

SUMMER/FALL 2015

WALDEN

ALUMNI MAGAZINE

Bridging Cultures in China

A Sweet Spin

How cotton candy raises
HIV/AIDS awareness

Sustainable Social Change

Powerful advice for making
a lasting difference

Opportunity Calling

Pathways of possibility
with a doctoral degree


Dear Alumni,

● ● ● **FOR 45 YEARS**, Walden has been dedicated to effecting positive social change around the world and inspiring our students to do the same. Over the last several years, the power of social change has been demonstrated across the planet. From social movements like Occupy Wall Street to international relief efforts in response to natural disasters like the earthquakes in Nepal, we’ve seen people around the globe stand up for issues as diverse as better health and infrastructure, racial justice, marriage equality, freedom of expression, access to education, and financial equity.

Our 2014 Social Change Impact Report showed that there is still more work to be done—only 36% of adults, on average, are extremely or very satisfied with how much they are helping to improve the lives of individuals and communities. Yet, what we perceive to be our smallest efforts can often have huge effects on the lives of others. As Walden scholar-practitioners, you are in a position to make a meaningful impact.

In this issue, you will read about how a number of our alumni are making long-term changes around the globe. Whether through one-on-one mentoring, increasing HIV/AIDS awareness, or creating educational opportunities, they are each making an impact. The question is: How are you living Walden’s mission? You have an important role to play.

Join the broader Walden community’s efforts and share your ideas for addressing society’s greatest needs. Together we can leverage our collective strength and help our communities thrive.

Sincerely,


Jonathan A. Kaplan



Volume 10, Number 2
Summer/Fall 2015

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Walden is published by the
Walden University Alumni Association.

The views expressed herein are those of
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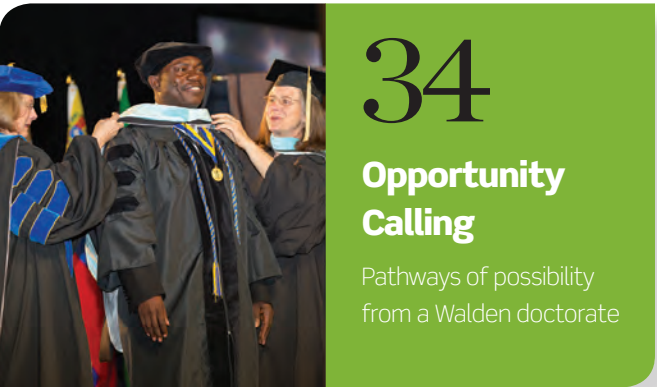
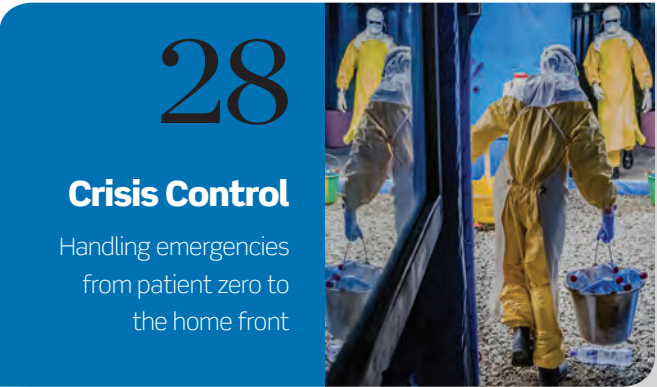
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ISSN number 1557-5578
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Changemakers

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BROADENING MY HORIZONS

A Working Retirement

Dr. Alexandria Osborne is building a legacy in Tanzania

By Victoria Wiseman



● ● ● HER FIRST TASK IS TO LET OUT THE CHICKENS —

not exactly a chore she had while growing up in New York City. But here in rural Lindi, Tanzania, chickens are the most reliable food source for the occasional unexpected guest. **Dr. Alexandria Osborne '10** then makes herself a cup of coffee and tries to check work e-mails, a task that can take much of the day since her Internet connection is dependent on solar power.

Osborne is no average retiree. Five years ago, she left a 30-year career at pharmaceutical companies such as Pfizer and Upjohn to retire in sub-Saharan Africa. But instead of retiring, she founded

a nonprofit that brings food, water, sanitation, health, and education to the poorest members of her community.

Completing her **PhD in Management** at the end of her corporate career provided the extra encouragement she needed to create positive social change in her new Tanzanian community. “It’s difficult to do nothing while living among people who make less than \$2 a day,” Osborne says. “I have this education. Am I going to retire on the beach, or am I going to do something with it?”

Her research about factors that lead to mistrust of public healthcare in Libya landed her a fellowship with CARE International in Tanzania. During that fellowship, Osborne met and married a Tanzanian, and she decided to leave Michigan to retire in Lindi.

Her specialization in leadership and organizational change helped her identify the strengths of the leaders in the community, and where they needed help. Donations from American friends enabled Osborne to found the Lindi Islamic Foundation of Tanzania (LIFT).

“LIFT’s team is smart: They know about education and food security. What they need is good governance,” Osborne says. “You want a flat organization where people can make their own decisions. To build capacity is to develop thinkers, decision-makers, and problem-solvers.”

Soon she had to adapt her American boardroom style of organizational leadership and management to the African way of doing business: Everything is done by hand, on paper, and often with a laissez-faire attitude about things like meeting

times. “Something that takes five minutes in corporate America can take weeks here,” Osborne says. “I had to adapt my style to move the organization toward efficiency.”

With that in mind, she mentors her management board on acquiring computer skills and creating a filing system—and she sends lots of meeting reminders. In return, they teach her about the customs necessary to run successful programs. A recent women’s health screening required letters to local bureaucrats and free lunches for the participants—steps that would have been unnecessary in the American business culture familiar to Osborne.

“It’s difficult to do nothing while living among people who make less than \$2 a day.”

Osborne has documented the first 5 years of this journey in her memoir, *The Black Mzungu*. Looking forward, she wants to leave a legacy of service based on integrating her leadership and business skills with the talent and drive of the local community. “I need to make something that is sustainable,” she says. “I don’t want this to go away when I die.”



HOW IT PAID OFF

Tech Specialist to Corporate Strategist

NAME: Dr. Simon Musaeus '14

DEGREE: DBA

TITLE BEFORE MY DEGREE: Technical Director of Mapping, India

TITLE AFTER MY DEGREE: Global Corporate Director of Mapping and Surveying

TAKING THE LEAP: If our employees pursue business education, it’s often a 3-month course or an MBA. Pursuing a full-fledged doctoral program attracted management’s attention. My early coursework coincided with a new strategy in our business group, and I used my new knowledge to write the business strategy for our India branch.

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS: I grew up and was educated in Germany with no exposure to the American market. In India, 30% of our customers were U.S. companies; our Indian group had issues satisfying them. I didn’t know if it was a business or cultural difference, but there were always tensions. I directed my thesis research to supplier selection criteria that U.S. companies apply to find the correct offshore provider. With the help of my professor, I confirmed my observations that U.S. customers are very quality-conscious, while I had observed that Indian companies focus on building strong relationships. American and Indian companies were speaking different languages. I helped my managers change their behavior toward American customers; they were surprised by the success.

BIGGEST BENEFITS OF EARNING MY DBA: I became a corporate director in charge of a specific business line. My company is Danish-anchored, and I am one of only two corporate directors in 80 years who are not Scandinavian. Walden allowed me to interact with the American way of thinking and open doors to other cultures. Walden is much more international than you’d think, and I like that. — V.W.

Tell us how your degree paid off at myWaldenAlumni.com/shareyourstory.

WHY WE REFER

Seeking Success Together

Two alumni share how they acted as champions for each other from enrollment to commencement

By Kyra Gemberling

● ● ● **A FRIEND’S ADVICE CAN BE THE BIGGEST CATALYST FOR CHANGE.** Michele Levandusky '14 (right) knew it was time to continue her education to advance her career, and she knew her colleague-turned-friend Ingrid Mariano '14 needed to as well. The referral was just the start of the pair’s personal and professional journeys.

MICHELE, WHY DID YOU REFER INGRID TO WALDEN?
When I told Ingrid I was getting my master’s, she looked at me like I had lost my mind. But I know her better than that; she strives for perfection and wants to improve her life and her career. So seeing the options Walden had for us and that we could complete our programs fully online, I knew it would be a good fit for her.

INGRID, WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO ENROLL?
Michele is the strongest woman I know, and I knew we could reach our goals together. I had my first child when I was 17, and he was already in college, so I decided I was going to get my MBA before he graduated to set an example for him and my other children. I called Michele’s advisor

and told her I wanted to pursue my MBA. I enrolled, and the next day at work, I told Michele we were going to tackle this journey together.

MICHELE, WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO SEE INGRID SUCCEED?
There were times when I knew Ingrid wanted to give up. I told her she was not going to give up on herself, because I wasn’t giving



Ingrid Mariano '14
DEGREE EARNED: MBA
CURRENT JOB: Staffing specialist at Accountable Healthcare Staffing in Boca Raton, Florida

Michele Levandusky '14
DEGREE EARNED: MS in Leadership
CURRENT PROGRAM: PhD in Management
CURRENT JOB: Independent Beauty Consultant at Mary Kay in Eustis, Florida

Jenny Abreu

“I determine my success based on other people’s success, so to see her accomplish this meant more to me than my own degree.” — Michele Levandusky

up on her; she was going to get through it, and she did. I was so proud to see her achieve this, knowing what her life is like. I determine my success based on other people’s success, so to see her accomplish this meant more to me than my own degree.

HAVE YOU REFERRED ANYONE ELSE TO WALDEN?
Michele: One of my daughters is pursuing her bachelor’s at Walden. She is 23 and has a 3-year-old son, so Walden was the perfect fit for her to continue her education.
Ingrid: I’ve referred my oldest son and his girlfriend because it’s a great fit for them academically. Writing isn’t my son’s best skill, and I know the faculty at Walden will work with him on that. They haven’t

enrolled yet, but I would be so proud to have him go to Walden.
WHAT CHANGES HAVE YOU SEEN IN YOUR LIFE AND CAREER?
Michele: Walden has given me the tools and the confidence to become the entrepreneur I want to be. I am taking what I learned and showing others how to build solid leadership teams, properly coach their staff, and take their businesses to a higher level.
Ingrid: It’s a confidence booster like no other. I finally learned the business skills I needed to get to the next level, and I got a new job at an organization known for growth. Being able to share that I earned my MBA is huge, especially because I’m a single mom of 5. If I can do it, anyone can.

Is there someone in your life who should join the Walden family? Introduce them today at myWaldenAlumni.com/refer.

BEYOND THE DEGREE

A Sweet Spin on a Serious Problem

Dr. Tasha Holland-Kornegay

turned to an unlikely source—cotton candy—to help raise awareness of HIV/AIDS

By Lesley Tkaczyk

● ● ● FACEBOOK'S CORPORATE

HEADQUARTERS in Silicon Valley is known as a fun place to work. But it was even sweeter when employees sampled Oscar William's Gourmet Cotton Candy during a meeting last year. Each Friday, Mark Zuckerberg shares stories of how Facebook impacts communities, and that particular meeting featured a video of Oscar William's success in raising money for HIV/AIDS awareness and education programs.

