

WINTER/SPRING 2016

WALDEN

ALUMNI MAGAZINE



A Legacy of Connecting Scholars

Positive Politics

Engaging in social change for Election 2016

A Brighter Future

Giving child soldiers a voice worldwide

Heart of Healthcare

Innovating cardiac diagnostics in Florida

Dear Alumni,

DURING OUR 45TH ANNIVERSARY in 2015, while reflecting on Walden's past and future, I thought about our founders—Bernie and Rita Turner. Their powerful ideals and ideas provided the framework for who we are today.

Bernie and Rita were disruptors. They founded Walden in 1970, when “disrupt” had a very different meaning. At that time, the need for change was paramount. The Turners strongly believed that postsecondary education could serve a higher and more compelling purpose than just helping students attain a degree. Closing these two gaps—enabling working professionals to pursue their graduate degrees and tying higher education to social change—set Walden apart.

Today, our mission of fostering social change while ensuring access to higher education has given us an abundance of success stories. We continue to hear of students and alumni who have inspired others through their passion for the greater good.

Advancing this mission is our sacred trust as we look toward our 50th anniversary, a milestone that we will hit in the year 2020. As we look ahead, continue to ask yourself, what means the most to you? Where do you believe that you can make a difference?

I ask these questions because what Walden looks like in 2020 will be shaped in part by you, our alumni who are working every day to raise social consciousness. Whether it's been 5 years or 25 since you graduated, we encourage you to renew your dedication to positive social change.

I also encourage you to share your ideas for how we can make this vision clearer and how we can help you leverage your education, your research, and your passion for social change. My President's Perspective blog is an open forum for all members of the Walden community, so please join the conversation at WaldenU.edu/presidentblog.

Thanks for being a part of Walden's rich history and for creating an enduring legacy for its future.

Sincerely,

Jonathan A. Kaplan
President



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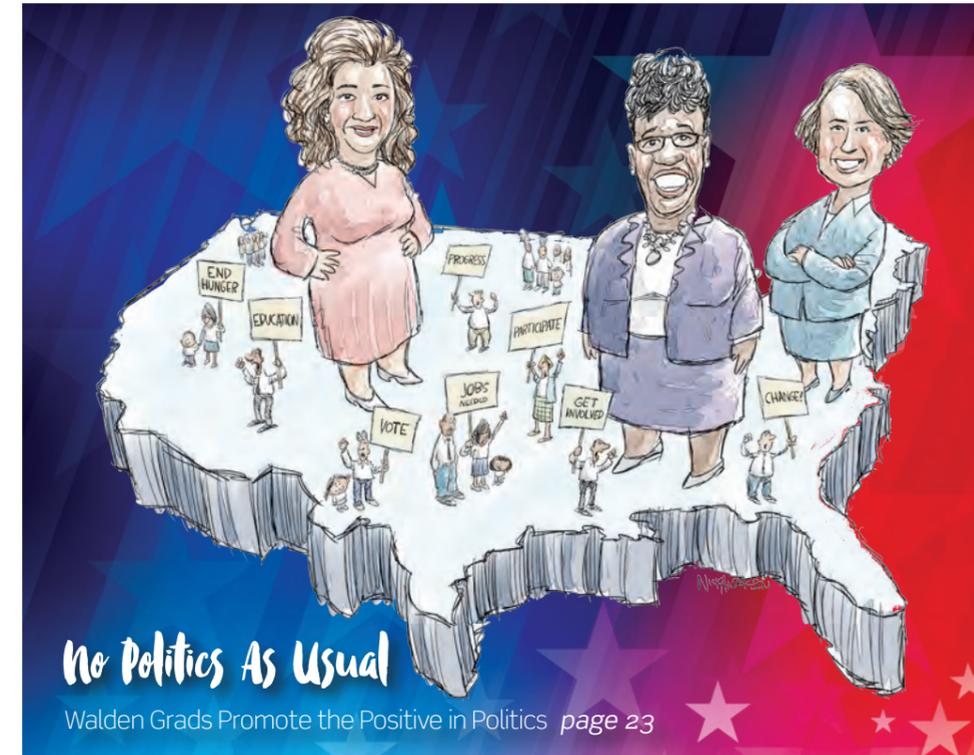
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ON THE COVER: A Walden alumnus and faculty member nurtures connections with his students to foster social change.
Photo by Matt Spangler.



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APPLYING MY RESEARCH

From Ferguson Forward

Dr. Roy Alston wants to save America's police departments

By Kristin Simonetti

AMERICA'S ATTENTION RETURNED TO FERGUSON, Missouri, in August 2015, 1 year after the death of unarmed black teenager Michael Brown at the hands of a white police officer. **Dr. Roy Alston '10**, a Dallas police lieutenant, watched the events a bit more closely than most. Several months earlier, he had served on a seven-person U.S. Department of Justice team investigating the police response to the protests and unrest that followed Brown's death.

Why Alston? His Walden dissertation—which led him to write a book and contribute to research at the Caruth Police Institute—had a lot to do with the department drafting him for the task force. A **PhD in Management** graduate, Alston focused his research on police occupational deviance—those behaviors that run contrary to the norms, ethics, and policies of the profession.

“Any profession is prone to occupational deviance,”



Getty Images/Joe Raedle

explains Alston, who joined Dallas's police force in 2003. “For a doctor, occupational deviance might be stealing medication. For a police officer, it might be stealing property from a crime scene.”

Alston's dissertation was based on a survey of a large police organization. The results showed that nearly all respondents had witnessed examples of police occupational

deviance. Those same officers said they were reluctant to turn the offenders in for discipline. The traditional department response of quickly and quietly singling out “bad apples” exacerbated the deviant behaviors of rogue officers without addressing why they occurred in the first place, Alston concluded.

“The adage is that one bad apple can rot the barrel,” he says, “but for the past 4 decades, the entire barrel of policing has been more rotten than anyone in the profession has wanted to admit.”

Until now. The social media-driven coverage of Ferguson, the shooting death of Walter Scott in South Carolina, and the traffic stop of Sandra Bland in Texas have placed hot spotlights on excessive use of force by police. As Alston and his fellow Justice Department researchers delved into hundreds of interviews, reams of policy documents, and firsthand video accounts, Alston saw the same problems he had studied in his dissertation.

“The behaviors we talk about in police occupational deviance have been happening for generations, and we've eroded

a powder keg, and it shows the devastating effects of police occupational deviance over time.”

enforcement officers, he adds, its recommendations may be particularly effective.

“Theory informs practice and vice versa—and that link has been broken in the past for public policing.”

the public's trust,” he says. “In Ferguson, the legitimacy of all of these agencies”—the Justice Department focused on Ferguson, St. Louis County, and St. Louis Metropolitan police departments in addition to the Missouri State Highway Patrol—“was gone in the public's opinion. Ferguson was

Alston hopes the recommendations in the Justice Department report, released in late August 2015, represent a significant step toward eradicating the policing norms that have allowed occupational deviance to thrive. Because the report's authors have experience working as law

“Most knowledge about policing and police science has been produced by people who have never been police officers, so scholarly recommendations aren't typically embraced,” he explains. “Theory informs practice and vice versa—and that link has been broken in the past for public policing.”



Getty Images/Michael B. Thomas

“I want agencies around the country to take this document, think about what happened in Ferguson, and say, ‘Not in our community.’”

To read the complete report from the U.S. Department of Justice, visit ric-zai-inc.com/Publications/cops-p317-pub.pdf.

BEYOND THE DEGREE

Finding the Mind-Body Connection

Dr. Shawna Charles puts a psych degree to work at her boxing gym

By Victoria Wiseman

BREAKTHROUGHS SOMETIMES HAPPEN WITHOUT THE GLITZ AND GLAMOUR:

in a gritty boxing gym, lighting low, music thumping, and people grunting as they smash their fists into punching bags.

For **Dr. Shawna Charles '13**, a **PhD in Psychology** graduate, this is where she's changing people's lives—from the outside in.

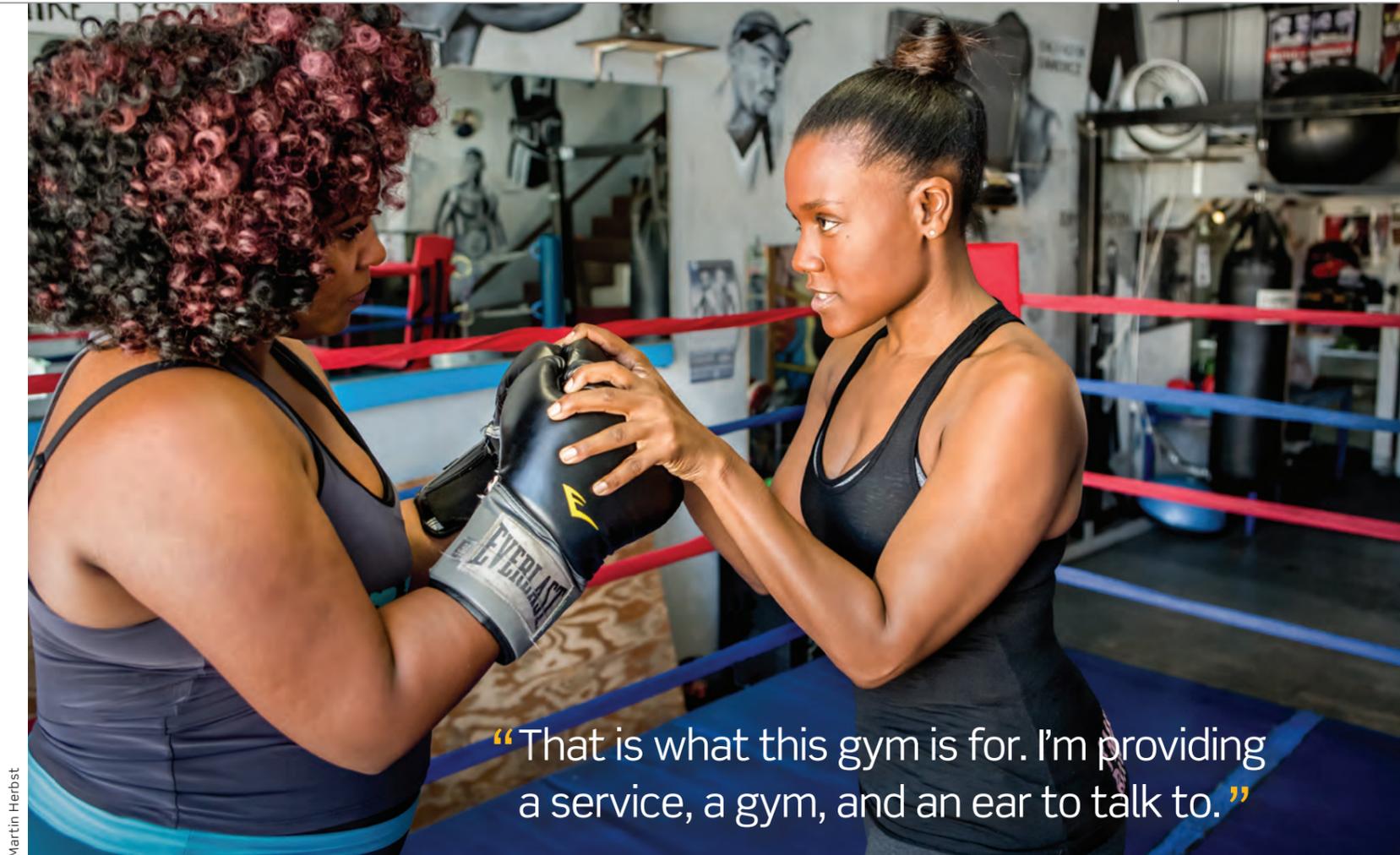
As the owner of The Boxing District, a gym in Los Angeles, Charles says she reaches more people than she ever would have as a clinical psychologist. That was her initial goal when she enrolled at Walden in 2006. "Today, I want to be an advocate, not a therapist," she says.

