

SVSU awards honorary degree to founding professor

The Board of Control has granted an honorary Doctor of Science degree to Eldon Graham for a distinguished career as a scientist, engineer and scholar that spans more than six decades.

Among a select few who have been part of public higher education in the Great Lakes Bay region since its inception, Graham served on a science advisory committee for Delta College, beginning in 1955, and later served in a similar capacity for SVSU.

Graham was formally honored during Commencement exercises Friday, Dec. 18, and was particularly pleased to share the stage

with one of his former pupils, as Tony Ceccacci, a 1979 engineering graduate, delivered the address.

“This is what a professor lives for,” Graham said. “It’s not the honors or awards. Professors get their joy out of seeing their students succeed.”

Ceccacci has enjoyed an accomplished 28-year career



at NASA’s Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas. In May 2009, he served as lead

ELDON GRAHAM

- **Joined SVSU in 1970 after 24 years at The Dow Chemical Co.**
- **Founded SVSU’s engineering programs**
- **Designed and oversaw construction of Pioneer Hall**
- **Authored and edited a book, *The History of Academic Programs at Saginaw Valley State University* (2003)**
- **Named professor emeritus in 2005**
- **Currently serves as director of SVSU’s engineering technology management program**
- **Earned degrees from Purdue University (B.S., 1946) and Michigan State University (M.S., 1954)**

flight director for the space shuttle Atlantis mission (STS-125/HST SM4) to repair and upgrade the Hubble Space Telescope, and he arranged to have an SVSU pennant fly aboard.

“I’m a man of action, not a man of words,” he said, “but this was a pretty unique opportunity to tell folks my story.



Board of Control chairman K.P. Karunakaran is assisted by Board vice chair David J. Abbs with the hood for an Honorary Doctor of Science that SVSU conferred upon Eldon Graham. Graham’s former student, Tony Ceccacci, gave the commencement address to graduates at the Dec. 18 ceremony in the Ryder Center.

You have to take challenges. You can’t just stay in your comfort zone.”

The son of a factory worker, Ceccacci stressed finding a career you love.

“I hear people every day groan about how they have to get up and go to work. I’ve never had a day like that. When

I lead a team at NASA, it’s so fun to work with them, because everybody there wants to solve a problem.”

After its orbit, Ceccacci personally returned the pennant to campus. Coming full circle, it will be displayed in Pioneer Hall, which was originally designed by Graham.

President Eric R. Gilbertson will deliver his annual

State of the University Address

Thursday, Jan. 28 at 4 p.m. in the Malcolm Field Theatre for Performing Arts.

The campus community is invited to attend. A reception will follow the address.

Jonathan Gould

Assistant Professor of Teacher Education

Jonathan Gould has taken a very methodical approach to his educational career.

“That to me is the most important thing: to rise at a rate that I remember where I came from and where I’m still trying to go.”

After joining the teaching profession, Gould wanted to spend at least 10 years in a K-12 classroom. He met that goal and also taught at SVSU as an adjunct for several years before joining the faculty full time.

All of that happened after a major vocational detour; Gould began his career in a Pinconning funeral home.

At age 16, Gould started doing “basic manual labor,” including washing the hearse. He convinced his boss to allow him to serve his apprenticeship there, and on his 18th birthday he went to Lansing to get his license.

“I was the youngest funeral director in the United States for a long time,” he said.

After about a decade in that role, Gould became increasingly involved in Midland Public Schools as a volunteer.

“It was obvious that I was spending more and more time around kids. I decided to follow my heart.”

Gould asked a trusted principal where he should go to school to earn his teaching credential.

“Without hesitation he said, ‘You should go to Saginaw Valley. I’ll hire a Saginaw Valley student teacher three to one (over others) because they’ve been around kids from day one.’”

SVSU has been Gould’s home ever since. “I’ve been here nearly every day for the last 15 years.”

Gould says the number one question on his students’ minds is whether they will need to leave the state to find work. He adamantly tells them they won’t – if they go the extra mile.

“I tell the students, ‘You start your networking now. Offer to volunteer; showcase one of your strengths.’ I receive about an e-mail a week from a student who landed here in Michigan. It comes down to the preparation and the networking.”

When teaching his middle school, high school and college courses, Gould has always opened with a poem that includes the line “I’d rather see a sermon than hear one.” It serves as a reminder that actions speak louder than words, especially for educators.

To Gould, teaching was truly a calling, one he was quick to embrace and is eager to instill in future teachers.

“I used to affect 150 students a year. Now I have the potential to impact thousands of students over a lifetime. I’m loving it.”



Darlene Seegert

Administrative Secretary, College of Science Engineering & Technology • December 2009

Darlene Seegert has held the same position for 23 years and the same employer for 28; that experience pays dividends.

“No doubt about it,” she said. “The longer you’re here, the more you know what’s going on.”

With Deborah Huntley stepping into the dean’s office this fall, Seegert says their prior experience together has proven valuable.

