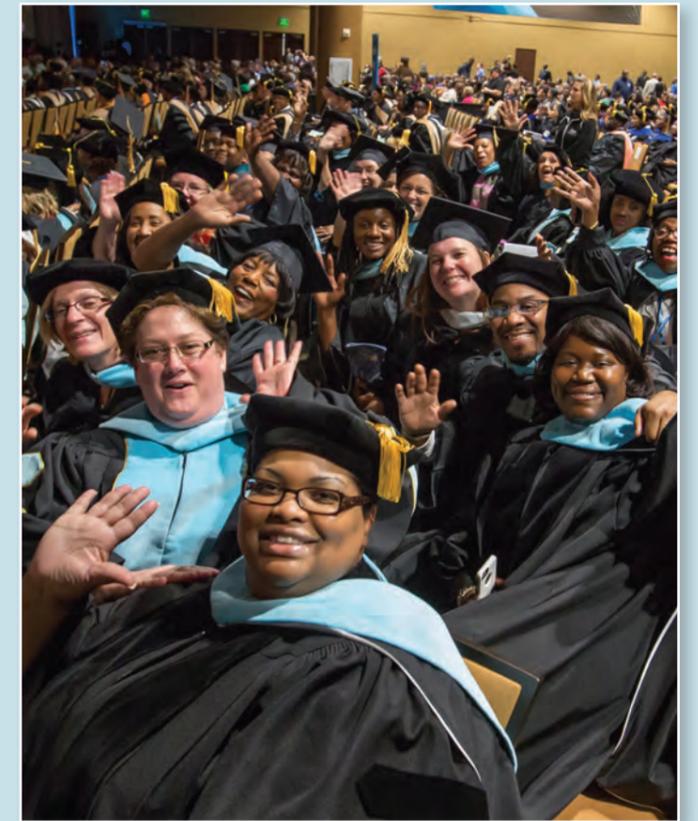
**October 16** | Global Days of Service

**October 21** | 11:00 a.m.  
Minnesota Alumni Brunch with President Kaplan  
Minneapolis, MN

**November 9** | 7:30 p.m.  
College of Social and Behavioral Sciences Alumni Online Networking Event

**December 2** | 11:00 a.m.  
Minnesota Alumni Brunch with President Kaplan  
Rochester, MN

For more information, go to [myWaldenAlumni.com/events](http://myWaldenAlumni.com/events)



## SAVE THE DATES for Future Commencement Ceremonies

January 20, 2018 | Tampa, FL

July 28, 2018 | Minneapolis, MN

January 19, 2019 | Tampa, FL

August 3, 2019 | National Harbor, MD

January 18, 2020 | Tampa, FL

July 18, 2020 | National Harbor, MD

# One degree many careers



Stephanie Dalton Cowan

## PhD in Public Health

Whether at a local, state, national, or international level, public health practitioners and scholars have the power to make meaningful change in the lives of those whose health is at risk on a daily basis. The nearly 600 graduates from our PhD in Public Health program are working in the public and private sectors, as policymakers, advisors, and educators. These are just a few of the career choices of our PhD in Public Health alumni. For more, please go to [WaldenU.edu/magazine](http://WaldenU.edu/magazine).

**Dr. Charles Boison '16**  
CONSUMER SAFETY OFFICER  
AND INVESTIGATOR  
U.S. Public Health Service  
Glen Allen, Virginia

**Dr. Ericka Kalp '16**  
DIRECTOR, EPIDEMIOLOGY  
AND INFECTION PREVENTION  
Summit Health  
Shippensburg, Pennsylvania

**Dr. Dorothy (Dory) Magasis  
Escobar '16**  
DIRECTOR AND FOUNDER  
Coaction Institute  
Santa Rosa, California

**Dr. Ngashi Ngongo '16**  
PRINCIPAL ADVISOR,  
Child Survival and Development  
UNICEF  
Dakar, Senegal

**Dr. Abdul Salam '16**  
SENIOR BIostatistician  
Hamad Medical Corporation  
Doha, Qatar

**Dr. Michael Brisson '15**  
AEROMEDICAL EVACUATION  
OFFICER  
U.S. Army  
Fort Rucker, Alabama

**Dr. Patrick Dunn '15**  
SENIOR PROGRAM MANAGER,  
Center for Health Technology  
and Innovation  
American Heart Association  
Keller, Texas