Her drive comes from her own experience. "The gym wasn't even for sale when I bought it," Charles says. "But right after I finished my degree at Walden, I started going there to work out. I loved the way I felt when I left that gym. I felt powerful, like I could conquer the world. I needed to hold on to that feeling for my own sanity."

She knew she could impact her community if she could just pair her degree with the right venue. "I wanted to share that feeling I got at the gym with other people," Charles says. So she had her lawyer talk to the owner; soon after, she was a small business owner.

Her background in psychology helps her expand the role of The Boxing District. Perhaps the biggest advantage is that its clients are people who would have likely never taken advantage of the services of a counselor. The gym, instead, provides people the help they need outside the traditional therapy paradigm.

"I remember one day I was working out with a client on the treadmill, and she just started crying. She shared some really personal things,"



Martin Herbst

"That is what this gym is for. I'm providing a service, a gym, and an ear to talk to."

Charles says. "Later, she sent me a long text message, thanking me for listening to something she'd held on to since she was a child. She said it was cathartic.

"That is what this gym is for. I'm providing a service, a gym, and an ear to talk to. Everyone who walks into a gym for the first time is making himself or herself vulnerable," she says. "You have to be open to trying something new, something different."

Charles uses that openness to observe, build rapport, and connect people with the services they need. "Being able to direct clients to a resource

that fits their needs moments after they walk into the gym, they don't expect that."

But that's just what she does: On her intake forms, she asks people if they're military veterans and connects them with local organizations. Constantly looking for opportunities to help her clients, Charles is taking the Walden mission back to its roots on her gym floor.

"If I touch one person at a time, and they touch one person, and it becomes infectious, then I've done what I wanted to do," she says. "I want these doors to be open so I can sow this seed of social change."

■ Tell us about your experience at myWaldenAlumni.com/shareyourstory.

MY MISSION POSSIBLE

Reclaiming Their Futures

Educator **Dr. David Parks** gives opportunity to at-risk students

“AFTER I RETIRED FROM THE ARMY and was hired at Premier High School (PHS), only about 33% of students were graduating. To me, that was unacceptable.

“We are a community in west Phoenix with a lower income and a lot of single parents who haven’t finished high school. Students who are new to our charter school often come from area public schools when their performance is lacking in attendance, academics, or behavior.

“After my third year, I was promoted to assistant principal, and I enrolled at Walden to enhance the knowledge I needed to be successful. I wanted to help these kids find hope and earn their diplomas so they could have a good

life. I realized Walden’s mission of social change was what this community was asking for.

“I introduced the Credit Retrieval Program (CRP) to allow students to work a couple extra hours before and after school to complete their missing coursework. The CRP takes less time than night school, but it’s enough for them to be successful.

“I am thankful for the process used at Walden; my professors were inspiring, demanding, and accessible during my studies. That’s informed the way we teach at PHS. First, we teach students to believe in themselves. Second, we provide them with the rigor needed to challenge and motivate them. Last, we provide structure and support to ensure the completion of established goals.



Peter Ensenberger

.....
“I remind them that I’m not going anywhere. If they’re not coming four days a week, I’m after them.”
.....

“I teach my students to be accountable for their actions. If they don’t come to class, they have to own that they won’t do well in school. That’s a lesson we heard around the dinner table growing up, but one these kids don’t necessarily hear because their parents are at work. They just need to be given the opportunity, pointed in the right direction, and get a little follow-up. I remind them that I’m not going anywhere. If they’re not coming four days a week to CRP, I’m after them.

“We had a young student in the CRP with a lot of potential. He was straddling the line between living on the streets and being on track to go

to college. He came to school drunk one day. We confiscated the liquor, suspended him, and upon his return to school we gave him a lot of attention and guidance. We taught him to believe in himself.

“He did so well on his college placement exams that he was awarded a presidential scholarship to college. He is now studying psychology and plans to work in behavioral health.

“When I started at PHS, I met kids who were the first people in their families to graduate; now, their siblings are graduating. Our graduation rate in 2015 was over 85%. They’re going to community college, technical school, and even law school. If this school wasn’t here, I’m not sure what they’d be doing.”

— As told to Victoria Wiseman

Dr. David Parks '11, an EdD graduate, is assistant principal at Premier High School in Phoenix, Arizona, a charter school—where he established a credit retrieval program to help at-risk students graduate. He also manages the English Language Learner program and the career counseling program.

BY THE NUMBERS

2014 Alumni and Employer Satisfaction Survey Results

THE MOST IMPORTANT OUTCOME of all teaching and learning at Walden is to produce graduates with knowledge, skills, and abilities that can immediately be applied. To ensure we're reaching that goal, we ask our graduates—and their employers—to provide feedback on how they are applying their Walden knowledge to advance their careers and the greater good.

Thank you to all the alumni that responded to the 2014 Alumni Satisfaction Survey.

“My Walden degree enhanced my professional performance.”

90%–95%

Alumni from the following programs say their degree enhanced their professional performance.

90%
DBA

91%
MSEd

93%
MSN

93%
BS
in Child Development

95%
MS
in Clinical Mental Health Counseling

“We would hire another Walden graduate.”

Employers of Walden graduates of the following programs say they would hire another Walden graduate.

96%–100%

96%
BSN

98%
MBA

99%
MSN

100%
MPH



9 out of 10 graduates say that they are satisfied with Walden.

Source: www.WaldenU.edu/survey_methodology; % calculated on total number of respondents to our 2014 survey



FROM THE FIELD

Answering the Call



“I DIDN'T REALIZE UNTIL I WAS SITTING WITH PRESIDENT OBAMA that the decision that I made—and the decisions we made as a group—changed not only healthcare in the United States, but healthcare globally. He wanted to know what we learned from the experience because he was about to deploy the troops. I didn't realize he was going to use our insights to review policies and some laws.

“We have to make social change feel attainable. When it was something big, it was scary. It was just one small decision that I made. It doesn't take much. Sometimes it just takes doing your job and applying the foundation. Once you dig down and see your potential, then things are attainable.”

— CRYSTAL JOHNSON '14, an MSN graduate, is the 2015 Outstanding Alumni Award winner. She was honored for her courage and leadership as one of the first healthcare professionals to treat Ebola patients in the U.S. at Emory Hospital.

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

BROADENING MY HORIZONS



Matt Spangler

Open Communications

How MBA grad **Jessica Mayorga** transitioned from on air to behind the scenes

By Victoria Wiseman

THE STORY BEGINS IN CUBA.

A woman, exiled for speaking out against the communist revolution, received a “void” stamp on her passport, forbidding her to return home. Her granddaughter, **Jessica Mayorga '07**, would discover a

passion for storytelling during a youth journalism program trip to Cuba at the age of 15. “I talked to young people who were part of the José Martí Pioneer Organization—it was like the Boy Scouts but with communist indoctrination,” Mayorga recalls.

That experience shaped Mayorga’s future. “I realized stories are a powerful tool,” she says. “I was able to reveal what life was like in a place where the message was manipulated by the government. I could bring freedom to untold stories.”

With that goal, Mayorga enrolled in journalism school at the University of Maryland. She landed a full-time summer job at Univision after just one day as an intern; she later accomplished the same feat at a DC-area Spanish-language radio station.

But that’s not where her story ends. She pivoted from an on-air career to one behind the scenes, and she has racked up an impressive list of industry expertise: broadcast journalism, local government, education policy, and now the waste and recycling industry.

Along the way, Mayorga completed a master’s degree at Harvard’s Graduate School of Education before enrolling at Walden. “When I looked at Walden, I knew it would be a great support for me to expand my career,” she says.

She credits her Walden **MBA** with giving her the ability to switch from her first career as a broadcast journalist to working as a media relations expert in education policy to her current role as senior director of communications and marketing for the National Waste & Recycling Association in Washington, DC.

“The more you learn, the more opportunities you will have,” she says. “That’s what’s

great about journalism and communications—you can apply those skills to just about every environment. Walden taught me that every discipline has some facet of communication.”



“I realized stories are a powerful tool. I could bring freedom to untold stories.”

The opportunity to work with people from all walks of life in an online learning environment also provided a leg up, she says. “Using my existing communication skills, my MBA program felt like a true professional setting where I was working with colleagues

at a new level. I found it to be more engaging than a traditional classroom.”

Mayorga’s impact goes well beyond her impressive resume. Her son, Jax, is deaf, blind, and has cerebral palsy, and Mayorga uses her management skills as the PTA president for his school, a unique community serving 100 students with special needs. “I keep these exceptional students in my thoughts as I make decisions,” she says.

Next up for Mayorga? She can’t say exactly, but she’d love to increase her advocacy on behalf of children with special needs. One thing is for sure: The openness that’s defined her career so far is here to stay.

“I’m always eager to take on new opportunities,” she says. “I try to decide what’s best for me and for my son, what’s best for my family and my community.”



Doctor's Orders

Dr. Ernest Ekong channels his grandfather's spirit into a lifetime of healing and fighting infectious diseases

By Mike Dunphy

AS A BOY GROWING UP IN NIGERIA, DR. ERNEST EKONG '14 used to watch his grandfather—the man he was named after—treat members of the community as a “dispenser,” a sort of informal nurse or doctor trained by British colonists. As Ekong and his grandfather grew close, so did his desire to follow his grandfather's lead and help people in need. Playtime often resulted in Ekong treating friends who suffered wounds, so much so that he soon earned the nickname “doctor” from friends

and family. When it came time to choose a career path, there was no doubt about what field he would pursue: medicine.

More than 30 years later, Ekong plays a key role in public health, splitting his time between the United States and Africa. As the director of the clinical services department at the Institute of Human Virology, Nigeria, and the director of health programs at the University of Maryland's Institute of Human Virology, Ekong develops regional and country-specific

strategies for improving healthcare in the general population, with a specialization in HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. He trains healthcare workers in patient management and research, works to strengthen health systems, and acts as a liaison to the government. Most recently, Ekong earned his **PhD in Public Health** with a specialization in Epidemiology.

It was a close friend of Ekong's—also a public health physician—who first directed his attention to Walden. “He told me that since I was already successfully and actively working in public health, Walden's doctoral program would be beneficial for me to combine what I learn in the courses with my own work,” he recalls.

Ekong already had vast international experience—research associate for Harvard University, assistant secretary

Matt Spangler



“Walden helped me think much more widely than my job description as country director of Harvard PEPFAR in Nigeria.”

general of the Task Force on AIDS Control in Africa, and country director for Harvard's U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) in Nigeria—but the 60-month PhD program helped him expand his vision of the impact he could have professionally to a global scale. “Walden helped me think much more widely than my job description as country director of Harvard PEPFAR in Nigeria,” he says.

He found health informatics to be particularly helpful: “I learned how to handle and manage data, from generation right through to its storage and use, and how to use specific indicators to apply to

new service offerings and planning more for different populations like orphans and vulnerable children.”

Ekong wants others to know that anyone can work toward international social change, no matter where you are in the world. “It is not easy, but you can always start with the little that you can do,” he says. “You must build trust, you must be transparent, and you must enjoy being the changemaker and innovator for sustainable success.”