Dr. Tasha Holland-Kornegay '07, coowner and founder of Oscar William, never thought her company would be noticed by Zuckerberg. In fact, she had forgotten she'd sent a simple submission to the Facebook Stories page months before. And she certainly never expected the e-mails that soon came flooding in from prominent Facebook employees professing their love for Oscar William: "I love the pumpkin spice flavor!" "We love what you're doing in the community!"

"This is just not real," Holland-Kornegay remembers thinking. "Zuckerberg is a social revolutionist; people are always trying to figure out how to get to this guy. I'm little old Tasha in Apex, North Carolina, selling cotton candy, and the founder of Facebook has his marketing team calling and e-mailing me."

While she may have been surprised at the response, the fact that Holland-Kornegay found a way to connect with Facebook's headquarters doesn't surprise those who know her well. She has been forging meaningful connections with others since she first acted as the "community therapist," chatting with neighbors on her stoop while growing up in Few Gardens Public Housing in Durham, North Carolina. She realizes now that those interactions with her neighbors molded her for a career in counseling.

Holland-Kornegay completed her **PhD in Human Services** and is now a licensed counselor providing outpatient mental health therapy. She credits Walden with showing her that if there is a problem, there must be a solution—and how to bring the two together. She and her husband, William, must also be teaching this to their son, Kyree—he's the one who suggested cotton candy as a unique solution to her fundraising problem.

Holland-Kornegay donates her time teaching young women about HIV/AIDS, and she needed to raise money to further boost awareness of the illness. She wasn't having much luck with grant writing, so her son suggested she raise her own funds. Soon they were brainstorming flavors for the family's organic, kosher, vegan, gluten-free, and allergen-free cotton candy. Oscar William now uses 10% of its sales to distribute HIV/AIDS pamphlets and sponsor educational workshops.



“I’m little old Tasha, selling cotton candy, and the founder of Facebook has his marketing team calling and e-mailing me.”

"My friends were affected by HIV and AIDS," Holland-Kornegay says. "I wanted to help people, and this was the only way I knew how. I wanted to tie in a nonthreatening, fun product to ease the discussion of such a serious topic."

As "little old Tasha" learned, social media really works. "You can reach people and impact communities you never dreamed of being able to touch," she says.

How did you successfully switch to a new career path? Let us know at myWaldenAlumni.com/shareyourstory.

INSIGHTS



Smart Starts for Small Businesses

Lolita Cleveland '12 | Master of Public Administration

● ● ● **AFTER MORE THAN 15 YEARS** of working with small businesses on staff development and strategy implementation, Lolita Cleveland '12 developed a clear picture of why nearly half close within 5 years: Founders don't focus on creating a solid plan for their companies. That's why she founded Open Hands Outreach Consulting Corporation in 2012, connecting business owners to training and resources. Here, the Alumni Ambassador leads business owners toward brighter beginnings.

START WITH STRATEGY. First, we need to define what you want for your organization. Is your goal to generate revenue? Land a certain number of clients? Then we discuss what kind of legal designation fits. Should you incorporate? Become an LLC? Finally, I ask about the biggest challenges you think you'll face. Are you concerned about marketing and advertising? Lack of revenue? Once we answer those questions, we have the beginning of a solid plan.

GET TECHY. Most small businesses don't start with many employees. Sometimes, it's just one (often overwhelmed) person. But good time management, plus some free or inexpensive business tools, can keep you grounded. I frequently recommend scheduling software—such as Simply

Appointments; financial tracking and accounting apps like OneReceipt or Mint; and low-cost marketing tools, such as YouTube, which allows you to easily embed videos in your website or LinkedIn page.

NEVER STOP LEARNING. Learning shouldn't end with the completion of your degree. Always look for ways to increase your knowledge of your field and of general business practices, whether you are seeking a new certification or considering taking your business on a new path. Search on LinkedIn or Meetup for local business

owner groups, attend conferences hosted by associations you aspire to be part of, and keep up with new information in trade publications. Expand on the professional development opportunities you discovered as a student and continue to unearth as a business owner.

“Every small business owner needs to bounce ideas off of someone, preferably a mentor or coach.”

FIND A MENTOR. Every small business owner needs to bounce ideas off of someone, preferably a mentor or coach. I've owned my own business for a few years, and I still have a coach. Sometimes we talk daily, other times we just meet based on my needs. Finding and retaining adequate personal support is a huge benefit to any leader, no matter how much you think you already know.

— As told to Kristin Simonetti



● ● ● **“EXECUTIVE MBA STUDENTS** travel to an international destination during their final semester in the program. This year, the cohort visited India, allowing them to enjoy sights like the Taj Mahal while continuing their business education. Students traveled from the United States, Nigeria, Peru, and Canada for this life-changing experience. The first stop was Chennai, the capital city of the state of Tamil Nadu, and the second city was New Delhi. Students had the opportunity to visit United Nations' sites, global PR firm Edelman India, and the only nongovernment-owned news station in India. The similarities and differences in their home countries were the basis for many discussions, including a comparison of human resource practices in India and in the U.S.”

— **Dr. John (Jack) McDonald** (seated, holding *Walden* magazine) is the program director for the EMBA program in the College of Management and Technology. He accompanied 16 EMBA students to India in February.

Submit photos of your field experiences at myWaldenAlumni.com/fromthefield.

LIFELONG LEARNERS

Never Give Up

Jay D. Rodriguez didn't let a brain injury get in the way of his goal to be a great educator

By Christine Van Dusen

● ● ● **THE 5-YEAR-OLD BOY** had been kicked out of several schools, his behavioral issues too challenging for his teachers to handle, before he came to Forever Young Montessori School in Virginia Beach, Virginia. His parents wondered how long their child could last at this new school, and whether yet another set of educators would give up on him.

They didn't yet realize that the kindergarten teacher and head of pre-K at Forever Young was someone who refused to give up, a man of exceptional tenacity who understood the importance of fighting for an education—for that child, for all children, and for himself. It didn't take long for the teacher to realize that the student was bored academically. He worked with the child to embrace his intellectual curiosity and help him develop

the discipline to be a successful student. An extensive background in child development and education led to that success story for **Jay D. Rodriguez '14**, an **MSEd** graduate and **EdD** student with a specialization in early childhood.

Rodriguez was in a car accident 21 years ago that left him living with seizures. Doctors removed a chunk of the right temporal lobe of his brain in

The Graduate:

Jay D. Rodriguez '14
MS in Education (MSEd) >>
Doctor of Education (EdD)

an attempt to reduce the frequency of the seizures. He then spent months in physical and emotional therapy to relearn how to live a normal life. But he wanted more than that. As the child of educators—his family founded Forever Young—he wanted to go back to school. And so within 6 months of his recovery, he did just that. “I was able to start a whole new life,” he says.

Rodriguez received his associate degree in interdisciplinary studies in 2011, and 16 months later, he completed a Bachelor of Science in early childhood with summa cum laude honors. But that wasn't enough. So he enrolled at Walden in 2012 for his Master of Science in Education, focusing on teaching adults about early childhood education.

“My continuous studies open up a new perspective in the way I look at education.”

“One of my previous instructors is a Walden student and highly recommended it for my continuing education,” Rodriguez says. “Online programs are a challenge, but I love a challenge. This was just the next step toward teaching at a higher level.”

The degree helped Rodriguez understand the importance of focusing on the process of education—the environment, the planning, the teaching quality, the trust built between teachers and caregivers—and not just the outcome.

“A good teacher does not just teach you mathematics and how to read but also teaches you about life and helps you grow as a person,” he says. “Throughout my MSEd courses, I learned more about children

through research and with the professional guidance from my instructors. I have learned about the growing stages of young children and, at the same time, learned the basic fundamentals needed early in their lives.”

This year, Rodriguez reenrolled for his Doctor of Education with a focus on teaching adults. He expects to finish the program in about five years. It's a challenge he characterizes as his greatest yet.

“My continuous studies open up a new perspective in the way I look at education—the promises, the values, and the support needed to secure a positive attitude toward education, families, and children,” Rodriguez says.

Ready to come back? Call an enrollment advisor at 1-866-492-5336 to explore your next degree.



BEYOND BORDERS

Bridging Cultures in China

Getty Images

Dr. Annette Padilla

builds cross-cultural relationships through education

By Rebecca Kirkman

● ● ● **THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS CAN BE NERVE-WRACKING** for students and professors alike. Throw in a big cultural difference, and it may border on frightening. When **Dr. Annette Padilla '13** taught her first undergraduate business class at Jiangnan University North American College in Wuxi, China, she looked out at the expectant faces of more than 40 students—most spoke little English and had never left China. She knew she had to devise a way to break down those barriers—quickly.

“I do a lot of photo sharing,” Padilla says. Students delight at a photo from her recent vacation to Malaysia or a picture of Padilla smiling atop her bicycle that she has interspersed with her lecture slides. “They love the pictures of my mother, my dad, and my sister,” she says. “These folks are really bonded to their families.” Providing a glimpse of her life beyond the classroom helps Padilla find common ground with her students, laying the foundation for more engaged learning.

“What we do in education can improve diplomacy, world peace, and how we understand each other.”



Before pursuing her degree at Walden, a 2-year contract at California Miramar University that allowed her to teach in Vietnam inspired her passion for international education and curriculum development. But it didn't end there. “I was interested in going back overseas after I finished my **PhD in Public Policy and Administration**,” says Padilla.

As an international professor, Padilla brings a different perspective to teaching by considering how her students might learn best in a second language. She uses Bloom's Taxonomy to guide her in creating

and revising objectives for her students, taking into account their language skills and baseline knowledge. Most of her students are not used to interacting in groups or thinking critically about real-life problems. Padilla challenges them to develop the skills they need for success moving forward by working together to solve problems and present to the larger group. “I have seen some students grow their skills in just the 9 weeks I work with them,” she says.

It's not just at the university where her problem-solving skills have been helpful in

Padilla represents the U.S. every day, and she's seen as a leader at the university because of her degree and global insights. She was recently invited to speak at an international conference hosted by the university about ethics and corruption in China. “I presented some of my research findings on social justice and ethics in front of a Chinese audience with professors from other provinces,” Padilla says. “If I hadn't written that dissertation, I never would have had this experience of being seen as a thought leader in a foreign country.”

Although the experience has been challenging, it has also been rewarding. “It's a really healthy experience, getting pushed out of your comfort zone,” she says. “We need our smartest people to help build relationships across borders. What we do in education can improve diplomacy, world peace, and how we understand each other. I hope I will be considered one of those people when I leave here.”

Have you been to China? Tell us about your experience at myWaldenAlumni.com/shareyourstory.