**Dr. Nancy Hahn '15**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
Kindred Hospice  
Piscataway, New Jersey

**Dr. Wilson Iyokho '15**  
SENIOR EPIDEMIOLOGIST  
Pharos Public Sector, New York  
State Department of Health  
Albany, New York

**Dr. Augustus Jaja '15**  
PRESIDENT/CEO  
Augstrom Technologies Inc.  
Edmond, Oklahoma

**Dr. Flavia Rosado '15**  
CLINICAL LABORATORY DIRECTOR  
Laboratorio Clinico Bio Tech  
Canovanas, Puerto Rico

**Dr. Sunday Rivers '14**  
FIELD MEDICAL DIRECTOR  
Pfizer  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

**Dr. Taraleen Malcolm '13**  
REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL  
HEALTH OFFICER  
North East Regional Health  
Authority  
St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica

**Dr. Juliana Weeks '13**  
VETERANS ADMINISTRATION  
RN CASE MANAGER  
Veterans Administration  
Columbia, South Carolina

**Dr. Julius Ade '10**  
REGIONAL EPIDEMIOLOGIST  
New York State Department  
of Health  
Central Islip, New York

**Dr. Jessica Grossmeier '10**  
VICE PRESIDENT OF RESEARCH  
Health Enhancement Research  
Organization  
San Jose, California

**Dr. Raymond Panas '08**  
PROGRAM DIRECTOR, CLINICAL  
STUDENTS SUPPORT PROGRAM  
Children's National Medical  
Center  
Washington, D.C.

## Highlighting Higher Education

Often considered the finish line of a PhD program, academia calls to many of our doctoral graduates. After excelling as practitioners, our PhD in Public Health alumni may go on to careers as professors or administrators at institutes of higher learning around the world.

**Dr. Susan Banjo-Ogunnowo  
'16, '10**  
Bell Tech Career Institute

**Dr. Padmini Kirpalani '16**  
University of North Carolina

**Dr. Srikanta Banerjee '15**  
University of Roehampton

**Dr. Brenda Jones '15**  
Lee University

**Dr. Hassan Naji '15**  
Ivy Tech Community College

**Dr. Lynda Carlson '14**  
CUNY

**Dr. Dawn Ford '14**  
University of Tennessee at  
Chattanooga

**Dr. Khelesh Persaud '14**  
Ryerson University

**Dr. Crystal Wynn '14**  
Virginia State University

**Dr. Edilberto Raynes '13**  
Tennessee State University

**Dr. Vaple Robinson '13**  
Coppin State University

**Dr. Cheryl Holloway '10**  
South University

**Dr. David Milen '05**  
Columbia Southern University

## Promotion, Prevention, and Preparedness

At least three PhD in Public Health alumni are currently working at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to improve overall public health.

**Dr. Denise Giles '16**  
Maputo, Mozambique

**Dr. Elizabeth Hoo '16**  
Atlanta, Georgia

**Dr. Bret Atkins '13**  
Atlanta, Georgia

## Leading Global Health

Three of our PhD in Public Health graduates are working for the World Health Organization, a specialized agency of the United Nations, in Nigeria and Uganda.

**Dr. Miriam Nanyunja '16**  
Kampala, Uganda

**Dr. Shafique Nass '16**  
Katsina State, Nigeria

**Dr. Jalal-Eddeen Saleh '15**  
Kano State, Nigeria

SPOTLIGHT



# Creating Communities for Change

Refocusing our vision for the future

By Dr. William C. Schulz III

**IT'S PROBABLY PART OF THE REASON YOU CHOSE TO ATTEND WALDEN**—our emphasis on positive social change. As we move toward Walden's 50th anniversary in 2020, we are refining the focus on this pillar of a Walden education. With the release of our report *Walden 2020: A Vision for Social Change* and the launch of the Walden University Center for Social Change in January 2017, we are laying the foundation for greater impact.