■ Tell us about your experience at myWaldenAlumni.com/shareyourstory.





MEET THE FACULTY

Dr. Peter J. Anthony | College of Management and Technology

By Mike Dunphy

EVERYONE CAN BE AN EXCEPTIONAL LEADER, according to **Dr. Peter J. Anthony.** All it takes is the right guidance, knowledge, and team members—which he learned first as an Eagle Scout and later during his 20-year military career as

a Navy submariner. Those skills have served him well as an instructor in the U.S. Department of Commerce’s pilot program Camo2Commerce, which assists members of the military in western Washington state in their transition to civilian and business life after service.

Anthony’s skills are also on display when he’s teaching at Walden. The quality of his instruction inspired 20 doctoral students to nominate him for the College of Management and Technology Outstanding Faculty Award and the Presidential Award for Faculty Excellence—both of which he won in 2015. Here, as he reflects on his long career,

he offers insights into his work with students, military veterans, and sustainable businesses.

What is your role in Camo2Commerce? How does the program help veterans transition to a career in business?

I teach a four-day kickoff including résumé writing,

interviewing skills, networking skills, emotional intelligence, and how to transition to civilian culture. Then, each week for 12 weeks, the fellows work on real projects, from working as a Lean management lead for an aerospace equipment supplier to developing a veteran recruiting program at a major healthcare organization. They also go to internships each week for 3 days, then come back into the classroom with me for business leadership and management training.

What skills do vets bring to the business world that you help them further develop?

Vets bring strong leadership skills, diverse knowledge and experiences—especially

with other countries and languages—and dedication to the organization and getting the job done.

You also provide consulting on sustainable business practices. What drew you to this field?

Business leaders see the need for social, community, and environmental responsibility, but also the need to make a profit. So I saw a challenge—and I always like a challenge—to empower leaders to understand how they can profit from being a socially responsible company.

What do business leaders need to know about sustainable business practices?

There is a need for understanding the benefits. The challenge is to present a business case for sustainability and show how socially responsible

measures may not net short-term profit, but they will earn long-term success and customer respect.

How does your sustainable business consulting and Camo2Commerce influence your teaching in your class?

The world needs responsible leadership, and leadership needs a world that values organizations that are socially and environmentally responsible while still making a profit. The classroom and conference seminars are valuable platforms for expanding knowledge and experience in collaborative critical thinking and analysis. The diverse backgrounds of classmates provide the perfect opportunity to share together in one room or an online forum.

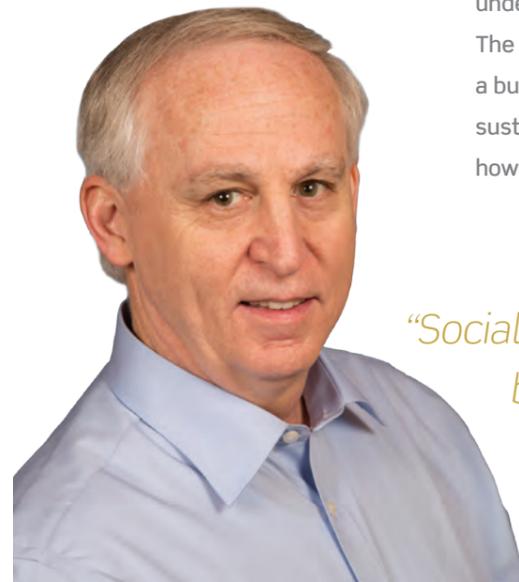


PARTICIPATION:
Two **20**-person cohort groups

SUCCESS RATE:
90% of participants landed civilian jobs

NET INCOMES:
\$50,000 to **\$100,000+**

LEAN SIX SIGMA PROJECT SAVINGS:
Hundreds of thousands of dollars



“Socially responsible measures may not net short-term profit, but they will earn long-term success and customer respect.”

— Dr. Peter J. Anthony

LIFELONG LEARNERS

Healing Healthcare

In 6 years, two degrees have helped **Dr. Wendy Renault** redefine her role in healthcare in Canada

By Mike Dunphy

HELPING PEOPLE HAS ALWAYS COME NATURALLY to Wendy Renault '15, '12.

Growing up in Brockville, Ontario, the doorbell would ring at all times of day (and night) with people seeking help from her father, a minister at the church just next door. He never turned anyone away, and his dedication to serving others inspired Renault to pursue a similar goal.

Although she had a master's degree in anthropology, nonprofit groups were scarce in the 1970s and Renault had to find another way to serve. She decided to pursue nursing, first by way of in-patient mental health, then as a visiting nurse providing home healthcare, and eventually managing home care. However, it was her clinical teaching

experience with the Practical Nursing With Aboriginal Communities program that helped her discover a love of teaching and led her to Walden.

Wanting to teach nursing full time, Renault was turned down for several jobs in the industry before she realized a nursing degree would be necessary. At first, it seemed she'd finally hit a wall that her ambition couldn't break down.

"I was over 50 years old, and part of me was thinking, 'I can't go back to school because

I'm too old. I don't know how it's done anymore,'" she recalls. "At the time, I didn't know how to text, and I really wasn't good at e-mailing. So how could I do anything school-related online?"

But then she talked to an enrollment advisor at Walden, who not only helped her pull together and complete all the required paperwork for her application but also provided support and encouragement during the process. "He told me that I was



Henk Rintjema

The Graduate:
Wendy Renault '15, '12
Master of Science
in Nursing (MSN) >>
Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)

definitely capable of doing it. His belief in me was the push I needed to take the leap," she says. "Recalling that now just kind of makes me laugh. I've come so far."

"I thought I understood the nursing system. Then I started my MSN courses and realized how much I didn't know."

Renault enrolled in the **Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)** 36-month program in 2009, and she saw the positive effects on her work immediately. "I thought I understood the nursing system," she says. "Then I started my MSN courses and realized how much I didn't know."

This was especially true in understanding how each action or change—admitting a patient to the hospital or setting them up with home healthcare—affects other parts of the healthcare system. "I learned how essential it is for nurses to understand the theory and the consequences behind what we do with our patients and how we handle certain situations," she says.

It was at her commencement celebration in 2012 that Renault began to realize her education might not be finished. Dr. Andrea Lindell, associate dean for the School of Nursing, spoke with her that weekend and encouraged her to continue her journey with a doctoral degree. With family support, she began the **Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)** program later that year, graduating once again in 2015.

"Just as I was finishing my practicum hours, a job opportunity came up that presented a different way of looking at home care and what home care can do," she says. The program, Health Links, looks at people who have frequent or complex health needs and how their needs can be met by the most appropriate provider. As a care coordinator, she gets to make a difference in people's lives every day.

Renault is now looking to the future—especially for more ways to bring aid to the rural and high-poverty area she serves in Ontario, including Bridges Out of Poverty, a community support program that provides strategies for getting out of poverty. "Walden taught me an incredible amount about nursing, healthcare, education, and the necessity of making positive social change, both professionally and personally," Renault says.

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



CONNECTIONS

A Legacy of Connecting Scholars

Dr. Walter McCollum nurtures relationships well beyond graduation to impact social change

By Lesley Tkaczyk

LAST SUMMER BEGAN WITH A FAMILY REUNION. None of **Dr. Shana Webster-Trotman's** blood relations were there, but the ties that bind her intellectual community are just as strong. "I felt like I was connecting with folks I'd known for years, but many of them I only knew by name," the 2010 graduate says.

Webster-Trotman, a PhD in Applied Management and Decision Sciences (now **PhD in Management**) graduate, had gathered with College of Management and Technology (CMT) colleagues in the living room of alumnus and Walden faculty member **Dr. Walter McCollum '04**. He had brought the group together not just to celebrate the success of his most recent graduates and to continue the mentoring relationships he'd started with each of them, but also to encourage them to take action to prolong their scholarship and dedication to social change.

The common thread of successfully completing dissertations under McCollum's guidance brings them together, but his call to community action is what keeps these graduates connected. "Dr. McCollum had students contact me to get my insights and learn about my experience in hopes that it would motivate them," Webster-Trotman says.

And there is no doubt that his past students will continue to motivate others just the way he motivated—and continues to motivate—they. McCollum considers **Dr. Cernata C. Morse '14, '09** his "legacy student": He mentored her from undergrad to her

MBA and straight through the completion of her PhD in Management program. "No matter the circumstance, Dr. McCollum consistently encouraged me to soar to my greatest potential," Morse says. And that encouragement does not end upon graduation for McCollum.

"One of my mentees, **Dr. Dereje Tessema '10**, is co-chairing the International Conference on Interdisciplinary Research Studies (ICIRS) with me," McCollum says. They held the inaugural ICIRS conference in August 2015, with scholars from 30 countries attending and presenting;

Webster-Trotman and Morse have both volunteered to participate in next year's conference. "Those are the students I love to work with because I learn as much from them as they do from me. It's a true partnership," he says.

"Once you have a PhD, people look to you for answers," Webster-Trotman says. "But you don't have to know *all* of the answers. Thanks to



"No matter the circumstance, Dr. McCollum consistently encouraged me to soar to my greatest potential."

— Dr. Cernata C. Morse

Matt Spangler



While classes are delivered in an online environment, students and graduates have ample opportunity to connect to their colleagues and faculty members through events such as residencies and commencements. Keeping those connections strong can lead to a world of opportunity, just like it has for McCollum's community.

"My relationship with Dr. McCollum has shifted from mentor and friend to colleague and friend for life," Morse says. "And now, I am mentoring three young ladies. He always requires mentees to reach back and mentor others to impact social change."



"Thanks to Walden, you have a backroom full of folks who have different areas of expertise whom you can call when you need help."

— Dr. Shana Webster-Trotman

Walden, you have a backroom full of folks who have more years of experience and different areas of expertise, whom you can just pick up the phone and call when you need help."

Webster-Trotman, Morse, and another of McCollum's mentees, **Dr. Jodi Burchell**, are co-chairing the Walter McCollum Scholars' Gala to honor his philosophy of achieving academic excellence and impacting social change. The first gala, slated for fall 2017, will include as many as 40 of McCollum's scholars to highlight their successes and achievements, while also offering scholarships to students.

It's a collaborative, intellectual group by all accounts, which is partly why Webster-Trotman holds Walden in such high regard. "Dr. McCollum is a phenomenal faculty mentor because he's so student-centered. I look up to him and have the utmost respect for him," she says. "I get so excited to guide students to Walden because I know they'll get a quality education from the high-caliber faculty."

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

WHY I REFER

Finding Order in Chaos

Ten years after Hurricane Katrina, **Dr. Danette O'Neal** still gives back to the university that helped her start over

By Victoria Wiseman

NAME: Dr. Danette O'Neal '11

DEGREES EARNED: Master of Public Administration (MPA) and PhD in Public Policy and Administration

CURRENT JOB: Owner of Danette O'Neal Realtors and professor and curriculum developer for Strayer University, Argosy University, Realtor University, and Homberg University

WHEN DID YOU DECIDE TO COME TO WALDEN? Before Hurricane Katrina hit, I had a successful company, I was active in politics, I was well known. In Katrina's aftermath, I was left with nothing because the population I had served was now scattered all over the United States. I evacuated to Atlanta, Georgia, to start over. I had dreamed of becoming Dr. O'Neal since I was a little girl. My sister had just finished her master's degree at Walden, and



I knew a few others who had good experiences. The PhD in Public Policy and Administration was just 10 months old at the time, so I took a leap of faith.