MEET THE FACULTY



Dr. Victoria D. Coleman

School of Social Work and Human Services

By Camille LeFevre

● ● ● **VISITING A BROTHEL CAN BE AN EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE** and Dr. Victoria D. Coleman doesn't pass up an opportunity to leave a lasting impression on her students. She took a class to visit a Southern Nevada brothel to break down their dogmatic views of prostitution that were based on myths and stereotypes. She succeeded—and challenged her own views on the sex industry, sex crimes, and domestic violence in the process.

Coleman, a faculty member in the School of Social Work and Human Services, is the founder, president, and CEO of both The Coleman Group and The Anger Doctor, management consulting firms that specialize in anger management, human capital, training, and research. She also serves as a Substance Abuse Professional for the U.S. Department of Transportation and as a certified federal mediator for the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Here, she discusses her teaching methods and their real-world applications.



HOW IS YOUR WORK INTERCONNECTED?

ANSWER: It's unified by the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, which divides us into physical, moral, personal, family, social, and academic/work selves. I use this to help clients understand their strengths and limitations. Almost all of my clients come to me lacking in one of these areas, which impacts their abilities to function at their best. Over the years, I've refined this tool to help people overcome anger issues or the mental health implications of substance abuse.



HOW HAVE YOU PERSONALIZED COUNSELING?

ANSWER: I published Lifeline in 1998. It is a therapeutic technique in which you draw lines and shapes or write narratives that illustrate themes, trends, patterns, and milestones. This information is then used to establish short- and long-term goals to determine next steps in the therapeutic process with your counselor, based on the outcomes you would like to see. This has been used in human-capital training for businesses as well as in individual mental health counseling.



HOW DO YOU MAKE CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS MORE TANGIBLE?

ANSWER: I developed WHAT! (What Happened After That!), a series of topics I post for my students that refer to an event in popular media or an ethical, moral, or legal dilemma I've encountered professionally. Then I ask students to address the situation. Theories can be sterile in that some students are unable to understand the application to real-world counseling environments. The discussions these posts create enliven the online classroom. This type of engagement helps students bridge the gap between theory and application by giving them a real-world situation, as in how to counsel one of the women in that brothel, or her family.



WHAT DO STUDENTS LEARN FROM YOUR BACKGROUND?

ANSWER: Because I've worked in such diverse practice areas, the students really understand the myriad opportunities they have with a background in counseling, human services, and psychology. Students value and appreciate the ways their skills can be transferred to a variety of practice environments.

APPLYING MY RESEARCH

Connecting the Dots

Walden's doctoral program helped **Dr. Robert Flower** develop a new way of thinking about the world—and share it with others

By Christine Van Dusen



● ● ● **HER HUSBAND HAD BEEN KILLED**, leaving her to raise two young children alone. She felt lost. Instead of sending her to a psychiatrist or a hypnotherapist, a friend sent her to **Dr. Robert Flower '94**, a **PhD in Applied Management and Decision Sciences** (now **PhD in Management**) graduate.

we're better off thinking multidimensionally. When the widow came to his office, Flower tried to help her think less about the material consequences of her husband's death—missing his physical presence—and more about abstract concepts like finding love within herself.

deeper level what life was about as she tried to move on from her husband's death," he says. Flower strongly believes he wouldn't have been able to help her if he hadn't completed his PhD. When he worked in real estate, he would satisfy his intellectual curiosity by researching ancient mysteries, reading sacred texts, and connecting them with principles of natural sciences and quantum physics. When he started connecting the dots, he felt his thinking process change.

abstract ideas like "a god force composed of living potential" and turned them into a coherent methodology. "I began to see the connection between my coursework and my research," he says. "I discovered a structure, a science—the science of potential."

Flower now works with a range of clients, including athletes; top executives from Macy's, Progresso, IBM, and Chrysler; and notable figures like former hostage Terry A. Anderson, to help them change how they think.

“My knowledge from Walden helped me succeed, so now I can help others succeed.”

Flower is a Mensa scholar known for founding The Gilchrist Institute for the Achievement Sciences—a sociopolitical and economic think tank—and for discovering Natural Thinking and Intelligence (NaTI). NaTI suggests that though we typically use linear thinking—following known cycles or step-by-step progressions—

“I worked with her for a month, but she wasn't buying it,” he recalls. But 6 months later, Flower was teaching a course at a local college and the woman was there. It turned out that she had warmed up to his methodology shortly after stopping her visits with Flower. “She said I helped her understand on a much

“I began to understand a different order to things,” Flower says. “But I couldn't quite relate it to everyday life.” Walden connected those last dots. After learning general systems theory and writing his dissertation on nature as a systems model, Flower took

“People achieve a lot more than they did when they were linear thinkers. NaTI brings clarity to issues in their lives and expands their understanding,” Flower says. “My knowledge from Walden helped me succeed, so now I can help others succeed.”



Bob Ingelhart/Getty Images

MY MISSION POSSIBLE

Healing Foster Youth

Dr. Anita Alston Ellis offers children the support they need to overcome the odds

●●● **“BELIEVING IN YOURSELF IS THE FIRST STEP** to making a change in your life. I have been an advocate for foster care and adopted youth since 2005, when I started a

nonprofit called Through Their I’s—Mentoring Program. The group focuses on mentoring and bringing about change in the foster care system. Additionally, I am one of the founding

members of GA EmpowerMENT, a group supported through the Jim Casey Metro Atlanta Youth Opportunity Initiative. It has since expanded and is now making a difference statewide by offering educational scholarships, trainings, and resources to current foster care youth.

“Mentoring is a big piece of the support system that’s missing. The chances of young adults overcoming their circumstances are much higher if they have at least one caring and supportive mentor. Helping them feel safe is the key to starting to heal. Earning my **PhD in Public Health** gave me that broader

perspective on social change. We learned to apply our skills and knowledge in practical ways in our communities so those initiatives could have massive impact.

“Dr. Richard Jimenez was the chair of my dissertation committee, and he always encouraged me to keep moving toward my goals. He pushed me to put together a proposal for the American Public Health Association (APHA) conference, which was accepted the same year I defended my dissertation. I presented my study on HIV-prevention strategies at APHA’s 2011 annual meeting in Washington, DC.

“That support and mentorship at Walden really framed how I live my life today. It inspired me to start a health and wellness ministry at my church. In addition to foster care, health is my primary interest, and advocating for both is my passion. I’m grateful that I get to serve the areas I love—it’s everything that I want to be doing.

my autobiography, which begins when I was abandoned as a baby. I published *From Abandonment to Abundance: A Memoir to Inspire the Unwanted* last year. I want to use my experience in foster care to inspire youth to believe that they can do anything they want.

“I would love to see them healed from their past so they



“Helping them feel safe is the key to starting to heal.”

“I’ve mentored one girl for about 10 years and have seen her blossom into a full-blown advocate for children in foster care. She is very passionate, and I admire her ability to give back; she now wants to help me get a mentoring program back up and running. I’ve always encouraged her to complete what she starts.

“Walden’s ‘start small’ focus also motivated me to write

can really flourish in their present and future. A lot of them are so talented, but they’re hiding in the shadows. I want to help them see that it’s OK to dream and there are resources available to help them.”
— As told to Lesley Tkaczyk

Dr. Anita Alston Ellis ’11, a PhD in Public Health graduate, is a public health analyst whose passion is advocacy for youth in foster care.



Anita Alston Ellis has always had strong mentors. Here, her 9th grade teacher attends her book launch to show her continued support.

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CONNECTIONS

Out of the Ordinary

Dr. April Jones seeks the extraordinary in the Walden community

By Rebecca Kirkman

● ● ● **AS A CHILD, DR. APRIL JONES '14** accompanied her father—a longtime Alabama politician—to events where she learned the importance of connecting with others. “He told me everyone has something to offer you and to never forget anyone because they could help you along the way,” Jones says. “Ever since then, I’ve always gone around the room and introduced myself.”

The social worker and Air Force contractor continued networking while earning her **PhD in Psychology**. At a 2009 residency in Florida, Jones met **Dr. Prospere Charles '14**, then a **PhD in Public**

Policy and Administration student, who was involved in a number of nonprofits with his business partner, Andrise Bass, a current PhD in Public Policy and Administration student.

Jones now advises Charles and Bass on a number of nonprofit projects, from a literacy program in Haiti to a youth program in the Bronx. “We supported each other,” she says. “I’d ask for tips on the

dissertation process, and Prospere would share his struggles and triumphs.”

She continued to cultivate connections at commencement, where she met School of Psychology faculty member Dr. Sandra Harris. Harris is also from Alabama, and she soon took on the role of mentor for Jones. Jones and Harris are co-authoring a journal article this year, “Comparison of conflict management between generational cohorts of nurses.”

After seeing such success come from her own connections, Jones wanted to share the power of networking with other members of the Walden community. She is establishing quarterly meetings in Alabama for alumni and students. “The purpose is to support people who are coming through the program, network for jobs and community projects, and help students get work and experience while in school,” Jones says.

She believes networking is especially important when pursuing higher education online. Despite the extra effort it may take, she says connections are rich at Walden because everyone shares the same mission to effect positive social change. “You aren’t connecting with ordinary people,” Jones says. “They are scholar-practitioners who have the same passion and goals. We can apply our education to real-world problems and find solutions together.”

■ Share how your Walden connections have shaped your community or career at myWaldenAlumni.com/shareyourstory.



POWERFUL ADVICE FROM PEOPLE WHO HAVE COMMITTED THEIR LIVES TO MAKING A DIFFERENCE AROUND THE WORLD

By Kristin Simonetti

●●●● **"KNOWLEDGE IS JUDGED WORTHY** to the degree it can be applied ... to the immediate solutions of critical societal challenges." That sentence, drawn from Walden's vision statement, forms the foundation for the university's curriculum. It's also a clear and compelling charge to all who choose to earn a Walden degree: Students and alumni are expected to be active agents for positive social change.

For the past 45 years, thousands of Walden graduates have answered that call. All over the globe, these alumni volunteer, educate, advocate, and fundraise for causes they strongly believe make the world a better place. A Walden education provides students a wealth of knowledge and skills that are crucial to making a lasting, positive social impact. Yet some lessons can only be learned through years of experience.

In the following stories, one board member and three alumni give insights into their personal and professional efforts to create and sustain social change, in Atlanta, Austria, Africa, and beyond.



Collaborating across departments

OFTEN, SOCIAL CHANGE IS BORN OF NECESSITY. During her nearly five decades as a professor and administrator at the University of Southern California (USC), **Dr. Barbara Solomon**, now a **Walden board member**, and her colleagues sought to increase the diversity of the faculty. They struggled to do so because they encountered very few diverse doctoral degree-holders in higher education.

"We were essentially playing musical chairs—stealing minority faculty members from other institutions rather than increasing the pool so we could all benefit," Solomon says. As she and her colleagues looked more closely at the problem, they realized its root existed not in colleges and universities but in compulsory

education. "Public schools were not making it possible for minority students to get to college, much less go beyond a bachelor's degree. We had to focus on the issue of access to higher education."