*Walden 2020* puts forth a 5-year working plan that began in 2015 and will shape Walden's thinking about the future and its vision for creating and contributing to real change and having an impact on a global scale. Launching the virtual Center for Social Change was one of the first major implementation steps in the plan.

It's becoming increasingly important for us to focus on opportunities to demonstrate how we, as part of a public benefit corporation,



make a positive impact on society and create benefits for the public and the common good, from volunteerism to sustainable community-based research. The center's mission is to promote, facilitate, and support collaborative, inspired relationships, partnerships, research, and projects that advance positive social change initiatives for the common good.

Together, *Walden 2020* and the Center for Social Change aim to:

- **Leverage Walden's research capacities,** expertise, networks, and curricula to serve external organizations and communities in the application of social change.
- **Strengthen the impact** of Walden curricula to educate agents of social change across all academic programs.
- **Continue to improve** how we support ongoing social change initiatives that engage current students, faculty, alumni, and our partner communities.
- **Award Social Change Grants** to qualified Walden faculty, students, alumni, and external stakeholders (Social Change Fellows). For more information, go to [WaldenU.edu/financial-aid/types/fellowships/social-change-research](http://WaldenU.edu/financial-aid/types/fellowships/social-change-research).
- **Bring knowledge, skills, and passions** into partnership with external communities that can benefit from sustained relationships with Walden that foster positive social change.

As we develop and launch an informative and dynamic website, we are excited to see the ways our community can come together in



the name of positive social change, through offering opportunities to collaborate and sharing success stories from our community. The full Walden Center for Social Change website and Walden social change discussion communities should be up and running by fall 2017. We can't wait to have you join us on this journey to a clearer vision for social change.

To read the report and learn more, go to [WaldenU.edu/about/social-change](http://WaldenU.edu/about/social-change).

*Dr. William C. Schulz III is the director of academic initiatives in the Office of the Chief Academic Officer, a faculty member in the School of Management, and the launch and interim director of the Walden Center for Social Change*



## Share Your Scholarship, Expand Your Influence.

Walden University's peer-reviewed, academic journals connect you to a global community of scholars, practitioners, and thought leaders who will expand your knowledge and influence in your profession. Join the conversation.

### Journal of Social Change

Focuses on social change research that improves the human condition and advances people, groups, organizations, cultures, and society.

### International Journal of Applied Management and Technology

Addresses contemporary issues in management and technology, such as diversity, organizational change, and more.

### Journal of Educational Research and Practice

Features research, commentaries, book reviews, interviews, and other content that examine current issues in education and learning.

### Journal of Social, Behavioral, and Health Sciences

Encourages dialogue between scholars and practitioners and advances models of interdisciplinary collaboration based on sound empirical support and theory.

### Journal of Social Work in the Global Community

Promotes research, literature and book reviews, and thought pieces related to the field of social work practice and social change.

[ScholarWorks.WaldenU.edu/journals](http://ScholarWorks.WaldenU.edu/journals)



### About Our Journals

Why should scholars consider submitting a manuscript to one of our research journals?

- Expedited reviews
- On-acceptance publishing
- Open access
- Editorial assistance
- Professional exposure

## Announcing our 2017 Outstanding Alumni Award Winner



Congratulations to this year's Outstanding Alumni Award winner, **Dr. Lovely Thornton!**

**Dr. Lovely Thornton** is a **1993 PhD in Education** graduate with more than 40 years of work in the various communities in

which she has lived around the world. She is the founder and president of Sensible Women Initiative, Inc., an organization that assists ladies from age 5 through 25 with developing professional skills and decision making. She also cofounded Parents Assisting Youth in Germany, and developed a transition program for a Department of Defense School in Misawa, Japan. Dr. Thornton is currently an adjunct faculty member at Towson University in Maryland.