Hurricane Katrina presented the perfect opportunity to redefine myself. Everyone was feeling their way through their new lives. Many encounters while rebuilding were not so pleasant, but pursuing my PhD was so challenging, I couldn't focus on the negativity surrounding me. That kept me sane. Only after I graduated was I really able to see the mess around me. I'm grateful I entered Walden at that time.

THANK YOU, Dr. O'Neal, for referring so many friends, family members, and colleagues to Walden!

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!

As one of Walden's more than **95,000 alumni**, you have the power to effect change in the lives of countless others who are looking to further their education. Share your story with them and refer them to Walden today!

REFERRAL TIP **1**

Connect colleagues, family members, friends, and mentees to an enrollment advisor by calling 1-866-492-5336.

REFERRAL TIP **2**

Go beyond mentioning Walden in conversation—share the website: WaldenU.edu.

REFERRAL TIP **3**

Send names of future students to us via myWaldenAlumni.com /refer so we can thank you.

REFERRAL TIP **4**

Make sure to highlight your Walden education in your LinkedIn profile, and be on the lookout for contacts who are seeking opportunities to advance their careers.

“People look for job promotions or an increase in pay. But the first change is on the inside.”

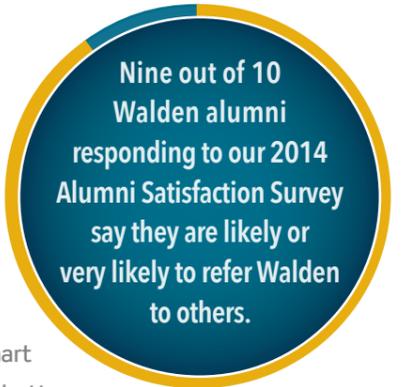
WHO HAVE YOU REFERRED? I've referred so many people, I can't even count them all. It's got to be upward of 30 people, and about 20 have entered a PhD program. Walden even gave me my own enrollment representative!

THAT'S IMPRESSIVE! WHY HAVE YOU RECOMMENDED WALDEN TO SO MANY PEOPLE? First of all, my Christian values have taught me to give back. Second, I'm exposed to students every day when I am teaching, so I have the ability to reach a captive audience that understands the value of education. They want to know how I did it, and how I survived Hurricane Katrina—and that's the perfect platform to tell them about Walden.

WHAT CHANGES HAVE YOU SEEN IN THOSE YOU'VE REFERRED? Meaningful change takes place from the inside out. People look for the external signs of success: job promotions or an increase in pay. Yes, that's the goal. But the first change is on the inside. My sister-in-law is finishing up her Doctor of Public Health (DrPH)

at Walden and she works at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). So she's already in her field, but she wanted to add to her credibility. When she enrolled at Walden, she was already smart and passionate, but now she's better at articulating that passion and is becoming a better policy writer. She is growing in her field and effecting change.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO OTHER WALDEN ALUMNI ABOUT REFERRING? I would challenge graduates to reach back and refer new students. I don't wait for people to ask. For instance, while renting a car recently, I asked the clerks behind the counter if they were in school or considering an advanced degree. I talked about Walden and gave them my card. I do it because somebody did it for me.



HOW IT PAID OFF



Nikita Lee

Nurse Manager to CEO

NAME: Christi Siedlecki '15

DEGREE: MSN with a specialization in Leadership and Management

TITLE BEFORE MY DEGREE: Nurse Manager at Grants Pass Clinic in Grants Pass, Oregon

TITLE AFTER MY DEGREE: CEO at Grants Pass Clinic

BEATING THE COMPETITION:

During the interview process for CEO, I was up against 120 applicants. So the first way my degree really paid off was by boosting my confidence. The interviewers asked me about my experience with finance, if I knew how to increase my power base, and how to influence government through

"By far, the most important change has been in my own personal self-worth."

healthcare legislation—all the things I had been taught in my courses at Walden. After I was offered the position, I was told that my education really made a difference when weighing me against the competition. Choosing a curriculum that emphasized my clinical skills showed them my commitment to the organization, and it increased their confidence in my abilities to lead the organization.

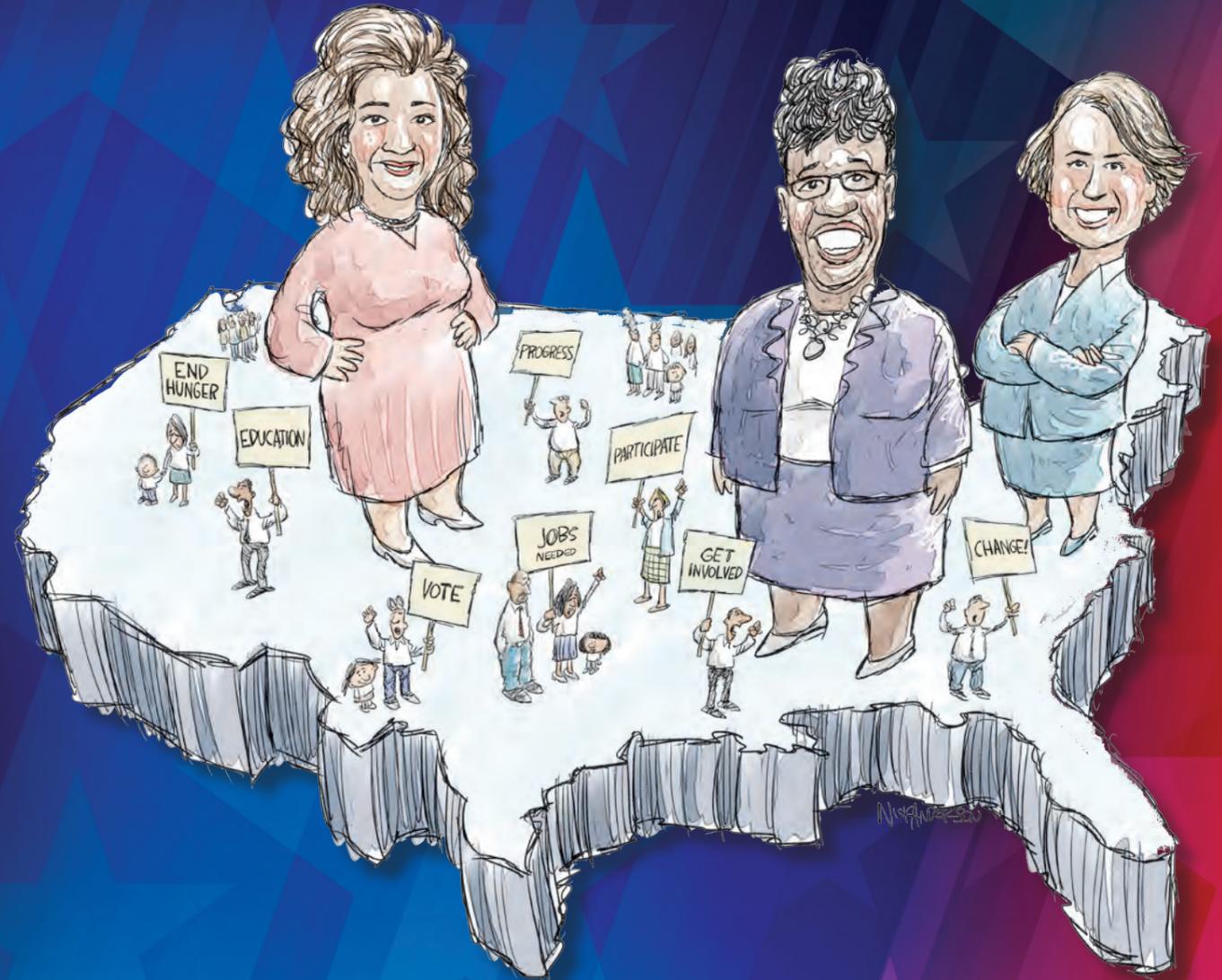
APPLYING MY SKILLS: The Walden curriculum provided essential skills—like finance and human resources—that I need to be in a healthcare leadership position. I've taken these skills and built upon the great job our former CEO did by taking a slightly different approach. I've been utilizing business practices that are more inclusive of our stakeholders, and because of

that, I've been told that you can feel the difference when you walk through the door. Walden also encourages you to commit yourself to ongoing, lifelong education.

BIGGEST BENEFIT OF EARNING MY MSN:

I am now a Certified Medical Practice Executive, and I'm eligible for a year-end bonus that is dependent upon my success. But by far, the most important change has been in my own personal self-worth. I come from a low-income background—no one in my family has attained such advanced education or risen to CEO level. Walden gave me the chance to become what I knew I was inside, even if I didn't have the means or the resources. That's tremendous, and I'll never get over that personal satisfaction. — K.G.

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



No Politics as Usual

Walden Grads Promote the Positive in Politics

By Victoria Wiseman

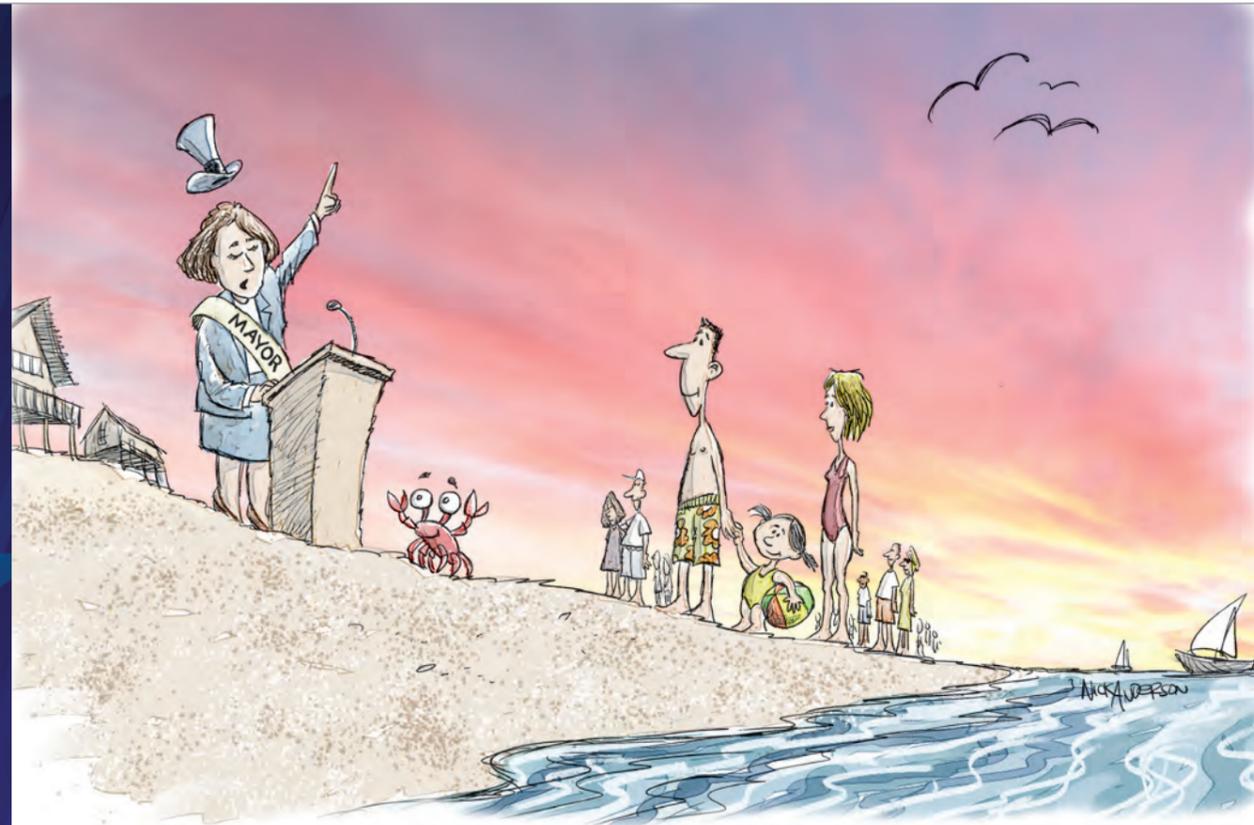
NEARLY 95% OF WALDEN ALUMNI say their degree program has helped them to advance positive social change in their communities, according to the 2015 Alumni Satisfaction Survey. We tend to think of social change as grand, sweeping initiatives—starting a nonprofit to end poverty in a developing country or donating millions of dollars to environmental causes.