In 1989, Solomon helped establish the Neighborhood Academic Initiative (NAI), a 7-year enrichment program designed to prepare low-income students for college. Since then, more than 1,000 students from the Los Angeles area have participated in the program and graduated from high school—and nearly all of them have gone to college and beyond. One graduate recently completed her doctorate in education at Loyola Marymount University, Solomon says, and the student wrote her dissertation on the NAI.

The NAI's success, says Solomon, required breaking down long-standing silos in academic and administrative departments within

“Social change isn’t a community service project here—it’s central to the mission.”

— Dr. Barbara Solomon

USC. “We involved almost every discipline over the years,” she says. “We worked with the school of business to teach financial literacy, the school of cinema and television to help document the program, performing arts, the sciences—every department was asked, ‘What can you contribute?’”

Such cross-departmental collaboration is rare in higher education, Solomon says—but she knows that kind of cooperation is common at Walden based on her interactions with faculty members and students. “Walden can do a more effective job addressing these kinds of problems. Social change isn’t a community service project here—it’s central to the mission,” says Solomon. “That’s what will keep Walden a leader in this field.”

She encourages students and alumni to carry that approach into their careers as social changemakers. “Major social problems can’t be solved by one agency or organization alone. They require collaboration,” she says. “Because of that, priorities and conflicts of interest are inevitable. The key is conversation and managing those conflicts to solve problems.”



Finding the right partners

OLYMPIC ATHLETES SPEND MOST OF THEIR LIVES TRAINING their bodies for peak performance in competition. Many, though, prepare less effectively for

academic success. That’s a gap Atlanta 1996, The Legacy Institution of the Atlanta 1996 Centennial Olympic Games, and its CEO, **Dr. Marc-Daniel Gutekunst ’91**, a **PhD in Health** graduate, have worked hard to close for nearly 2 decades. Gutekunst has forged strong relationships with public- and private-sector partners, allowing

“Introduce your idea in a way that makes people say, ‘I want to see this happen!’” — Dr. Marc-Daniel Gutekunst

Atlanta 1996 to build a world-class facility that helps aspiring athletes from all over the world chase their Olympic dreams and a quality education—at the same time.

Gutekunst’s organization traces its roots to the five-athlete delegation from Burundi, which made its Olympic debut at the 1996 Summer Games in Atlanta. Burundi’s team had few pieces of quality equipment and little beyond the basics in their Olympic Village living quarters. Gutekunst—who had lived in that small African nation in his childhood—encouraged several friends in the Atlanta area to join him in “adopting” the team. The hosts provided Burundi’s athletes and staff with new shoes and clothing, home-cooked meals, and more.

Then, against all odds, Burundi athlete Vénuste Niyongabo won gold in the men’s 5,000-meter race. For two weeks after Niyongabo’s victory, both sides of Burundi’s long-running civil war declared a cease-fire. This incredible result prompted Gutekunst and his friend, Prince Albert II of Monaco, to wonder: What if they could expand

the generosity they showed Burundi’s athletes to others? The seeds of Atlanta 1996 were sown. Its mission? “Peace and reconciliation through sports and education.”

“So many athletes from Burundi and around the world have little or no education. They may win a medal, but that medal doesn’t have a long lifespan,” Gutekunst says. “Education can change a person’s life. You can flee a war-torn country and take your education anywhere.”

After the Atlanta games, Gutekunst began building the partnerships that would make the foundation’s dream a reality. His negotiations with government leaders in Georgia’s DeKalb County paved the way for Atlanta 1996’s 102-acre residential training facility. A 2002 agreement Gutekunst brokered with the DeKalb County School District allowed athletes training at Atlanta 1996’s facility to continue their studies at DeKalb’s elementary and secondary schools. A 2010 pact between Gutekunst and Georgia Perimeter College

(GPC) enabled older students to take college courses and qualify for GPC’s transfer guarantee program, opening the doors to 36 institutions offering 4-year programs in Georgia and beyond. Since last year, Gutekunst has finalized negotiations with eight American universities to send 10 former international Olympians to chiropractic school tuition-free.

What’s Gutekunst’s secret for enlisting such valuable support for his cause? Understanding potential partners’ positions so well that his ideas for change reflect theirs.

“Find out what they want, what’s in it for them, and then introduce your idea in a way that makes people say, ‘I want to see this happen!’” Gutekunst says. “People begin to realize that our success is their success—and that’s why we’re able to implement change for these athletes and these nations.”

Making a long-term commitment

“**MAJOR SOCIAL CHANGE CAN’T BE MADE** in a few months or a year,” says **Dr. Lynn Cockburn ’09, ’07**, an assistant professor at the University of Toronto. “Ten years is a more realistic time frame.”

That’s why, for more than a decade, the **PhD in Public Health** and **MPH** graduate has traveled to the impoverished North West Region of Cameroon at least once or twice a year. There, the occupational therapist works to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities as well as to address other health challenges in the region. Last year, she committed to continue that effort for at least another 10 years.

“Major social change can’t be made in a few months or a year.”

— Dr. Lynn Cockburn

Cameroon has held a piece of Cockburn’s heart since she lived in the central African nation from age 11 to 13 with her family. “I was a white girl from a small town in Canada,” she says. “I had access to everything I needed, and these people didn’t. It changed everything for me.”

Long after she returned to North America, Cockburn felt confident her interest and, eventually, expertise in occupational

therapy could make a difference for the people she had met in Cameroon. She decided to pursue public health graduate work at Walden so that she could expand her impact to more systemic change in Cameroon.

Her public health research dovetailed with an opportunity to help improve and expand rehabilitation and health systems in North West Cameroon—a particularly poor and under-resourced region. Today, in addition to directly serving clients, Cockburn and her colleagues educate health professionals and community leaders across the country. They have

worked to improve communication among hospitals, rehabilitation centers, schools, and workplaces by establishing an annual conference and several smaller regional seminars and events.

Such work requires managing many diverse partnerships—with individuals and institutions. It also requires deep knowledge of the political and social history of the region, an understanding that can only come with time.



Cockburn advises aspiring change agents to be prepared for the long haul. Making headway against major social problems is slow and patience is critical. Finding inspiration in the process, though, is one way to keep putting one foot in front of the other.

“Your biggest asset is attitude,” Cockburn says. “When I see the tenacity, persistence, and optimism of those who have so little, how can I not be inspired?”

Standing up with courage

“**YOU JUST COULDN’T SHOW FEAR,**” **Mike Brennan ’08** recalls about growing up in a rough community in Jacksonville, Florida. The **MS in Education** graduate had no inkling at the time how useful that experience would be about 20 years later, after he found himself bloodied on a train platform in Vienna, Austria.

Brennan was commuting home from his teaching job at the Vienna International School one afternoon in February 2009 when two undercover police officers attacked him, mistaking him for a suspected drug dealer they were tailing. The reason they targeted Brennan? He was black. As he recovered from his injuries in the hospital, Brennan learned he wasn’t alone in his plight.

“I started talking to people of color who had similar interactions with police. They were afraid—they knew black people who had been beaten, or even killed, by the police,” he says. “They said things to me like, ‘We’re glad someone’s here to help us, to speak out.’ They thought I could make a difference because I was American.”

Ready to tackle the challenge, Brennan worked closely with the United Nations and agencies like ZARA, a Vienna-based nongovernmental organization that tracks human rights violations, particularly at the hands of police. He took part in several news conferences, including one carried internationally by Radio Afrika. Friends and allies took to social media, creating

a “Justice for Mike Brennan” Facebook group and publishing a blog.

Brennan himself worked with Amnesty International to include his incident alongside many other examples of systemic racial discrimination by the Austrian police. *Victim or Suspect: A Question of Colour*, published in April 2009, was “the first official report to contextualize human rights abuses by Austrian authorities,” according to *The Vienna Review*.



“I was fighting for people who couldn’t speak for themselves.” — Mike Brennan

As he pursued charges against the two officers in Austrian courts (one was eventually charged, pleaded not guilty, and received a fine of 2,800 Euro), Brennan remembers being monitored by Viennese authorities but insists he never felt afraid. “I was fighting for people who couldn’t

speak for themselves,” he says, recalling his childhood in Jacksonville and his days as a Walden student. “Walden gave me the passion to stand up for what’s right and the intellect to make it happen.”

More than 6 years later, Brennan is still teaching—though now in Florida, not Europe. He’s pleased that minor progress

has been made in the way Austrian police receive training and approach minorities in the wake of the Amnesty International report. Yet he knows others elsewhere are still struggling.

Today, Brennan is exploring the possibility of writing a book about his journey and establishing a nonprofit organization that can provide resources and support for victims of racial discrimination worldwide. He hopes his recent selection as one of South Florida’s African American Achievers for 2015 is a step toward making those endeavors a reality.

Brennan’s advice to others who seek to make a difference as he has is at once simple and daunting: Just get started.

“Don’t be afraid to go out there, to try and fail. Get out there and talk,” he says. “Anytime I have a chance to speak to my students, go out in the community or influence people, I do it. You just can’t sit back.” ■



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Crisis control

PUBLIC HEALTH EXPERTS OFFER TIPS TO PREPARE FOR AND RESPOND TO EMERGENCIES THAT AFFECT YOUR HOME OR WORKPLACE

By Christine Van Dusen

●●● **PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES** and natural disasters often strike with little warning, and if a population isn't properly prepared, the consequences can be deadly. **Mercy Chikhosi Nyirongo '14**, an MPH graduate, and **Dr. Tony Cappello '12**, a PhD in Public Health graduate, know this firsthand. They've faced down cholera, flooding, rabies, anthrax, and other emergencies as experts in public health—and they credit their Walden educations with helping to prepare them for difficulties in the field.



“Allow people the right to feel fear.”

— Mercy Chikhosi Nyirongo

Nyirongo, the Malawi Country Director for the Zimbabwe Orphans Endeavor (ZOE), began her career in public health in 2010 when she studied the H1N1 influenza virus in Malawi as a nurse researcher. ZOE aims to break the cycle of poverty for orphans and other vulnerable children in Africa by teaching them to farm, offering vocational training and micro-grants, and helping children stay healthy and disease-free. She also works with the Mkukula community in Malawi on community-led health initiatives designed to empower girls and women.

When cholera broke out in Malawi in March—with 55 confirmed cases and two deaths—Nyirongo helped distribute cholera kits and sanitize water, and provided treatment to the afflicted.

“We investigated the cause of the outbreak by checking drinking water and food that may have been contaminated at the source or during transport or storage,” she says. “My Walden classes and lessons about public health ethics, epidemiology, biostatistics, policy, and leadership helped me to respond, support and lead a team, as well as control the spread of the outbreak.”

Cappello, the Public Health Director for the Northeast Colorado Health Department,

spearheaded efforts to contain and manage the largest case of rabies in the state's history, and helped communities affected by flooding in Colorado. His research on radon-contaminated private drinking wells—the basis for his doctoral dissertation—has been heralded as groundbreaking by the American Public Health Association.

“We often forget just how important public health is until it is challenged and we no longer have the luxuries it has provided,” Cappello says. “Every day we take for granted fresh drinking water, flushing toilets, protection from vaccine-preventable diseases, healthy and safe food sources, and a public health system that is trained and ready for response.