*From the nominator:* "Dr. Thornton is a dynamic, sensible woman of immense integrity who is committed to service and social change."

*From the judges:* "Dr. Thornton has over 40 years of volunteerism, started a nonprofit to help young women develop professionalism, and is an engaging professor in education. She has had a far-reaching impact on positive social change."

This year we received 33 nominations, representing 13 class years and 27 degree programs.

We applaud the following four finalists for their commitment to effecting positive social change in their communities:

- **Dr. Tonya Howard Calhoun '16, PhD in Public Policy and Administration graduate**
- **Alvin Mena Cantero '15, Master of Science in Nursing graduate and Doctor of Nursing Practice student**
- **Dr. Martin K. Logo '16, PhD in Public Health graduate**

- **Dr. Patricia Spearman '15, Doctor of Business Administration graduate**

The Outstanding Alumni Award is granted each year to a graduate who exemplifies our mission to effect positive social change by making an impact on his or her profession, discipline, or community. The recipient of the award is honored at the Awards Dinner during Commencement Weekend each summer. Nominations for the 2018 award will open in the spring.



### Meet Your Walden Alumni Relations Team

**We're always telling you how we want to meet you.** Now it's our turn to show you who we are. Next time you reach out with a question, you'll have a face to put to the name!

*Left to right:* **Lindsay Eney**, Editor of Alumni Publications  
**Lisa Allen**, Alumni Relations Specialist (Commencement)  
**Valescia Lee-Collick**, Director of Alumni Relations  
**Marion Branch**, Alumni Relations Specialist (Ambassadors)  
**Joanie Baumgartner**, Alumni Relations Manager

# Accolades

Alumni have a significant impact on their organizations, communities, and disciplines. Here are some recent highlights.

*Congratulations to all on your accomplishments!*

## The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership



**Dr. Shirley Richardson '16** | Doctor of Education (EdD) | Appointed dean of Our Lady of Lourdes School of Nursing in Camden, New Jersey. She is also dean of St. Francis Medical Center School of Nursing, a sister school through the hospitals' parent organization, Trinity Health.

**Dr. Alberto Vazquez '14** | EdD | Recipient of the Latino Excellence in Education Award and the Latino Administrator of the Year Award by the Florida Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents. Vazquez is the chief of staff for the office of the superintendent of Hillsborough County Public Schools.



**Dr. Elvie Ancheta '13** | EdD | Appointed by California Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. as administrator of the Veterans Home of California-Lancaster. She has served there as nurse instructor and quality assurance coordinator since 2014.

**Dr. Amanda Jacobson '13** | EdD | Named principal of New Holstein Middle School in New Holstein, Wisconsin.

**Dr. Lydia Singura '13** | EdD | Elected to the Carteret (New Jersey) Board of Education and sworn in for a 3-year term.



**Michael Brogley '12** | MS in Education (MSEd) | Named a finalist for Harford County (Maryland) Teacher of the Year. Brogley is a social studies teacher at C. Milton Wright High School.

**Stephanie Hughes '12** | Education Specialist | Named principal of Lumberton High School in Lumberton, Mississippi.

**Teri Peasley '12** | MSEd | Joined Ohio University Zanesville as a lecturer in the early childhood education department.



**Dr. Trevor Kubatzke '11** | PhD in Education | Selected as the incoming president of Lake Michigan College. Kubatzke most recently served as vice president of student services at Milwaukee Area Technical College.



**Dr. Reagan Romali '11** | PhD in Education | Named superintendent-president of Long Beach City College in Long Beach, California.

She most recently served as president of one of the City Colleges of Chicago.

**Dr. Brad S. Gregory '09** | EdD | Named senior assistant superintendent of finance and business services for Colquitt County (Georgia) Schools. He previously served as assistant superintendent of finance.