But it doesn't have to be. It can sometimes be as easy as casting a ballot on Election Day, or volunteering in the time leading up to it.

Politics may get a bad rap at times, but it's the original social change method. The outcome of elections and the ensuing public policy decisions made by elected leaders affect the whole scope of our lives. Elections and politics pave the roads we drive on, build the schools we send our children to, and calculate the money in our paychecks.

How you vote, rallying your friends and neighbors to support a cause you believe in, or attending town hall meetings to voice your opinion may seem like small acts, but they create real change in our society. That's the great promise of the free democracy in which we live: Every person, no matter the job title or income level, can be an agent of change.

Here, we've explored the ways our alumni are participating in the political process and leading their communities to positive social change. How will you find a way to engage this election year?



The Accidental Mayor

Sometimes life causes a collision between private and political life. That's exactly what happened to **Dr. Sheila Davies '14, '09, a PhD in Public Policy and Administration and Master of Public Administration (MPA)** graduate. Starting out her career with a bachelor's degree in psychology and kinesiology, Davies did not anticipate she'd someday pursue two graduate degrees in public policy from Walden, be hired as a top

county government official, and hold elected office. Davies has served as mayor of Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina, since 2011—and works full time as director of public health for Dare County. That journey started when she put her kinesiology degree to work as her local YMCA's executive director. There, she was given her first opportunities to interact with lawmakers firsthand. "I was fascinated by

local politics and government," she recalls.

After her tenure there, she expanded her service to the community. "My career took me to the government sector, working for the county health department for a substance abuse and treatment program. It became apparent that if I wanted to move up and grow, I needed to pursue higher

education," she recalls. "And I needed an online learning environment, because I was starting a family. That led me to Walden."

After graduating with her MPA in 2009, she had both the real-world experience and the degree to become a leader in government. Yet she still never considered running for her community's highest elected office. "I could see myself filling a commissioner seat someday, but I had no intention of running for mayor," she says.

But the community had other plans for Davies.

community with only 7,000 full-time residents that swells to 75,000 during the summer months; the Outer Banks town was struggling to balance the need to support a vibrant tourist economy while preserving a small-town beach feel.

On the table were plans to expand big-box development, a cause for great concern in the town. "The board had standing-room-only public comment sessions, where citizens were asking the board not to approve this public development. And the board would still vote their own way," Davies says. "The political climate was: 'The board

as the executive director of the YMCA and with the county health department. They asked her to run for mayor. She ran, she won, and she changed things.

"I ran on increasing citizen engagement, so one of the first things we did was start live-streaming all of our board meetings on TV," Davies says. She also added more public forums for community input and gave time for public comment during council meetings. Her multiple re-elections are proof that it's working: She's restoring voters' faith in local leadership and increasing citizen access to decision-makers. And there's no more direct of a democracy than the one she experiences every day.

"I love being a mayor in a small community," she says. "I'll be shopping in the grocery store and someone will pull their cart up right beside me and ask, 'What's going on with this? Can you look into this for me?'"

"I ran on increasing citizen engagement, so one of the first things we did was start live-streaming all of our board meetings on TV." – Dr. Sheila Davies

"Constituents' frustration with the seated board of commissioners was growing. They were making decisions without citizen input," she says. Kill Devil Hills is a small

just doesn't care, and they're not listening to citizens." Soon, Davies was approached by a group of citizens who knew her work

The Political Junkie

“By the time I was in high school, I knew I wanted to be involved in political campaigns,” says **Dr. Clarissa Arellano '08**, a PhD in Public Policy and Administration graduate and public policy expert. “At our dinner table growing up, we talked politics, we talked smack. It was in my veins!”

Arellano is part of the backstage world of politics, working the levers of our democracy: government affairs. The professionals in this industry have many job titles, but they all work to support elected leaders and to advance voter engagement.

As the director of government affairs, media, and public policy for the Pikes Peak Association of Realtors in Colorado, Arellano educates members about the political issues that affect them. She stays on top of developments at the local, state, and federal levels and coordinates responses to rules or legislation.

Currently, she's advocating for an ordinance in Colorado Springs that would make condominiums and other multi-tenant dwellings easier to buy. “Multi-family dwellings are a key point of entry to the market,” she explains. Though they are cheaper than single-family homes in

Colorado, developers—not individuals—buy most of them. That's bad news for first-time homebuyers and for the real estate business.



“Being a spectator in the process just doesn't cut it. You have to be vested as a citizen and participate in whatever way you are able.” — Dr. Clarissa Arellano

Her job is to find out what's causing the situation and work with political leaders to fix it. Currently, that includes coordinating efforts as part of a coalition to testify in front of city councils statewide to bring valuable data to elected leaders. One by one, the coalition presents its case. It's a painstaking process, but it works.

Arellano is also the go-to expert on government questions for association members, who sometimes call her in a panic. “When the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, became law, we were bombarded with e-mails because there was a change in the structure for capital gains,” she says. It's a huge issue for the

Realtors Arellano works with, because selling property is their entire business. “I have to let them know what affects them, and what doesn't.”

Arellano is also extremely active in voting issues and was appointed chair of the Colorado Secretary of State's Pilot

Election Review Committee to analyze the potential implementation of a statewide voting system. It's a process, she says, that's getting a lot of attention. “The Colorado elections in November were watched nationally and internationally,” she says. “I'm an elections nerd, so I have loved every minute of that.”

People like Arellano are a one-stop shop for getting things done politically. But she makes it clear that she's not a politician.

“People ask me when I'm going to run for office, but that's not my cup of tea! I love public policy and I love being behind the scenes,” she says. “I like my space. I like my privacy. So I don't mind helping someone else get elected, but I don't think you'll see my name on the ballot anytime soon.”

Arellano has a challenge for her fellow Walden alumni. “Being a spectator in the process just doesn't cut it,” she says.

The good news is Walden graduates are particularly influential in the realm of community engagement: The 2015 Alumni Satisfaction Survey showed that 64% of graduates surveyed said they volunteered in the past year. That's more than double the national average of 25%, which the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics says is the lowest rate in more than a decade. But of that 64% from Walden, only 6% said they are involved in a political party or advocacy group.

“You have to be vested as a citizen and participate in whatever way you are able,” Arellano says. “Write a congressman. Go to the soup kitchen and get involved. Show that you care. Civic engagement is the most basic form of engagement.”

An Expert's Guide to Political Engagement

Dr. Samuel Williams '14, a PhD in Public Policy and Administration graduate, is an expert on citizen engagement, having served in public policy roles in the White House as well as the private and nonprofit sectors.



1. ENGAGE CRITICALLY WITH THE MEDIA.

It's hard today to tell if the news you're seeing is objective, and that's where a Walden education makes a difference. “I read everything I can from different perspectives,” Williams says. “When you have a 24-hour news cycle, there's a tendency to draw a conclusion based on what you just heard. Instead, store that away, and assess it later.” Reading letters to the editor in a major daily newspaper is one quick way to get a handle on both sides of an unfamiliar issue.

2. DETERMINE THE ISSUES THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU.

Too often in an election cycle, the most-discussed issues aren't the ones most important to your day-to-day life. Williams says the first step to making political change is determining your own priorities. “Issues like education, healthcare, the environment, and jobs. Public policy is important because it deals with quality-of-life issues, not just the bureaucratic issues of getting legislation passed,” he says.

3. FIND A WAY TO AMPLIFY YOUR VOICE.

“Communications between elected officials and the citizen ensures the citizen's voice is being heard, and also that the elected official understands what concerns their constituents have,” Williams says. “That's the two-way engagement process.” Writing letters, attending town hall meetings, and meeting directly with elected officials all make a difference.

4. DON'T GIVE UP.

Williams is passionate about figuring out ways to sustain voter engagement; that's the key to a well-functioning democracy. “When an election doesn't go your way, realize you are one of many,” he says. “You do have an impact. Just keep communicating. That's when we begin to make progress.”



The Personal Politician

Win or lose, it's how you play the game that counts.

Valencia Breedlove '07, an MPA graduate, learned that lesson firsthand when she recently finished running for her first public office as city

councilmember in Decatur, Georgia.

"Because I was new to politics, everything was an eye-opener," she says. "Getting your name out there is one of

the hardest things there is. You're constantly knocking on doors and going to community events. It's very time consuming, but every moment counts when you're running the race."

In the end, Breedlove lost the election. "I came in third place—155 votes," she says. But each of those votes represents a lot of work: talking to people, pounding the pavement, introducing herself and her vision to the

community. So Breedlove is grateful for every single vote she received.

Determined to run again, she says this won't be the last election with her name on the ticket. Her political resiliency isn't surprising—she grew up with politics in her blood. Her grandfather was a city councilman in Terrell County, Georgia, and took her along for many of his official duties during her childhood. "I saw him go into homes and talk about how to end racism and work with seniors in the community," Breedlove remembers.

She watched him open a senior center, mentor children, and feed the hungry in the community. "That was one of the things that inspired me to say, 'This is what I want to do one day,'" Breedlove says.

Formerly an American history teacher, Breedlove decided to pursue a degree in public policy to prepare herself for a career as a lawyer.

"What drives me is the change. That's why I'm going to run again." — Valencia Breedlove

"I wanted to get my master's degree before going to law school," she says. "I was the single parent of an infant, and I didn't have the opportunity to go to a live classroom, so Walden was perfect for me."

Now working as a probation officer in the DeKalb County Court, Breedlove sees the problems in her community that need to be fixed every day. Her run for office was intended to give a voice in the community for people like her—those who live and work in the city and want to be able to continue doing so for years to come. "I don't want our seniors or our working families to be priced out," she says.

"I remember when I was in college, my great aunt called me and said things weren't going the way she planned," Breedlove says. "She said she

couldn't afford to continue living there. I was devastated."

Win or lose, Breedlove brought these personal stories with her to the election, giving her issues a voice at the table. It's a powerful reminder that participating in the process is what's important.

"What drives me is the change. To make sure that our people—families, single parents—are able to see a positive change and be a voice for the community," she says. "I want them to know that Breedlove is going to work to get them whatever's needed. That's why I'm going to run again."

It's Your Turn

Though Walden prepared these graduates for the world of politics, you needn't be a graduate of the public policy program to effect social change through our American political system. Walden graduates have proven over and over that they take what they've learned and their unique view into our communities to make a change, driven by the desire to make the world a better place.

We can even inspire others to do the same. So vote. Volunteer in your community. Or maybe work for a cause or candidate you believe in. Democracy, like social change, can only happen if people like us take action. ■

LEVERAGE YOUR WALDEN NETWORK

Introducing Online Career Networking Powered by Brazen

The **Walden University Alumni Association** has partnered with Brazen, an innovative communications platform offering online networking events. The text-based chats are individual and timed—allowing you to make introductions, exchange contact information, and end the hour with new career connections. Watch for e-mail invitations to network with fellow alumni and current students this year!