“But public health emergencies have the potential to wreak havoc on communities both domestically and abroad,” he says. “Not being adequately prepared, trained, and supported can mean disaster for the general public.”

Here, Nyirongo and Cappello offer their tips on how individuals, families, businesses, and nonprofits can prepare for, respond to, and recover from public health crises.

Prepare

Undoubtedly, the first step is to identify potential risks for you, your family, your company, or your whole community. Do you live in a flood plain, a tornado alley, or near an unvaccinated population? Consider what’s likely to happen where you live, and prepare as best as you can for what can go wrong, then:

MAKE A PLAN. As a public official, Cappello has a unique perspective on planning for public health emergencies. He has to educate and prepare the public before disaster strikes, and work with his colleagues to determine a plan for how to handle an emergency while developing consensus recommendations from experts and first responders.

He suggests that you create a disaster plan, and make sure to keep it updated and fresh in your mind. “If only a few core people developed the plan and the rest of the staff—or family—doesn’t know about it, that spells trouble,” Cappello says.

It’s important to designate responsibilities, charting out who in your home will handle what task. The same



Mercy Chikhosi Nyirongo '14

goes for the workplace and at agencies, where you may need to obtain signed endorsement from leadership and delegate responsibilities for handling the media, the public, and partner teams so there is a clear chain of command when crisis strikes. You have to come to agreement on who releases what information, when, and how. Spokespeople should always be at the ready, and clearance and approval procedures should be clear to everyone involved.

When an anthrax outbreak among cattle in Colorado exposed more than 20 people to the disease in 2012, Cappello and his team updated an existing disaster plan to stop the spread of the

disease in the animals. He also had to limit human exposure while disposing of infected carcasses in a fast, efficient, and environmentally sound manner.

TEST SYSTEMS AND ENFORCE DRILLS. You’ve heard it time and again: Practice makes perfect. While there’s likely not a perfect scenario when it comes to emergencies, you can get much closer by practicing your plan.

“It’s important to participate in mass drills so that when something does occur the response is second nature for everyone involved,” Cappello says. “Often, these plans get put on a shelf and people never test it or practice portions of it.

“We often forget just how important public health is until it is challenged and we no longer have the luxuries it has provided.” — Dr. Tony Cappello

“This past year we conducted a mass vaccination exercise, using flu vaccine, as well as an Ebola tabletop exercise where we simulated and practiced what we would do in an actual event,” Cappello says. “Yearly practice is necessary in identifying our current strengths, weaknesses, and

needed resources. Doing so during an event is often much too late, and places you at a disadvantage in responding in a timely, accurate, and effective manner.”

In January of this year, Nyirongo facilitated a fire outbreak drill, and learned that there were some problems to address: Staffers didn’t know the location of fire exits or where extinguishers were located, and there was no clear way of contacting firefighters. “This helped us identify the gaps and improve on our preparedness and response,” she says.

It’s just as important in the home as it is at a government agency or a business. Know escape routes as well as safe places in the house for different types of disasters. Teach family members how to extinguish fires and review safety drills on a regular basis.

PARTNER UP FOR SUCCESS. When it comes to public health crises or natural

disasters, success depends heavily on partnerships. Establish procedures to collaborate and coordinate with other response teams and agencies.

“It is important to network and coordinate among government and non-governmental agencies when managing public health emergencies,” Nyirongo says. “They are not competitors; they’re partners with a common goal to save lives and support victims. Sharing of information and resources is vital during these events.”

When planning ahead for possible disasters, Cappello makes sure to communicate and collaborate with organizations such as law enforcement, hospitals, businesses, and elected officials. “It may not always be feasible to get all parties at the table,” he says. “But knowing who to contact, having met them before, and previously discussing how support can be provided is always a good idea.”

“You need to build partnerships in the community—with employers, employees, and public officials—before an event occurs,” Cappello says. “Public health agencies in general aren’t very big and are underfunded. Having a broad-based partnership puts more troops on the ground to combat the crisis.”

EMERGENCY essentials

When creating a plan for yourself or your family, have a well-supplied emergency kit and make sure everyone knows where it is kept.

The kit should include:

- ☐ Enough water to last 3 days
- ☐ Nonperishable food items
- ☐ A manual can opener
- ☐ First aid kit and medications
- ☐ Blankets
- ☐ Flashlight with extra batteries
- ☐ Whistle to signal for help
- ☐ Hand sanitizer
- ☐ Tools to turn off utilities
- ☐ Local maps
- ☐ Hardcopy lists of emergency numbers
- ☐ Cell phone and solar chargers
- ☐ Battery-powered radio



Dr. Tony Cappello '12

Respond

COMMUNICATION IS KEY. In a hyper-connected world, there are a lot of bases to cover when communicating. “You need to be able to communicate internally and externally,” Cappello says. “Prioritize what needs to happen and get that message out. Most people have access to technology, but some people don’t. It’s important to communicate in every possible fashion, from Twitter and Facebook to the radio and the newspaper.”

There is a balancing act at play here though; act too quickly and you could provide inaccurate information, but act too slowly and people will feel lost. “Allow people the right to feel fear,” Nyirongo says. “Acknowledge their fears and give them the information they need.”

“During an emergency it can be hard to check sources, and there’s always hype,” Cappello says. “People get very excited. One of our jobs is to disseminate correct information and weed out what’s inaccurate.”

Another strategy for communication is to crowdsource—but carefully. When a wastewater system wasn’t working correctly, Cappello’s agency put out a call on Facebook to learn about what people were doing to handle their waste safely. “It reminded people that this is a community, and that we can all work together to get through a disaster,” he says.

KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON. It almost goes without saying—although it’s easier said than done—but do not panic in the face of an emergency or public health crisis. Check on vulnerable people who might need help, notify family members of where you are and what is happening, and monitor updates. Staying away from the affected areas is essential—unless it’s your job, don’t try to be the hero.

As an official at one of the agencies or response groups, make sure to provide encouragement to your people as they cope with the disaster. Watch stress levels and provide breaks and food when needed.

Once the crisis has ended, it’s time to pick up the pieces. Take advantage of available counselors to help cope with the emergency—for both responders and victims—and find support from other people in your community. Update your emergency plan so that you’ll be even more prepared for the next crisis—what went right and what could improve? Focus on individuals’ strengths to help carry on once the storm clears.

After the disaster hits, begin to prioritize and shift tasks. “Priorities will help to save lives as well as reduce stress caused by the emergency,” Nyirongo says. “It will help in identifying urgent and important things to do first, getting organized, setting goals, and having specific action items to achieve the goals.”

Once that is set in motion, Nyirongo says, “It’s good to shift tasks from trained health personnel to less-specialized health workers as a way to deal with staff shortages and burnout.” ■

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HOW A WALDEN DOCTORATE
CREATES PATHWAYS OF POSSIBILITY

By Camille LeFevre

● ● ● FROM TEACHING COLLEGE CLASSES

to starting a new business, a doctoral degree is applicable to numerous career options because it gives you a framework for studying a problem as well as its existing and potential solutions. Here, six alumni share the trajectory of their doctoral journeys and encourage others to pursue new heights both academically and professionally. As they demonstrate, the completion of a doctoral degree is not the end, but rather the beginning of new opportunities.

Dr. Avon Hart-Johnson '15, '11

PhD in Human Services and MS in Forensic Psychology
Adjunct Professor, President at DC Project Connect,
Principal Consultant at NTT DATA, Maryland



After completing her MS, Dr. Avon Hart-Johnson was “hungry for more,” she says. “I wanted to enact transformative change, to be a voice for the marginalized. I knew I needed to become a subject matter expert.” She focused her dissertation on the psychosocial ways male incarceration affects African-American prisoners’ wives. She narrowed down her sample to the Washington, DC, area, where the local prison had closed and inmates had been relocated to 103 prisons around the country. Hart-Johnson found that her subjects were suffering grief akin to the death of a loved one and were socially isolating themselves to the point where they too felt imprisoned.

In March, she presented her findings on Capitol Hill. She asked for legislation to be modified so that offenders could be held within a 250-mile radius of the DC area to ease the effects on their families. She’s only just begun—and expects Walden has, too. “Because Walden stresses social change, it became part of my DNA,” she says. “I expect that within the next decade, you’re going to see a lot of change enacted by this community.”



Dr. John Mohl '14

PhD in Psychology
Teacher at Cheltenham Township
School District

“A PhD symbolizes dedication to an academic endeavor,” says Dr. John Mohl. “I have embraced critical thinking, conducted research, and investigated ideas that have led to a better understanding of my field. That’s crucial to continuing my work as an independent researcher.” Mohl teaches AP psychology and U.S. history, and he is also a part-time psychology instructor at Bucks County Community College.

But he is also deeply involved in the American Psychological Association (APA), particularly its hypnosis division. Mohl is committed to continuing his dissertation research, which focused on how hypnosis can improve educational outcomes. He has delivered more than eight presentations and workshops at APA meetings throughout the U.S. and Canada. “My involvement in APA has brought me new connections that have allowed me to collaborate and continue my research around the country,” he says.

Dr. Liz Herman '09

PhD in Applied Management & Decision Sciences
(now PhD in Management)

Director of Health and Analytics Unit at Battelle



“So much work goes into the dissertation,” says Dr. Liz Herman. “I didn’t want to walk away after I was done.”

So she continues to collaborate with her case study sponsor on the knowledge-management project she initiated: instituting staff motivation and efficient work processes, and capturing lessons learned to demonstrate how the organization’s productivity continues to improve.

Earning her PhD showed the hiring committee at Battelle, a nonprofit charitable trust, that she could think critically and communicate complex ideas. Herman was hired to work with scientists, public health experts, epidemiologists, and high-level statisticians, and she now uses her doctorate “by conducting qualitative and quantitative analysis, and translating that information to the marketplace,” she says. Her unit at Battelle focuses on improving health and creating positive health impacts. “I’m bringing Walden’s focus on social change forward every day,” Herman says.



Dr. Preston H. Long '02

PhD in Health Services

Adjunct Professor, Public Health Program, Bryan University, Arizona



Dr. Preston H. Long moved from court testimonies to college teaching thanks to his PhD.

For many years he was

a chiropractor and ran his own company—Evidence Based Health Services Inc.—through which he served as an expert witness in the review of medical records and health processes and procedures. Long recently dissolved the company, and with the help of his PhD, made the leap to academia, “the big shiny red apple,” as he calls it.

For two years now, Long has been an associate professor in Bryan University’s Master of Science in Healthcare Informatics and Analytics program. Now, he’s welcoming another opportunity. Long is an adjunct professor in Bryan University’s new public health program, with hopes of becoming the program’s first director. Long’s overall goal, he says, is “inspiring critical thinking among students in the field of health sciences, using evidence-based medicine to improve patient safety.”