**Drew Krause '07** | MSEd | Named principal of Vernon Township High School in New Jersey.

**Dr. Rick McElroy '07** | EdD | Published *Conquering Heroes*, a novel set during the Vietnam War.

**Stacci A. Barganz '06** | MSEd | Named a 2016 National Javits-Frasier Scholar through the National Association for Gifted Children. She is also the president of the Southern Lakes Advanced Learner Network.



## College of Health Sciences

**Dr. Karin Lightfoot '16** | PhD in Public Health | Named interim director of the School of Nursing at California State University, Chico. The position will become permanent after 1 year.

**Melissa Reynolds '15** | Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) | Joined Hannibal Regional Medical Group in Hannibal, Missouri, where she will be providing care for patients in local nursing homes.



**Shannon Shaw '15** | MSN | Joined the Sanford Bemidji (Minnesota) Senior Behavioral Health Unit, where she will work with a specialized medical team providing short-stay inpatient psychiatric care for seniors.

**Dr. Karin Ciance '14** | Doctor of Nursing Practice | Selected by Women of Distinction magazine as a distinguished professional in her field. She was also named a professional of the year by Strathmore's Who's Who for her contributions to and achievements in the field of community health nursing. Ciance is an assistant professor of nursing at Anna Maria College in Massachusetts.

**Margaret (Peggy) Lennon '14** | MSN | Appointed program director for surgical services at Greenwich (Connecticut) Hospital, where she has been working since 2011.

**Dr. Victor Beauvil '12** | PhD in Public Health | Named chair and program director of the School of Respiratory Therapy at Mandl School, The College of Allied Health in Manhattan, New York.

**Katheryn M. Csonka '13** | MSN | Selected to join the Nursing Board at the American Health Council. She is an assistant professor of nursing at Daytona State College, an adjunct professor in the School of Nursing at Kaplan University, and a visiting professor in the School of Nursing at Chamberlain College of Nursing.



**Dr. David Florkowski '12** | PhD in Public Health | Named dean of the faculty of health at Kwantlen Polytechnic University in Surrey, British Columbia.

## College of Management and Technology



**Dr. James Edward Wilkinson '17** | Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) | Selected to serve as a member of the board of trustees of the University of the Ozarks, a liberal arts college established in 1834, located in Clarksville, Arkansas. He and his wife have also established an endowed scholarship for students with demonstrated need. Wilkinson is the president of Farmers Bank.

liberal arts college established in 1834, located in Clarksville, Arkansas. He and his wife have also established an endowed scholarship for students with demonstrated need. Wilkinson is the president of Farmers Bank.

**Dr. Karen Adams '16** | DBA | Named operations manager at Steger, Gowie and Company in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania.

**Dr. Belinda Roberson '16** | PhD in Management | Named executive director of the YWCA Northwest Louisiana.



**Dr. Jared Padgett '14** | DBA | Published "Improving Patient Safety Through High Reliability Organizations" in *The Qualitative Report* along with faculty members Dr. Wen-Wen Chien, Dr. Kenneth Gossett, Dr. Roger Mayer, and Dr. Freda Turner.

## College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

**Dr. Nuriel Mor '16** | PhD in Psychology | Published "Mitigation of Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms From Chronic Terror Attacks on Southern Israel" in the *Journal of Social, Behavioral, and Health Sciences* with Dr. Kathryn Dardeck, a core faculty member in the School of Psychology.

**Kevin Pettus '16** | MS in Human Services | Promoted to director of client support services for The Walker Center, an inpatient substance abuse facility.



**Dr. Mutryce A. Williams '16** | PhD in Public Policy and Administration | Appointed to the International Association of Emergency Managers - Latin America and Caribbean Leadership Council as special counselor for the Caribbean.

**Sandra Flores '15** | MS in Human Services | Named senior programs director for Catholic Charities Community Services of northern Arizona. She has worked for Catholic Charities for 17 years.