SAVE THESE DATES:

February 11 | March 18 | April 25 | May 24 | June 16 | September 13 | October 20 | November 10

Go to page 43 for a full listing of events.



Matt Rybczynski

FIGHTING for a Brighter Future

An educator and parent combines his passions to help child soldiers

By Lesley Tkaczyk

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DAVID HARTNESS NEVER THOUGHT HE'D BE A MUSIC VIDEO DIRECTOR. But that's what the 2013 **Master of Business Administration (MBA)** graduate and **Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)** student became several years ago when he volunteered to help one of his students create a video for a rap song the student had written.

At the time, Hartness was working with the Peace Corps as a teacher in Mozambique—an African nation with a tumultuous past. He didn't have any knowledge about creating a music video, but he did have what mattered: a camera and the drive to help this passionate student bring his music to life. This unlikely project changed everything for Hartness.

"When I was in Mozambique, there were a lot of stories about the country's fight for independence and about the civil war that lasted from 1977 to 1992," he explains. "It was a violent and bloody time



Matt Rybczynski

in the nation's history. In those stories, a lot of people were talking about the child soldiers."

One of the people talking about Mozambique's civil war was the rap artist who was Hartness's student. "His song was about the struggle for freedom," Hartness recalls. "We got some archival footage of the war to use in the music

video, and one of the most striking images was about 4,000 children learning how to march with weapons—learning how to be soldiers."

As Hartness tells the story, the shock is still evident in his voice 5 years after leaving Mozambique. It was an eye-opening moment for the Puget Sound, Washington, native. From that moment on, Hartness knew he had to dedicate his life to protecting kids around the world from the same unfortunate fate.

"I didn't realize how many child soldiers were used," he says. "Actually, at that time, I didn't know any had been. I started to research the subject and found out children are still being used constantly in battles around the world; more than 250,000 are currently being used. The figures just shocked me."

Since the day he saw that alarming footage, Hartness has worked to bring this atrocity into the spotlight of public attention. From authoring a book to drafting a petition, he's focused on raising awareness to inspire policy change.

Giving a VOICE to Child Soldiers

Child Soldiers International, a human rights research and advocacy organization Hartness supports, shares the definition of a child soldier:

"A ... child soldier refers to any person below 18 years of age who is or who has been recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to ... fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies."

(Source: *Louder Than Words: An Agenda for Action to End State Use of Child Soldiers*, 2012.)

Since 2010, child soldier use has been reported by 20 countries worldwide, including the Philippines, Colombia, Somalia, Myanmar, and Iraq.



Getty Images/Thierry Falise

"Hundreds of thousands of children are used as soldiers in armed conflicts around the world," states the United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. "Many children are abducted and beaten into submission, others join military groups to escape poverty, to defend their communities, out of ... revenge."

Exile International, a nonprofit organization that works to turn rescued child soldiers and children orphaned by war into leaders for peace, states that "in Central and East Africa, armed forces and rebels have abducted more than 100,000 children. Children as young as 7 are kidnapped and forced to fight in rebel armies. Many are psychologically tortured and brainwashed—forced to commit atrocities against their own families and communities."



These facts and the footage he watched inspired Hartness to learn more and to work with organizations like Exile International. He delved into research on the topic and eventually wrote his first novel, *Amani's River*, which tells the story of a child forced into the brutal Mozambique Civil War. Hartness spoke with several former child soldiers during his research, and the book captured their experience in a powerful way—it was a finalist for the 2015 National Indie Excellence® Awards.

“When I decided to tell the story of the Mozambique Civil War, I wanted to give the country a strong voice,” Hartness explains. “I decided at that point to use the child soldiers as the basis, because that was a big part of the war, but it’s also a current social issue that I think is being neglected. Mozambicans need a voice to change people’s minds and make a difference. I hope *Amani's River* is that voice.”

An Early PASSION for Change

The mission to make a difference started for Hartness long before he discovered the plights of child soldiers. In 2006, Hartness decided to go to Kenya as a volunteer in Global Routes’s gap year program before enrolling for his bachelor’s degree in education at Central Washington University. He had been fascinated by Africa since he first learned about the continent in middle school, so he was anxious to experience the area firsthand.

“I spent 3 months there, and that drove a lot of my passion,” he says of his initial visit to Africa. “I taught English in a small village school, but they taught me more than I ever could have taught them. There’s so much work to do over there; I had more to give.”

He says he was hooked after that experience, despite the lack of running water and electricity in the remote community where the volunteers stayed. That desire to return to Africa and to contribute more led Hartness to apply for the U.S. Peace Corps. Two years after his first trip to Africa, he was stationed as an education volunteer in Namaacha, Mozambique.

“There’s not a lot you can do in 3 months, but with 2 to 3 years you can really accomplish quite a bit if you put your mind to it,” he explains. “The Peace Corps gave me the opportunity to work with the community to develop projects they would be proud of and that could live on after my service was complete.”

During his 3 years in the Peace Corps, Hartness developed programs that are still running today. One project was the HIV/AIDS Youth Council, an informal gathering where participants do art projects focused on healthy lifestyles.

His other two projects concentrated on literacy, which was his primary focus in the Peace Corps. Hartness worked with local teachers to develop an English theater program to help teach the English language in a fun, interactive way. He also partnered with a couple of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to build a library. The partnership brought in 5,000 books for the community. He says community members still go to the library and teachers are using the books in classrooms.

“That was my biggest goal: Whatever I did, I didn’t want to do it just to pad my résumé, I wanted it to be something useful that they could continue after I was gone,” Hartness says with pride. “The people embraced the programs.”

Sharing the Gift of EDUCATION

The 3 years Hartness spent in Mozambique were just the start of his mission of change in Africa. After leaving the Peace Corps, Hartness moved to Zambia in 2011 to work at an international school and continue community

development projects. There, he started health-related initiatives that involved basketball and coaching.



He also continued with his literacy focus by starting an interactive program to promote literature. The initiative began with a pilot program for 150 kids, providing resources to help

them read at an appropriate level for their age; the program grew to 600 within a year.

“It was a big push of mine to try to promote a culture of reading so they would start to enjoy picking up books,” Hartness says of the project. “We tried to get kids on the right educational path.”

Hartness was not only creating successful literacy and health programs while in Zambia, he was also writing *Amani's River* and studying to earn his MBA from Walden. In his initial Web search for online degree programs, he was drawn to Walden’s reputation for success and its mission of effecting positive social change.

“One of the other reasons I chose Walden was because of the online courses,” Hartness says. “I was living in Africa, but Walden’s online learning



format allowed me to work on my degree while still doing the on-the-ground work that I was passionate about in Africa.”

While he has always loved teaching, developing effective programs for social problems is what really makes Hartness happy. He hopes to put his MBA and DBA to use by working for an NGO and focusing on education and health initiatives that will help children around the world.

He’s also using the skills he gained at Walden to draft a petition to raise awareness and hopefully inspire policy change.

“The petition encourages Congress to put sanctions in place to ensure that our taxpayer dollars are used effectively and not put into countries that engage in using child soldiers,” he explains. “We need to track our funds and ensure that governments that we help are not supporting groups like Boko Haram and ISIS that use child soldiers. Unfortunately, as it stands, we can’t say with 100% certainty that our money is staying out of these hands.”

A Parent’s PERSPECTIVE

Now, after 7 years working and studying in Africa, Hartness is home in the United States with his adopted son, Luke. They first met while he was training in the Peace Corps—Hartness used to play soccer with Luke and the other boys in the neighborhood. But they truly bonded during English lessons in Mozambique; Luke gravitated toward the language and was very eager to learn from Hartness. Now 14, Luke is most passionate about basketball but also enjoys reading, which Hartness sees as a good start: “I don’t know if most 14-year-olds are passionate about education, but we’re working on it.”

While Luke was not at risk of becoming a child soldier (he was born after the end of the civil war), Hartness says that being a father lends a heavier perspective to the issue of child soldiers. “People would not want their children to be kidnapped and used in this way,” he says. “I wanted to get out the message that children have a place in our society, and that place is not



Matt Rybczynski

in a war that they barely understand. My own child played a huge role in that message; I don’t want it to happen to him and I don’t want it to happen to any other child.”

Hartness hopes his book and his work can inspire others to act as well.

“Write a quick letter, make a quick donation, or open it up for discussion at the kitchen table,” he suggests. “Change starts with us having the difficult conversation and being empowered enough to reach out to Congress to impact policies and bills. There are things that, as a nation, we could do to help ensure that the people who are exploiting children are not given the resources to commit those crimes against humanity.”

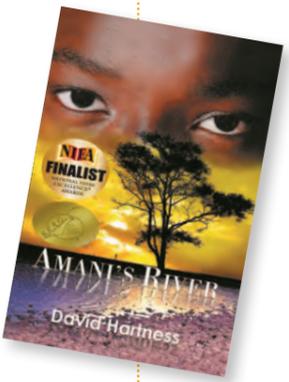
When Hartness thinks about this issue, he doesn’t think of it as violence taking place in far-off countries. He thinks about those who helped him when he became sick while in Kenya, people who are more like family to him. He had a high fever and was vomiting, and neighbors came to his aid: They brought the reverend to hold his hand, and a group prayed he would survive. This outpouring of compassion has stuck with him for the past 10 years.

“Mozambicans need a voice to change people’s minds and make a difference. I hope *Amani’s River* is that voice.”

“In Kenya, the community was so tightly knit,” Hartness says. “That’s what drew me to Africa to begin with. There are so many problems that plague the area, but in the face of it all, Africans are very much community-oriented. That’s one of the reasons I continue to serve them; with their high spirits in the face of everything, they deserve it. They deserve the opportunity for a good education and to not be subjected to a childhood of servitude in war.”

For Hartness, providing an education to the children of Africa starts with making sure those children aren’t abducted to become soldiers instead of students. Preventing that requires educating the world about this continuing issue, whether through his novel or a student’s rap video.

“I hope to educate people to help raise awareness that there are still roughly 250,000 children serving in militaries around the world,” he says. “If I can make a difference on this issue, then I will have changed the world for the better, and that is what I am setting out to accomplish.” ■



“The recruitment and use of children ... has to be viewed in the context of widespread poverty, lack of opportunity, [and] lack of access to education and employment.”

Charu Lata Hogg, policy and advocacy director, Child Soldiers International

Return to WALDEN

AND ENJOY SPECIAL SAVINGS

As alumni, when you re-enroll and start classes in January or February 2016, you can receive

A **15% tuition reduction** over the lifetime of your next degree program
plus
One **additional offer** that is available for select degree programs.

WHY WAIT? Take advantage of the 15% alumni tuition reduction today.

See if your next degree program offers additional savings at WaldenU.edu/financial-aid/tuition-fees/savings, or call 1-866-492-5336.

2016 Trade Shows & Conferences

ATTENDING OR PRESENTING AT ANY OF THESE CONFERENCES OR TRADE SHOWS IN 2016? Be sure to stop by the Walden exhibitor booth and bring a friend.

BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT

Society of Human Resource Management
June 19-22 — Washington, DC

EDUCATION

International Society for Technology in Education
June 26-29 — Denver, Colorado

NURSING

American Organization of Nurse Executives
March 30-April 2 — Fort Worth, Texas

American Association of Nurse Practitioners
June 21-26 — San Antonio, Texas

PSYCHOLOGY AND COUNSELING

American Counseling Association
March 31-April 3 — Montreal, Quebec

Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology
April 14-16 — Anaheim, California

SOCIAL WORK

National Association of Social Workers
June 22-25 — Washington, DC



Help Walden counseling students gain field experience

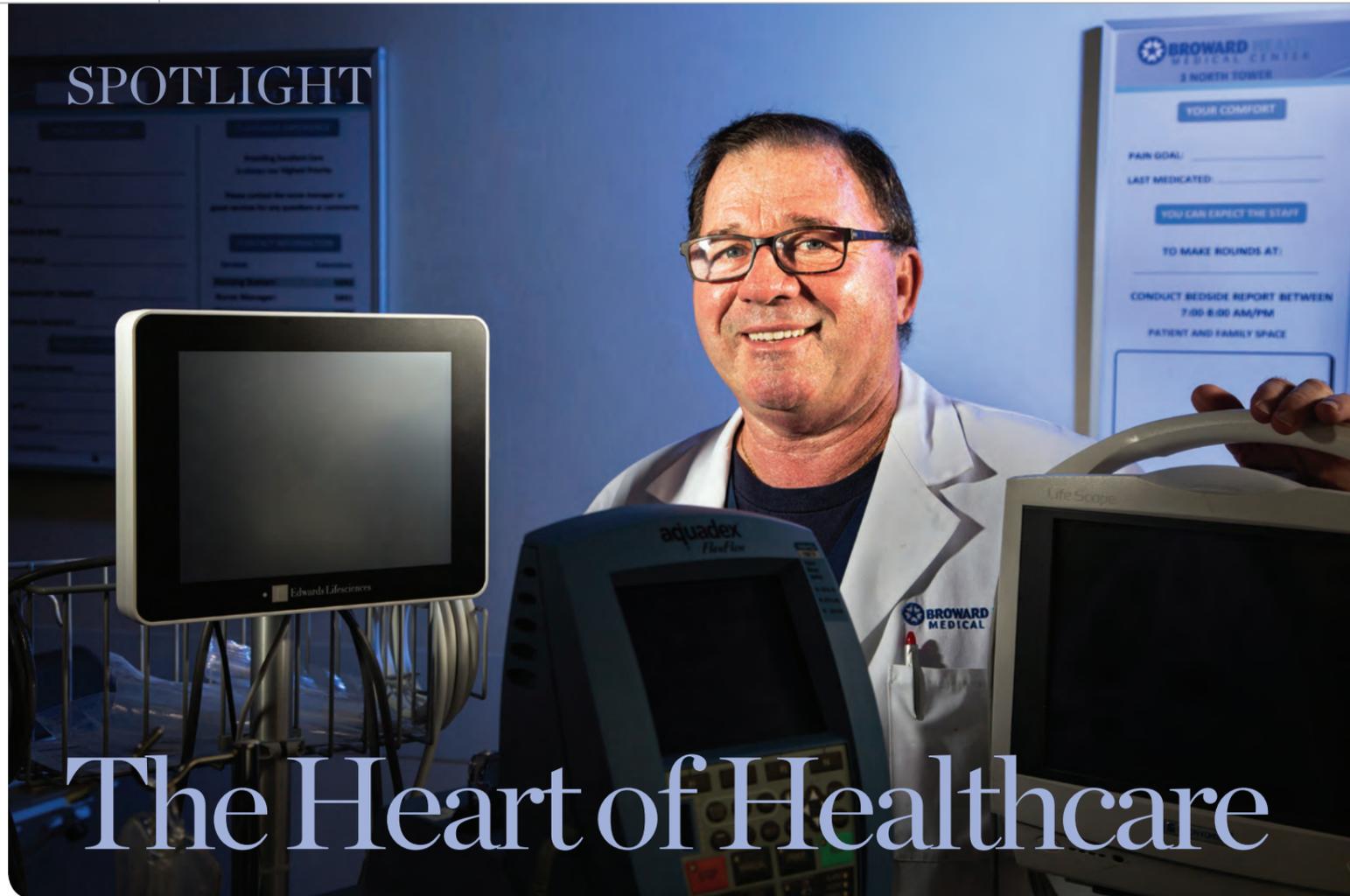
Attention, MS in Counseling alumni:

Currently, we have hundreds of motivated MS in Counseling students who need field experiences in order to complete their counseling preparation programs.

As a successful graduate, you can support Walden students who are ready for this critical academic milestone. You may be able to help a counseling student if:

- You can serve as a site supervisor.
- You can recommend someone who could serve as a site supervisor.
- You are currently working at a site that can host a counseling student.

To volunteer as a field experience advocate for counseling students, sign up at myWaldenAlumni.com/fieldexperience.



SPOTLIGHT

The Heart of Healthcare

All photos by Benjamin Rusnak

How one DNP graduate is creating impactful, innovative healthcare programs

By Lesley Tkaczyk

CHEST PAIN. THOSE TWO FRIGHTENING WORDS CONJURE THOUGHTS OF THE WORST: a heart attack. You rush to the emergency room looking for answers, only to spend days in the hospital undergoing tests to discover what's wrong, the waiting and uncertainty even more terrifying than the initial pain.

But **Dr. James LaFeir '14**, a **Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)** graduate, is working to make diagnostic care for chest pain more efficient to improve patient care.

"People were coming in and staying for 2 or 3 days for testing only to be told that everything was negative," he explains. The patients and the hospital staff were all frustrated, and LaFeir knew there had to be a better way. He wanted to tackle the issue both through his role as a clinical specialist at Broward Health Medical Center in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and through his doctoral study.

LaFeir didn't want it to be just an academic exercise, so he helped the hospital launch a pilot program using nurse practitioners in a dedicated clinic

to evaluate chest-pain patients for heart disease. The goals? Reduce the average 2.5-day stay to less than 24 hours, reduce re-admissions, and increase patient satisfaction and education with dedicated staff to confirm those negative test results or diagnoses more quickly.

The program was a huge success. Within 30 days of implementation, the length of stay for these patients dropped to between 26 and 27 hours; now, it's between 24 and 25 hours.

"Patients seem a lot happier," LaFeir says. "They're sent home with education, needed medication, and a follow-up appointment if they don't require emergency care, rather than sitting around waiting for answers. Our re-admission rate has dropped 6.6% because now they have follow-up care."

The results were so impressive that Broward Health is expanding LaFeir's chest-pain program to include a new pilot program for heart-failure patients. This will involve advanced technologies to help with the safe removal of those patients presenting with fluid overload in chronic heart failure.

"That's the spirit of what this DNP program is all about, translating your scholarly project into an actionable impact," says Dr. Faisal Aboul-Enein, DNP program faculty member and one of LaFeir's doctoral study committee members. "His work was the first I've seen that made positive change at a unit level and now has gone even further. It's had community impact, and that speaks volumes."



Dr. Daniel Berman, doctoral study chair, notes that LaFeir's project addressed the two hottest national issues in healthcare: improving quality of care while decreasing cost and increasing access for underserved people.

"Jim is doing this to create real change," Berman says. "This project has not only improved healthcare but also addresses the needs of vulnerable populations—such as non-U.S. citizens without health insurance—in Southeastern Florida."

The opportunity to implement real change at his hospital is what motivated LaFeir to pursue his doctorate after more than 40 years in nursing. He had heard great things about Walden from fellow nurses, and he loved the flexibility to study on his own schedule.

Now LaFeir serves as a preceptor for other Broward employees who are pursuing their DNP at Walden. "I like teaching and motivating people to be better," he says of being a preceptor. "To me, that's the ultimate sense of accomplishment."



2014-2015 Presidential Alumni Research Dissemination Award Winners

CONGRATULATIONS to the recipients of the 2014-2015 Presidential Alumni Research Dissemination Awards! Walden is proud to recognize doctoral graduates who are expanding the boundaries of research and spreading knowledge by publishing and/or presenting their doctoral dissertations.



Leah Grebner



Jason Newcomer



Kevin Newmeyer



Ina Peoples

DAVID BLUM '13

DBA

Publication Title: *Exploring Gender Disparity in U.S. Based Venture Capital Firms*

Publisher: The Clute Institute

PEGGY CREIGHTON '10

PhD in Education

Publication Title: *The Secret Reasons Why Teachers Are Not Using Web 2.0 Tools and What School Librarians Can Do About It*

Publisher: Linworth

ABIMBOLA FARINDE '14

PhD in Psychology

Publication Title: *Drugs for Treating Hypertension*

Publication: Nursing

GRACE GACHANJA '12

PhD in Public Health

Presentation Title: *Healthcare Professionals' Perspectives on HIV Disclosure of a Parent's and a Child's Illness in Kenya*

Presentation Audience: 2015 APHA Annual Meeting

JOSHUA M. GARRIN '14

PhD in Psychology

Publication Title: *Inspiring Change: Exercise Self-Efficacy, Dispositional Optimism, and Perceived Stress in College Seniors*

Publication: Walden University's Journal of Social Change

LEAH GREBNER '14

PhD in Health Services

Publication Title: *Addressing Learning Style Needs to Improve Effectiveness of Adult Health Literacy Education*

Publication: International Journal of Health Sciences

APRIL JONES '14

PhD in Psychology

Publication Title: *Organisational Commitment in Nurses: Is It Dependent on Age or Education?*

Publication: Nursing Management

JOY KIEFFER PHILLIPS '09

PhD in Education

Publication Title: *Exploring Student Nurse Anesthetist Stressors and Coping Using Grounded Theory Methodology*

Publication: AANA Journal

JASON M. NEWCOMER '13

DBA

Publication Title: *Aviation Managers' Perspective on the Importance of Education*

Publication: International Journal of Aviation, Aeronautics, and Aerospace

KEVIN P. NEWMAYER '14

PhD in Public Policy and Administration

Publication Title: *Elements of National Cybersecurity Strategy for Developing Nations*

Publication: National Cybersecurity Institute Journal

INA MARIE PEOPLES '11

PhD in Public Health

Publication Title: *Exploring the Impact of Stress on Pregnancy Loss*

Publication: International Journal of Childbirth Education

LAMONT ROUSE '13

PhD in Public Policy and Administration

Presentation Title: *The Impact of Workplace Bullying on Health Care Workers*

Presentation Audience: 112th Annual Nursing Convention of the New Jersey State Nursing Association

AHMAD SALIH '12

DBA

Publication Title: *A Middle Management Perspective on Strategy Implementation*

Publication: International Journal of Business and Management

ASSANATU SAVAGE '12

PhD in Public Health

Publication Title: *Examining Selected Patient Outcomes and Staff Satisfaction in a Primary Care Clinic at a Military Treatment Facility After Implementation of the Patient-Centered Medical Home*

Publisher: Military Medicine: International Journal of AMSUS

LORIE A. TUMA '12

EdD

Publication Title: *Flash Mob "Invades" Sleepy Rural Town*

Publication: Journal of Case Studies

To apply, visit myWaldenAlumni.com/researchers.



We are launching several new networking opportunities this year. Don't miss out on your chance to connect with colleagues, both old and new.

Thursday, February 11

Walden Alumni Online Networking
7:00-8:00 p.m.

Friday, March 18

Walden Alumni Online Networking
9:00-10:00 a.m.

Monday, April 25

Walden Alumni Online Networking
4:00-5:00 p.m.

Tuesday, May 24

Business and Technology
Alumni Networking
1:00-2:00 p.m.

Thursday, June 16

Maryland Alumni Networking
12:30-1:30 p.m.

Saturday, July 16

Fifty-Sixth Commencement Ceremony
National Harbor, Maryland

Tuesday, September 13

Walden Alumni Online Networking
7:00-8:00 p.m.