Dr. Catherine Davis '14, '11

EdD and EdS in Teacher Leadership

Lead Instructor and Curriculum Scheduling Coordinator, Intensive English Language Institute at University of Texas—Tyler

While completing her doctoral studies, Dr. Catherine Davis helped create a new Intensive English Language Institute at the University of Texas—Tyler, and moved from a part-time position to full time. The institute assists international students in improving their academic English language skills, and prepares them for university matriculation.

Working closely with the executive director of the Office of International Programs, Davis put her studies into practice,

including curriculum design, discussion facilitation, teaching expertise, and research in developing a language institute. Since opening last year with only a few students, the institute has added three instructors and now serves students from 13 countries. “My EdD provides scholarly support to the institute, and I’m involved in social change every day,” Davis says. “We’re having a positive impact on students’ lives and their future goals to effect positive social change, beyond just their education, which is exactly what Walden did for me.”



Dr. Dennie Beach '10

PhD in Public Policy and Administration

CEO & President at Go Africa Network Inc. and ASG Global Trade Inc.

with a purpose: To study and understand the challenges facing socioeconomic development in Africa. “I approached my PhD as a project,” he says, “breaking down the requirements, research, and knowledge areas to build the direction in which I wanted to go.”

The PhD program helped Beach realize that to solve the problem that was closest to his heart—improving development opportunities in Africa—he needed to look at it from a variety of perspectives before “rolling up my sleeves and doing the work.” In 2014, Beach founded Go Africa Network Inc., a nonprofit that advances the trade of African commodities, technologies, and goods and services throughout the

world by linking emerging markets in Africa with trade, training, and educational opportunities. He also founded ASG Global Trade Inc. to help fund the nonprofit and ensure the success of both organizations. “My PhD gave me the expertise and credibility to lead my organizations to success,” Beach says. “Walden teaches you to do things the right way the first time—and I have!” ■

SPOTLIGHT

Healing with Food

How one graduate is translating scholarly research into programs for health and wellness



●●● **ALL 27 HANDS WERE IN THE AIR** in response to a question **Aubrey Mast '12**, an **MPH** graduate, asked as she stood in front of a 7th grade class. Every single child said he or she was affected by diabetes. With that kind of evidence, it's difficult not to feel like her work in public health is critical. "The foundation of all our issues is access," she says. "If you have diabetes, you have access to medications. But maybe you also have access to local blueberries that are known to stabilize glucose."

"Giving people tools to prevent diseases and that are accessible at their farmers' markets, their grocery stores... is the most important work I can possibly do in my life."

Mast works for North Carolina State University's Plants for Human Health Institute (PHHI), a part of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service. The mission of the program is to provide citizens with access to knowledge generated by public universities. That means Mast and her

colleagues create programs that can be implemented across the state to impact health behaviors. "Giving people tools to prevent diseases and that are accessible at their farmers' markets, their grocery stores, and maybe even in their backyards is the most important work I can possibly do in my life," Mast says.

Her largest project to date as Extension associate for nutrition has been helping develop a web resource called Healthy Living. The user-friendly website highlights research-based connections between food and disease and is continually updated as more research findings are published. The goal? To make peer-reviewed scholarly research accessible to consumers so they can improve their relationships with food.

Recently, Healthy Living promoted black jamapa beans for their benefits to the immune system, including protection against the stress put on the body by free radicals that cannot be neutralized by antioxidants. The health stresses that come with aging are often associated with cardiovascular disease and cancer.

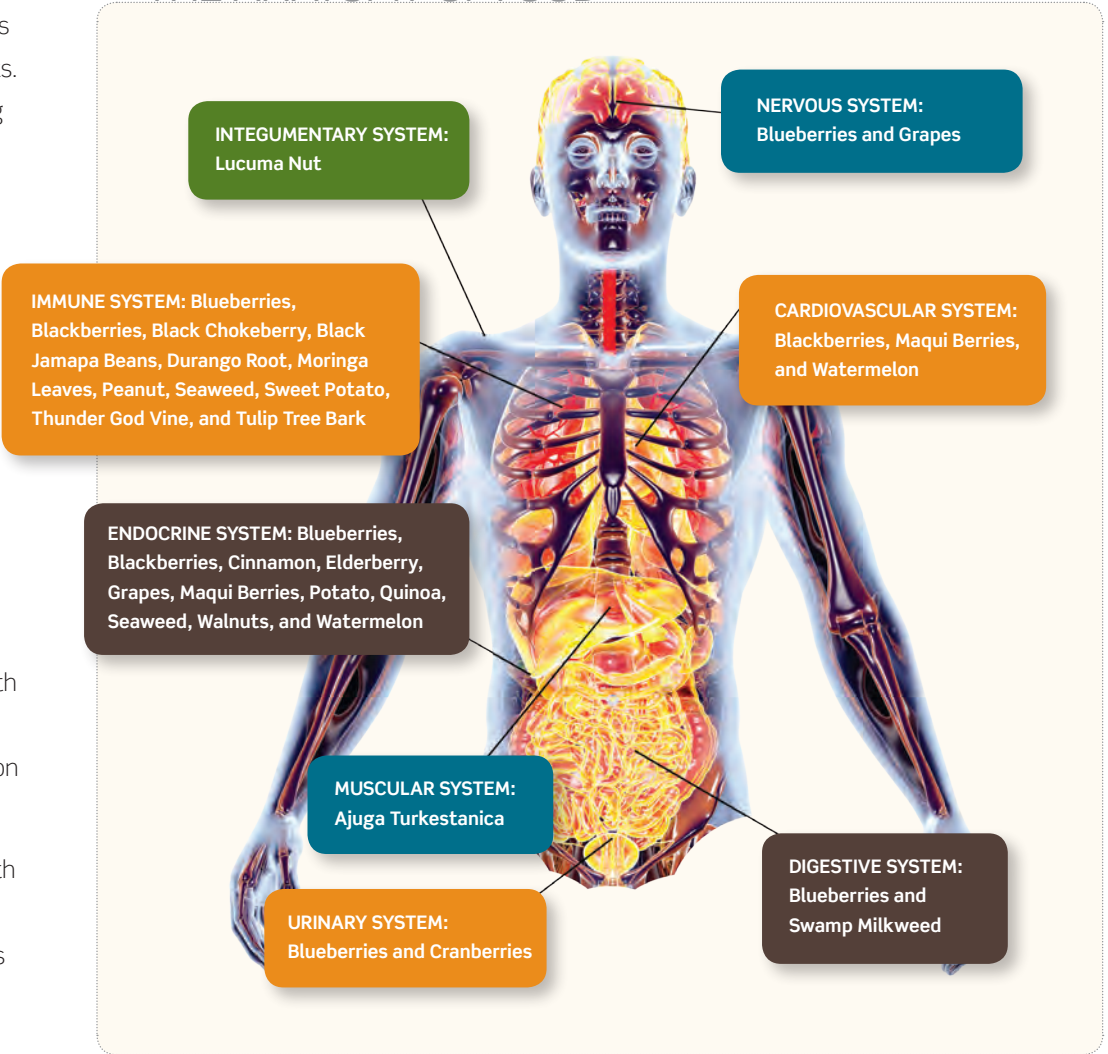
Mast completed her undergraduate degree in health wellness and promotion, but soon realized she wanted to make a difference on a larger scale and would need more education to do that. "Walden gave me an understanding of how to create policies and programs that can be regenerated to impact people in multiple areas," Mast says. Since getting her MPH, Mast has become a certified holistic health coach and is pursuing a certification in herbalism. She's now taking that education and her role at PHHI to the community.

She has spearheaded a 6-week series with local doctors' offices to give patients the tools and techniques to implement PHHI's

research in their kitchens. At a cooking class with the local health department to teach low-income citizens food-preparation skills for weight loss and prevention of illness, Mast emphasizes that the information provided on Healthy Living is versatile: "There are multiple ways you can change your lifestyle through food. We provide information about cooking, preserving, fermenting, and dehydrating crops."

Mast is hopeful that her efforts will change lives in North Carolina and throughout the country. "We are consistently accruing more medical costs as a society," she says. "Those could be prevented or reduced by using foods known to impact body system functions. What gives me incredible comfort is that I am promoting all peer-reviewed scholarly research. We're not saying, 'Only eat a grapefruit for the next 10 days and you'll do x, y, and z.'"

THE ANATOMY OF FOOD





Save the Date for Global Days of Service

Our annual Global Days of Service will take place from Oct. 12 to Oct. 18, 2015. Last year, more than 9,000 faculty members, staff, students, and alumni participated in community service projects around the world.

You're already making contributions to positive social change—leverage those current projects to make an even bigger difference during this celebratory week. Increase awareness of the projects that are close to your heart, connect with others who care, and show your community how important positive social change is to you and the Walden community.

To promote your project to other alumni near you, please contact us at alumni@waldenu.edu.

Congratulations, Dissertation Award Recipients!



Dr. Joshua M. Garrin '14
PhD in Psychology
Harold L. Hodgkinson Award

Dr. Joshua M. Garrin accepted the Harold L. Hodgkinson Award at the 53rd Commencement weekend in January. He received the award for his dissertation, *Inspiring Change: Exercise Self-Efficacy, Dispositional Optimism, and Perceived Stress in College Seniors*, which found that the extent to which students routinely engage in physical activities has global implications on their academic performance and career indecision. Garrin is the founder of iMotive Health, where he is a health psychologist, fitness professional, integrative health coach, and health sciences writer.



Dr. Samuel Isaiah Williams '14
PhD in Public Policy and Administration
School of Public Policy and Administration
Dissertation Award

Dr. Samuel Isaiah Williams is the 2015 recipient of the School of Public Policy and Administration Dissertation Award. His dissertation, *Engaging Citizens in Democratic Governance and the Decision-Making Process with Congressional Committees*, took a qualitative look at how citizens have been engaged in political decision-making throughout history and the effects of campaign finance reform; citizen awareness; media focus; redistricting and polling; and partisanship on engagement levels. Williams is an adjunct professor in public and business administration and founder and president of the nonprofit Pacific Public Policy Institute.



CELEBRATE YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS at the 55th Commencement Ceremony, January 30, 2016, in Orlando, Florida, at the Gaylord Palms. Registration will open this fall. Remember, if you missed your commencement ceremony after graduating, you can still walk. Send an email to commencement@waldenu.edu by Sept. 7 to be added to the invitation list.

Remember, if you missed your commencement ceremony after graduating, you can still walk. For more information, go to myWaldenAlumni.com/commencement.

Announcing our 2015 Outstanding Alumni Winner

Congratulations to this year's Outstanding Alumni Award winner, **Crystal Johnson '14**. Johnson is an MSN graduate who works in the Cardiovascular ICU and Post Anesthesia Care Unit and the Serious Communicable Disease Unit at Emory University Hospital. She was on the team of medical professionals who treated Ebola patients Kent Brantly and Nancy Writebol.

The Outstanding Alumni Award is granted each year to a graduate who exemplifies our mission to effect positive social change. Read more about past recipients of the award at WaldenU.edu/awards. Nominations for the 2016 award will open in the spring.