**Dr. Maria Odumodu '15** | PhD in Public Policy and Administration | Recognized as a Paul Harris Fellow by the Rotary Club of Woodstock (Ontario, Canada), which is one of the highest prizes that a club can bestow. It is named after the founder of Rotary. Odumodu is very involved in The Children's Aid Society, Zonta International, the Diocese of London, and library and church causes.



**Marie Owens '15** | Master of Public Administration | Named director of drinking water for the Utah Department of Environmental Quality. She has held leadership positions in the American Water Works Association and is the co-founder of Women of Water.

**Dr. Joshua M. Garrin '14** | PhD in Psychology | Published *The I-Way to Well: Mapping the Seven Selves of Health Motivation*.

**Dr. Terry R. Tinsley '10** | PhD in Psychology | Promoted to assistant vice president of programs at Youth for Tomorrow in Bristow, Virginia. He has served the organization delivering a broad spectrum of mental health services for children and adults for nearly 20 years.



**Dr. Danita Johnson Hughes '02** | PhD in Human Services | Published *The Unapologetic Woman: Leading With Power and Confidence*.



Want to see your name here? Submit your accomplishment to [myWaldenAlumni.com/shareyourstory](http://myWaldenAlumni.com/shareyourstory).



# How I Did It

## DR. JENNIFER MILLER '17

How one grad powered through her doctorate in her 20s

**DEGREE EARNED:** Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)

**HOW LONG IT TOOK:**  
3 1/2 years

**KEEPING BUSY:** I began my DBA in July 2013 when I was working as an accountant for the U.S. Army and the federal government was enduring furloughs. But I ended up changing jobs and moving three times—the first job didn't challenge me despite

a significant change, the second was too taxing although eye-opening, and I made my most recent move for a promotion in a dynamic environment. Making these changes while working on my degree took a lot of coordination and planning and some luck.

**MULTITASKING LIKE A PRO:** I found myself studying wherever and whenever I could. I would do discussion board posts in my car

“Dr. Cheryl McMahan always made me feel like she had a stake in my doctoral study and me as a student.”

during lunch or at airports and read while working out. While working at Fort Bragg in North Carolina, I would print out required readings and take them to the pool.

**PERSISTING THROUGH CHALLENGES:** Transitioning from coursework to the proposal development and doctoral study was where things became difficult. My first chair had to drop me because he couldn't accommodate the number of students he had. I found my guardian angel in the chair I had sought from the get-go, Dr. Cheryl McMahan, whose roster finally opened up a bit.

**FINDING SUPPORT:** Dr. McMahan always made me feel like she had a stake in my doctoral study and me as a student. She cared about what was going on, how we got here, where we were going next, and what the goals were. I call her “Machine McMahan” because she consistently had an impressive

2- to 3-day turnaround on reviews. We need to clone her.

**FOCUS ON THE FUTURE:** I had taken courses for college credit while I was still in high school, and I had my master's by the age of 22. Once I found Walden, my mindset was that I would rather get a doctorate done in my 20s. Not many other universities thought I had enough professional experience to do that. Thanks to Walden, I completed my degree at 28, and I won't have to stress about needing a doctorate to get a second-career dream job in academia later in life.

**CROSSING THE FINISH LINE:** When I got the e-mail containing the chief academic officer's signature, I took a screenshot, and my eyes started filling up with water. I took a picture of myself in that moment and sent it with the screenshot to my chair and thought, “Oh, my gosh, we are done.”

— As told to Rebecca Kirkman

Who or what was your inspiration for completing your degree? Tell us at [myWaldenAlumni.com/shareyourstory](http://myWaldenAlumni.com/shareyourstory).

# SCHOOL SPIRIT BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Your education changed you.  
It helped you become who you are.



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FOR YOUR UNIVERSITY  
FROM HEAD TO TOE.

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The FSC logo on our magazine signals not only FSC certification but also Walden's commitment to improving the environment.

*Every graduate  
has a story to tell.*

# WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

[myWaldenAlumni.com/shareyourstory](http://myWaldenAlumni.com/shareyourstory)

Dr. Laurie Shanderson '04, PhD in Health Services, is featured on page 20.