October 2016

Global Days of Service
Worldwide

Thursday, October 20

Walden Alumni Online Networking
Noon-1:00 p.m.

Thursday, November 10

Walden Alumni Ambassadors
Online Networking
12:30-1:30 p.m.

All times listed are Eastern time

Mark your calendars and watch for your invitations to register.

PhD in HUMAN SERVICES



James Fryer

“I am grateful to Walden for being behind my success in achieving my lifelong dream of a doctoral degree.” – Dr. Harrison Igwe '13

one degree many careers

From illness and addiction to violence and poverty, Human Services is not for the faint of heart. See how one degree can lead to a diverse mix of life-altering careers.

Boderick Bennett '15

VICE PRESIDENT,
EXTENDED CAMPUS
& ONLINE LEARNING
Lees-McRae College
Banner Elk, North Carolina

Harrison Igwe '13

DIRECTOR OF PROGRAM
SERVICES
The Salvation Army Adult
Rehabilitation Center
Detroit, Michigan

Satoko Nguyen '12

TEACHER
Sundai Michigan
International Academy
Novi, Michigan

Alexander Dorsey '11

PUPIL PERSONNEL WORKER
Prince George's County
Public Schools
Upper Marlboro, Maryland

Madelyn Harvey '11

ADJUNCT PROFESSOR
Wilberforce University
Centerville, Ohio

George Hendricks '10

DEAN, SCHOOL OF
PUBLIC AFFAIRS
Methodist University
Fayetteville, North
Carolina

Irma C. Gianuzzi '92

CASE MANAGER
Irving Cares
Community Center
Irving, TX

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



Walden's MSW is now accredited by CSWE



Walden University is proud to announce that our Master of Social Work (MSW) program has achieved accreditation from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

The benefits of a CSWE-accredited degree:

- Is an academic requirement for licensure as a social worker in most states.
- Meets recognized standards for competent preparation for social work professionals.
- Indicates to employers that you've received a quality education in social work.

Already have your master's degree? Walden also offers a PhD in Social Work and Doctor of Social Work (DSW). Learn more at WaldenU.edu.

Walden University is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission and a member of the North Central Association, www.ncahlc.org.

Walden University's Master of Social Work (MSW) program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), a specialized accrediting body recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). CSWE's Commission on Accreditation is responsible for developing accreditation standards that define competent preparation for professional social workers and ensuring that social work programs meet these standards.

The MSW program is designed to prepare graduates to qualify to sit for licensing exams and to meet the academic licensure requirements of many state counseling boards. Walden enrollment advisors can provide guidance on licensure issues; however, it remains the individual's responsibility to understand and comply with all state licensure requirements.

Walden makes no representation or guarantee that completion of Walden coursework or programs will permit an individual to obtain state licensure.



Save the Date

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE to walk across the stage to celebrate your accomplishments. Walden's 56th Commencement Ceremony will be held on Saturday, July 16, 2016. Join your classmates from around the world for a weekend of celebration with family, friends, and faculty members in National Harbor, Maryland, at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center.

Confirm the e-mail address in your alumni profile at myWaldenAlumni.com to receive an invitation when registration opens in the spring.

Accolades

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

Congratulations to all on your accomplishments!

Awards & Honors

Dr. Vivienne C. Meanger '14

PhD in Public Policy and Administration

Named **Worldwide Branding Professional of the Year in Health Care**. Meanger is the director of Kindred Healthcare.

Dr. Vanessa Hiratsuka '13

PhD in Public Health

Received the Jens Peder Hart Hansen Award from the **American Society of Circumpolar Health** at the 16th International Congress on Circumpolar Health in Oulu, Finland.

Dr. Grace Gachanja '12

PhD in Public Health

Awarded the **Excellence in Abstract Submission on an International Topic** award by the American Public Health Association for her submission, *Healthcare Professionals' Perspectives on HIV Disclosure of a Parent's and a Child's Illness in Kenya*.



Dr. Ann Marie Kappel '12

PhD in Psychology

Named a **VIP member of Worldwide Branding**.

The distinction honors individuals who have shown exceptional commitment to achieving personal

and professional success. Kappel is an organizational psychologist at Alpha Consulting & Empowerment. She also recently published *Empower U: Build Your Self-Worth and Know Your Net-Worth*.

April Saint '12

Doctor of Education (EdD)

Awarded a \$1,000 scholarship through the Paralyzed Veterans of America's **Paralyzed Veterans' Educational Scholarship Program**.

Elizabeth Brown '11

Master of Public Administration (MPA)

Received a **fellowship** from the Southern Regional Education Board, which promotes diversity in faculty research positions in graduate programs across the country. She was also invited to be a **Dr. Raymond S. Greenberg Presidential Scholar** at the Medical University of South Carolina.



Dr. Jonas Nguh '13, '11

BS in Nursing and PhD in Public Health

Selected for the **2015 National League of**

Nursing Lillian Wald Humanitarian Award, given to individuals who have made a significant and sustained contribution to volunteerism and community service in public health.

Dr. Melissa Thomas '07, '05

PhD in Public Health and Master of Public Health (MPH)

Received the **2015 Distinguished Health Educator Service Award** from the Ohio Public Health Association.



Melyssa Ferro '06

MS in Education (MSEd)

Named the **2015 Caldwell Teacher of the Year** and subsequently the **2016 Idaho Teacher of the**

Year, making her a **2016 National Teacher of the Year nominee**. She also received the **Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching**.

Dr. Wendy M. Whitner '05

PhD in Health Services

Named to the **Board of Examiners** for the 2015 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award by the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology. Whitner is an assistant clinical professor at Towson University in Maryland.

Careers

Ramona Bowser '15

MPA

Appointed **health director** at the Hertford County Public Health Authority (HCPHA) in North Carolina. Previously, Bowser served as the co-interim health director while in the role of chief finance officer. She joined HCPHA in 2004 as accounting manager.

Dr. Susan Zukowski '15

PhD in Psychology

Promoted to **director of corporate health services** at Mayo Clinic Health System in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Dr. Elizabeth Beasley '14

EdD

Appointed **supervisor of human resources** at St. Mary's County (Maryland) Public Schools. She has been with the school system since 1987, serving first as a special education teacher and then as a school counselor and principal.

Dr. Jacqueline Herd '14

Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)

Joined Columbus Regional Health in Georgia as **vice president and chief nursing officer** for Midtown Medical Center.

Tabitha Aldridge '13

Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)

Joined the Mary Black Health System in Spartanburg, South Carolina, as its **chief quality officer**. She previously worked at the William Jennings Bryan Dorn Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Columbia, South Carolina.



Dr. R. Scott Freeman '11, '08

PhD in Public Policy and Administration and MPA

Named **police chief** in the Athens-Clarke County

Police Department in Georgia. He previously served as Rockdale County Sheriff's Office chief deputy.

Dusti Sluder '10

MSN

Named **dean** of Pensacola State College's Warrington campus. Sluder was previously director of nursing at the college.

Michelle Hunt '09

MSEd

Named **principal** of Ewing Elementary School in Ewing, Kentucky. She has been in the Fleming County school district for 10 years.

Martha Hall '08

MPH

Appointed **health officer** for Lenawee County, Michigan.

Renee Childress '07

MSEd

Appointed **principal** at Hatfield Elementary School in Mitchell, Indiana. She was previously named the 2013 Pike County Teacher of the Year.

Dr. Bethany Mello '06

MSN

Named an associate professor and **director of the family nurse practitioner program** at Northwest Nazarene University in Idaho.

Dr. Harold Dean '05

MSEd

Named new director of **grants, funded programs, and student achievement** for the Freeport school district in New York. He is also an adjunct professor at St. Joseph's College.

Pam Wright '05

MSEd

Named **assistant director** of the Danville-Boyle County Convention and Visitors Bureau in Kentucky. Wright will develop, implement, and manage social media strategies, digital marketing content, and promotional materials for the tourism industry in Boyle County.

Publications & Presentations

Dr. Carole Stephens '14

PhD in Psychology

Presented her dissertation research, *Mean Girls in the Legal Workplace*, at **The European Conference on Psychology and the Behavioral Sciences** in Brighton, U.K.



Tochukwu Okafor '12

MPA

Published *Surviving in a Dangerous World*.

Dr. Robin S. Gilpatrick '10

EdD

Published *Classroom Management Strategies*, a reflection of her dissertation.



Brandi Spaulding '08

MS in Psychology

Developed a mobile app called Squirrel

Recovery for people in addiction recovery. The app checks in with patients several times a day and then sends information on their mood, urges, and stress levels to members of their recovery support team. It also has a panic button for an instance when they feel like a relapse is imminent.

Dr. Dawn-Marie Turner '07

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

Published *Launch Lead Live: The Executive's Guide to Preventing Resistance & Succeeding With Organizational Change*. Dr. Turner is the president of Turner Change Management in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

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



SHEKSHA ROBINSON '13

Lisa Godfrey

BUILDING A SUPPORT SYSTEM: My Walden professors understood my need to take care of my children. They supported me whether I needed to turn in an assignment late or if I had a question about my coursework. My kids were incredibly supportive; the twins would help babysit while I was studying because they knew what it meant to me. I also had classmates who were facing the same challenges as me. I was part of a community of adult learners—people with families and jobs, who still wanted to go for their dreams and succeed.

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS: When I looked at my final grades and my GPA was a 3.5, meaning I was graduating cum laude, I couldn't believe it. I surpassed my own expectations; I never thought I would graduate with honors. That was the proudest I've ever been—I still tear up when I talk about it.

BIGGEST CHANGE SINCE EARNING MY DEGREE: I was promoted within six months of being on the job. I started out as a temporary

How I Did It

DEGREE EARNED: BS in Political Science and Public Administration

REJECTING THE STATISTICS: I was six months pregnant with twins when I graduated high school. I found it too difficult to go to college with two babies to care for. But I told myself I was going to get my degree—it was my dream, and I refused to be just another statistic.

KEEPING PROMISES: My twins were juniors in high school when I decided to enroll at Walden; I also had a 6-year-old and a 1-year-old. There were plenty of times I wanted to quit, but I had promised my children and myself that I was going to do this. I ended up graduating in May 2013, one month before my twins graduated high school. I inspired my daughter to go to college because she saw how hard I worked for my degree.

WORKING ROUND THE CLOCK: I never would have finished with a traditional program. Because of Walden's online format,

“I told myself I was going to get my degree—it was my dream, and I refused to be just another statistic.”

I could study at 5 o'clock in the morning before I took my children to school. After I put them to bed, I would study until midnight, go to sleep, and then wake up early to do it all over again. Every free moment I had, I was studying—even during my lunch hour at work. Just juggling everything was the biggest challenge for me. But it was so worth it.

administrative assistant, but when our office manager announced she was leaving, my supervisor came to me and told me he thought I would be perfect for the job. He saw that my degree had prepared me for a wide variety of responsibilities. I wouldn't have been nearly as qualified if I didn't have the educational background that I got from Walden. — K.G.

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



YOU ARE PART OF THE MOVEMENT.

The movement of people pursuing their goals.

Achieving their dreams.

Following their why.

Leading the way for the next generation of Walden students.



Discover the inspiring stories of your fellow graduates who took the next step. See how Walden helped them follow their why.

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A higher degree. A higher purpose.

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A higher degree. A higher purpose.

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

*Every graduate
has a story to tell.*

WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

myWaldenAlumni.com/shareyourstory

Dr. Shawna Charles '13, PhD in Psychology, is featured on page 4.