Introducing ScholarWorks

SCHOLARWORKS, our new institutional repository that makes the scholarly and creative works of the Walden community publicly accessible, is now available. The new collection aims to generate knowledge, conserve past knowledge, and transform knowledge by making connections among and between ideas to improve human and social conditions.

Start browsing the collection at ScholarWorks.WaldenU.edu.

Accolades

Alumni have a significant impact on their organizations, communities, and disciplines. Here are some recent highlights. *Congratulations to all on your accomplishments!*

Awards

Sharronda Blackman ’12
Master of Public Administration (MPA)
Selected as the DeKalb County (Georgia) District Attorney’s Office **Paralegal of the Year** 2014.

Kathy Kelly ’12
Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)
Named to *Becker’s ASC Review’s* Rising Stars: **49 ASC Leaders Under 40**. Kelly is the administrator of Viewmont Surgery Center in Hickory, North Carolina.

Michael W. Baum ’11
MS in Education (MSEd)
Named Pennsylvania’s 2014 **Milken Educator Award winner**. Baum is a second-grade teacher at Thaddeus Stevens Elementary School in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.

Karen Krantz ’11
MSEd
Received the **Milken Educator Award**. Krantz is a sixth-grade teacher at Adams Elementary School in Spokane, Washington.

Lotes Nelson ’11
MS in Mental Health Counseling
PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision student
Selected for the **National Board for Certified Counselors Minority Fellowship Program**. Nelson will receive

funding and training to support her education and facilitate her service to underserved minority populations.

Susan (Joy) Draper ’10
MS in Psychology
Named Offutt Air Force Base **Military Spouse of the Year**.

Melodi Power ’10
MSEd
Named Somerset County (Maryland) **Teacher of the Year**, Elementary Teacher of the Year, and Greenwood Elementary’s Teacher of the Year. Power teaches kindergarten through fifth grade and has been an educator for 15 years.

Beverly Stern ’05
MSEd
Received the 2015 **Arch Teacher Achievement Award** from Arch Coal Company. She was one of 12 recipients in West Virginia. Stern teaches first grade at Ruthlawn Elementary School.

Kristina A. Brush ’03
MSEd
One of 25 teachers in Florida to be selected by Battelle for Kids to receive the **Celebrate Teaching award**. The award demonstrates Battelle for Kids’ commitment to identify highly effective teachers, celebrate their achievements, learn from their practices, and share the lessons learned. Brush has taught at Miami East Junior High for 15 years.

Careers

Dr. Andrea Townsend ’15
Doctor of Education (EdD)
Named superintendent of New Bremen (Ohio) Local Schools, effective July 1. Previously, she served as director of student services, elementary programs, and online learning at Springfield City Schools.

Devon Nicely ’14
MSN
Joined Dabney S. Lancaster Community College in Virginia as an **adjunct instructor** in the practical nursing program.

Darcy Clardy ’12
MPA
Named regional field director for Operation Homefront’s Region Two. Operation Homefront is a national nonprofit that provides emergency financial assistance to service members and their families. In this role, Clardy will oversee field operations in Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

Dr. Tyra Norris-Ellis ’11, ’08
PhD in Public Health and Master of Public Health (MPH) **Named director** of the High Blood Pressure Program at the Greater Southeast Affiliate of the American Heart Association in Marietta, Georgia.

Dr. Lisa Lamb ’10
PhD in Psychology
Now a **licensed psychologist** in the state of Nevada. She is also a certified life coach and a certified hypnotherapist, and looking to start her own practice.

James Carder ’09
BS in Business Administration (BSBA)
Appointed chief information security officer of LogRhythm and vice president of LogRhythm Labs.

Dr. Beth M. Castiglia ’05
PhD in Applied Management and Decision Sciences (now PhD in Management)
Appointed dean at the Berkeley College Larry L. Luing School of Business. Prior to this appointment, she was dean and professor at the School of Business at Felician College in Lodi, New Jersey, where she developed 6 new degree programs.

Publications

Dr. Engin Ozertugrul ’15
PhD in Psychology
Published *Interview with OCD: Forty-five Days to End of a New Beginning*. The book reveals his struggle with OCD through a series of sessions with him acting as both researcher asking questions and participant answering them.

Dr. Pamela Paparone ’14
Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)
Published “Supporting Influenza Vaccination Intent Among Nurses: Effects of Leadership and Attitudes Toward Adoption of Evidence-Based Practice” in the *Journal of Nursing Administration*.

Dr. Thomas Schillinger ’14
PhD in Public Policy and Administration
Published “Bystander Effect and Religious Group Affiliation: Terrorism and the Diffusion of Responsibility” in the *International Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies* (Vol. 2, No. 2).

Dr. Veronica Semenova ’13, ’12
PhD in Psychology and MS in Psychology
Published *Learn How to Cope with Death, Loss, Grief, and Bereavement—Helpful Tips from Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy: 5 Most Common Grief Cognitions Therapy and Counseling Can Address, Restructure, and Resolve*.

Dr. Lisa R. Smith ’13
PhD in Psychology
Developed two iPhone apps to assist students with learning, writing, and using APA formats correctly. She says APA style was one of her biggest challenges while attending Walden and that inspired her to create APAGuide and MLA Guide.

Dr. Linda Vogel Talley ’12
PhD in Psychology
Published “How leaders influence followers through the use of nonverbal communication” in the peer-reviewed *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*. Talley is a behavioral theorist and president of Linda Talley & Associates Inc.

Dr. Richard Waters ’12
PhD in Education
Published *The Evolution of Teaching: A Guidebook to the Advancement of Teaching, Teacher Education, and Happier Careers for Early Career Teachers*. Much of the book’s content was derived from Waters’ research for his dissertation.


Dr. Juniace Senecharles ’11
EdD
Published *Three Steps to Guide Your Children’s Educational Future*, a foundational resource booklet for parents planning their children’s college education. Senecharles

is currently teaching French in Collier County (Florida) Public Schools and is a facilitator for the Title I Parent Academy.

Dr. William Yaw Adufutse ’10
PhD in Applied Management and Decision Sciences (now PhD in Management)
Published *Leadership Theories: Examining the Relevance of Transformational Leadership*. The book discusses leadership theories as well as Transformational Leadership and its applications across industries.

Dr. Billie Jean Holubz ’08
EdD
Authored a chapter in *Mobile Learning and Mathematics*. Holubz is an assistant professor at Liberty University School of Education, a middle school teacher in Cobb County School District, and writes online university-level teacher education course curriculum for Pearson Publishing.

Joshua L. Cohen ’07
MS in Psychology
Published *Video and Filmmaking as Psychotherapy: Research and Practice* through Routledge’s “Advances in Mental Health Research” series. Cohen has worked in hospitals, clinics, and private practice using video and creativity as an intervention. He currently works in Beverly Hills, California.

 Want to see your name here? Submit your accomplishment to myWaldenAlumni.com/shareyourstory.

Winter Commencement Memories



▲ Graduates made connections with classmates that they will carry beyond commencement.



▲ Dr. Lucky Uwuigbe '14 and his family traveled from Nigeria to attend the ceremonies in Orlando.



▲ Dr. Ricky Gujral '14 (middle) celebrated commencement with her father, who flew in from India as a surprise, and mother.



▲ Susan Fisher Brown (left), Teresa Sanchez-Lopez, and Jo Andrea Watson celebrated their graduation from the School of Nursing.



▲ Graduates mingled with each other and Interim President Jonathan Kaplan on Thursday evening.



▲ Dr. Grace E. Cook '14 met her goal of completing her PhD in Education before the birth of her first child.



▲ Board chair Paula Singer (left) and commencement speaker Edna Adan listen to commencement remarks.

Ways TO STAY INVOLVED

Take advantage of these chances to get to know your fellow alumni and remain connected to the Walden community.

August 22

Plenary session with Bill Durden, PhD
Atlanta, Georgia

September 12

Scholars of Change plenary session
Orlando, Florida

October 12-18

Participate in this year's Global Days of Service in your community

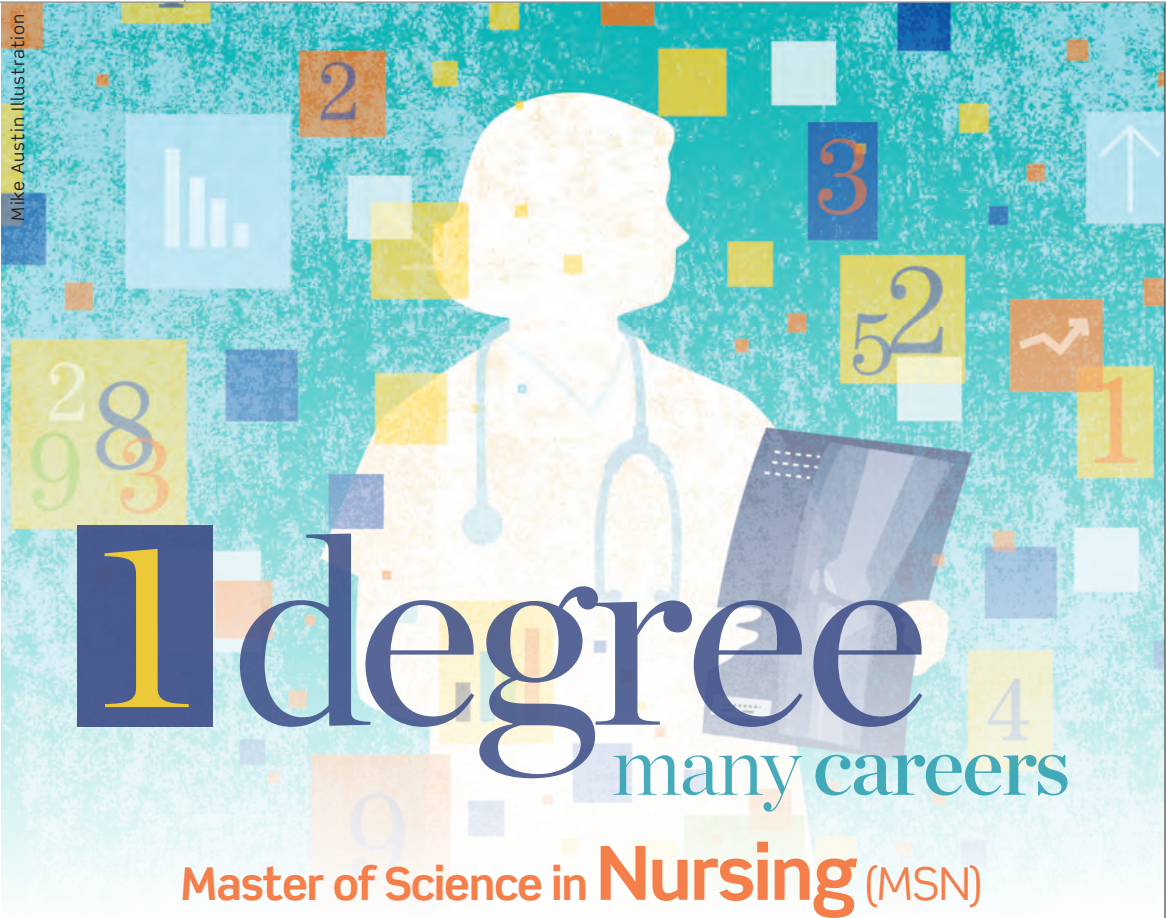
December 29

Plenary session with Steve Perry, EdD
Tampa, Florida

January 30

Save the date for the 55th Commencement Ceremony
Orlando, Florida

Interested in attending one of these events near your home? Email alumni@waldenu.edu for more info.



Once you cross the stage at commencement, it’s unlikely that all the graduates from your program are facing the same professional future. See how one degree can lead to a **diverse mix of careers**.

- 1. Deidre Boyd '14**
RN CATH LAB
Medical University of South Carolina
Charleston, South Carolina

2. Elizabeth Flores '14
NURSING INSTRUCTOR
Breckinridge School of Nursing and Health Sciences
Albuquerque, New Mexico

3. Jeffrey Paul '14
NURSE PRACTITIONER
TRAUMA SURGERY
Advocate Medical Group
Oak Lawn, Illinois
- 4. Jillian Reid '14**
NURSE EDUCATOR
The Rogosin Institute
New York, New York

5. Nick Hopkins '13
RN/CLINICAL ADJUNCT FACULTY
Wyoming Medical Center & Casper College H.E. Stuckenhoff Department of Nursing
Casper, Wyoming

6. Patricia Macolino '13
PROJECT MANAGER
University of Pennsylvania Health System
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- 7. Fabien Wecker '12**
SENIOR GLOBAL CLINICAL TRAINING CONSULTANT
Truven Health Analytics
London, England

8. Jackie Crosslin '12
CLINICAL EDUCATION SPECIALIST
Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital
Valencia, California

9. Kathleen Murtha '11
OB CLINICAL INSTRUCTOR
University of Michigan School of Nursing, Washtenaw Community College, and Siena Heights University
Ann Arbor, Michigan

10. Jana Pirie '11
LEARNING RESOURCE
MANAGER FOR NURSING ANALYTICS
Southern New Hampshire University
Manchester, New Hampshire

11. Kathryn Sanchez '11
SIMULATION LABORATORY/
CLINICAL COORDINATOR
Hutchinson Community College
Hutchinson, Kansas

12. Sylvia Rowe '10
VP OF CLINICAL INFORMATICS
Ethica Health and Retirement Communities
Dublin, Georgia

13. Eleanor Keller '09
PATIENT EXPERIENCE
MANAGER
OSS Health
York, Pennsylvania

14. Judy Stilwell '09
RESIDENT FACULTY
Mohave Community College
Kingman, Arizona

Where do you work?
Update your employer info
at myWaldenAlumni.com.

Programs at a Glance

Are you ready to advance your education and career? Remember: You'll **save 15% on all tuition*** over the lifetime of your program by returning to Walden for your next degree! Look at our current program offering and help family, friends, and colleagues get started at myWaldenAlumni.com/refer. **Only one tuition-reduction benefit may be applied to tuition.*

(New programs in bold.)

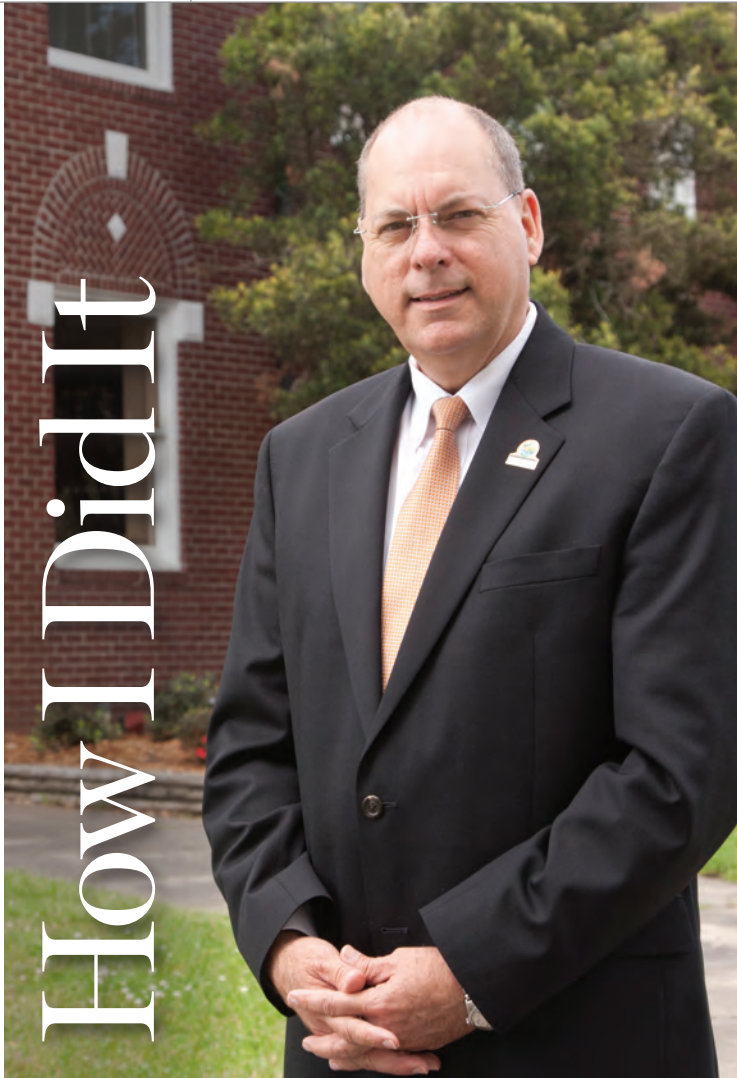
- DOCTORAL**
- Business Administration (DBA)
 - Counselor Education and Supervision
 - Criminal Justice
 - Education (EdD)
 - Education (PhD)
 - Healthcare Administration (DHA)**
 - Health Education and Promotion**
 - Health Services
 - Human Services
 - Industrial and Organizational Psychology
 - Information Technology (DIT)
 - Management
 - Nursing Practice (DNP)
 - Nursing (PhD)
 - Psychology
 - Public Health (DrPH)
 - Public Health (PhD)
 - Public Policy and Administration
 - Social Work (DSW)
 - Social Work (PhD)

- MASTER'S**
- Accounting
 - Addiction Counseling
 - Adult Learning
 - Business Administration (MBA and Executive MBA)
 - Clinical Mental Health Counseling
 - Clinical Psychology
 - Clinical Research Administration
 - Communication
 - Criminal Justice
 - Criminal Justice Leadership and Executive Management

- Early Childhood Studies (Course-based and competency-based)
- Education (MSEd and MSEd accelerated)
- Emergency Management
- Finance**
- Forensic Psychology
- Health Education and Promotion
- Health Informatics
- Healthcare Administration (MHA)
- Higher Education
- Human Resource Management
- Human Services
- Industrial and Organizational Psychology**
- Information Systems Management (MISM)
- Information Technology
- Instructional Design and Technology
- Leadership
- Management
- Marketing
- Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling
- Nonprofit Management and Leadership
- Nursing (MSN)
- Project Management
- Psychology
- Public Administration (MPA)
- Public Health (MPH)
- Public Policy (MPP)
- Social Work (MSW)
- School Counseling
- Teaching (MAT)
- BACHELOR'S**
- Accounting
- Business Administration
- Business Communication

- Child Development
- Communication
- Computer Information Systems
- Criminal Justice
- Forensic Psychology
- Health Studies
- Healthcare Management
- Human Services
- Information Technology
- Instructional Design and Technology
- Interdisciplinary Studies
- Nursing (RN-BSN) Completion Program
- Political Science and Public Administration
- Psychology
- Public Health
- EDUCATION SPECIALIST**
- Administrator Leadership for Teaching and Learning
- Adult Education
- Assessment, Evaluation, and Accountability
- College Teaching and Learning
- Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development
- Early Childhood
- Educational Leadership and Administration (Principal Preparation)
- Educational Technology
- Reading and Literacy Leadership (Non-Licensure)
- Special Education (Non-Licensure)
- Teacher Leadership

Learn more at WaldenU.edu.



Wayne Rogers

DR. SHAWN OUBRE '13

DEGREE EARNED: PhD in Public Policy and Administration

MY BIGGEST SUPPORTER: I met my wife in high school and knew she was a keeper—she has always supported my desire to further my education. I was working in law enforcement and going to night school when we had our first child. Between full workdays and night classes, my wife gave me the time I needed to study—and typed all

my papers. We had two children by the time I pursued my master's; I was police chief, but I knew that a graduate degree would lead me to greater opportunities. When the city manager decided to go back to law school, I applied for his job.

WHY I WANTED A PHD: As city manager, I've participated in many commencements—seeing those proud faces accept their

“My PhD was an investment for the city as well.”

degree is a gift. That's why I started teaching at our local college. I see a lot of myself in my students. Many already have a family and are there to improve their quality of life. Education has always played that role for me, so I decided to pursue a PhD to hone my leadership and communication skills. My wife knew I was restless, so she encouraged me to go for a doctorate—but only if I typed my own papers.

WHY WALDEN: I'd never heard of Walden until I started researching possible programs. The man who answered my first call was so warm and welcoming—he set the tone for the entire experience that followed. My advisors were just as supportive and enthusiastic throughout.

CITY BACKING: I was halfway through telling the mayor, my boss, that I wanted to pursue a PhD and he said, 'We fully support you.' He never once questioned

my decision—and knew my PhD was an investment for the city as well. Now he goes around boasting, 'We have a doctor as city manager!'

DISSERTATION DECISION: When I started my program, our city had just been through two hurricanes; one left us underwater. My job is to get the city going after catastrophes. We had FEMA and federal assistance, and I wanted to know if they made a difference, so that became the focus of my dissertation. People lost everything—clothing, furniture, even baby photos. It was painful to discuss, so I'm thankful for those who agreed to talk to me, including a widow in her 80s. Her home was flooded waist-high, all her belongings destroyed, and she was now homeless. FEMA placed a temporary dwelling on her property, and she was satisfied, as were the others I interviewed. You hear all these stories about what the federal government didn't do—it was nice to focus on what they did.

PROUDEST MOMENT: One of the women who lost her home in the flood stopped me coming out of church one day and said she wanted to be one of the first to call me 'doctor.' She said it with such pride; it made me proud, too. She still brings it up every time I see her. — L.W.

■ Tell us how you did it at myWaldenAlumni.com/shareyourstory.

Help positive social change go viral.

You share pictures and interesting articles. Why not share the power of education by referring friends or colleagues to Walden?

If your education is making a difference for you, pay it forward and empower others to improve their lives.

► REFER TODAY.



Empower your colleagues and friends:
www.WaldenU.edu/refer

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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 yours? **Share your journey with us.**

How has your degree advanced your career?

What motivated you along the way?

Have you been published?

How are you changing our world?

Did you recently get a promotion?



Tell us today! myWaldenAlumni.com/shareyourstory