“The nice thing about that is that she was the acting assistant dean before, so we knew how each other worked. It’s been a great transition.”

That stands in contrast to when Seegert first started working in the College of Science, Engineering & Technology after previous posts in the Registrar’s and Academic Support offices.

“You think you know a lot, and then you get in a position like the dean’s office... my first year was so hard. That was the hardest job I’ve ever had. I was taking work home to keep up with things, but after that year, I got to know the ropes. I’m always up for a challenge.”

Over the years, her responsibilities have remained similar, but not how she meets them.

“Technology-wise, it’s changed a lot,” Seegert said. “We used to sign a lot of overload slips by hand. Online class registration has really helped demand and reduced traffic through the dean’s office.”

One of Seegert’s favorite pastimes is joining colleagues across campus at noon for a game of volleyball or its cousin, wallyball, where the walls are in play.

“We’ve had a lot of fun with that. We’ve got quite a group. That’s a great place to meet other people.”

In the summer, Seegert also plays tennis. Always active, she appreciates the wellness program.

“That is a fantastic program and a great benefit for everyone.”

Another benefit of Seegert’s job is being able to overlook the courtyard.

“I always loved coming to work, but once they remodeled Pioneer Hall, I got this wonderful view. I know so many people envy me.”

Seegert still marvels at the building’s total transformation.

“It blows me away to think of what it was and what it is now. It was so worth the wait.”

One constant in Seegert’s career has been her appreciation for her employer.

“I love SVSU and I’m very dedicated to this place. My favorite part of the job is the people, working with the faculty and the students. It’s just a good feeling when you know you can help somebody, and I’ve always enjoyed doing that.”



Rousseau to oversee charter schools

Long-time education administrator Joseph Rousseau has been appointed director of school and university partnerships. Effective Jan. 1, he oversees SVSU's 18 charter schools that serve more than 11,000 students. Rousseau succeeds Ron Schneider, who retired after holding the position for nine years.

Rousseau had been serving as assistant director of school and university partnerships. He joined SVSU in 2004 as a school improvement specialist following a six-year appointment as superintendent of St. Charles Community Schools.



Joseph Rousseau

Throughout his education career, Rousseau has held many positions, including several with Saginaw Public Schools, where he served as an elementary school principal, director of federal programs and co-director of the Saginaw Arts & Sciences Academy. He has international experience, as well, having taught elementary school students in Japan, and working as a guidance counselor in Germany.

Rousseau completed a master's degree in counseling and personnel services from the University of Maryland. He earned a bachelor's degree in education from Michigan State University.

Professional Profile

- **Elaine Hunyadi**, assistant director of the Saginaw Bay Writing Project, and **Helen Raica-Klotz**, lecturer of English, presented a three-hour workshop titled "Conversation, Collaboration and Community: Connecting Writing in High School and College" at the National Writing Project Conference in Philadelphia, Nov. 19.
- **Joseph N. Inungu**, director of external relations, authored a book chapter titled "Health System in the Democratic Republic of Congo" in *Comparative Health Systems: Global Perspectives*. Also, Inungu coauthored an article titled "HIV Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices among College Students in the United States" for the *Journal of Health and Human Services Administration*. Inungu served on the Centers for Disease Control special review panel to review and make recommendations for grant proposals submitted to the CDC for funding. He also presented "Ethnic Disparity in Infant Mortality in the USA" at the Tomorrow's Child Association meeting held Nov. 5-6 in Mt. Pleasant.
- **Sara Beth Keough**, assistant professor of geography, presented a paper titled "Connecting to Home: Media Use Among the Newfoundland Diaspora in Alberta" at the Biennial Meeting of the Association for Canadian Studies in San Diego in November. Keough also was elected by the membership to the Executive Council of the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States for a four-year term (2009-2013).
- **Judith Kerman**, professor of English, has published her poem "Translating the Island" in *Visions International* #81.
- **Dorothy S. Lee**, associate professor of nursing, with Wayne State University faculty M. Safwan Badr and Jason H. Mateika, coauthored "Progressive Augmentation and Ventilatory Long-term Facilitation are Enhanced in Sleep Apnoea Patients and

are Mitigated by Antioxidant Administration" for the *Journal of Physiology*.

- **Laurie Reed**, lecturer of physics, was nominated for the Richard H. Emmons Award for Excellence in College Astronomy Teaching, a national award given annually by the Astronomical Society of the Pacific. Also, Reed was elected in October to a two-year member-at-large position on the Board of Governors of the Michigan Entomological Society.

- **David Schneider**, professor of communication, and Kim McCann from Fordham University coauthored a paper titled "Rational and Social Control Model of Public Opinion: The Spiral of Silence and the Conceptualization of Opinion Expression." The paper was presented at the National Communication Association Nov. 12 in Chicago.

- **Debra Wagner**, assistant professor of nursing, presented "Increasing the Number of B.S.N.-prepared Nurses through a Hybrid Program" at the American Association of Colleges of Nursing Baccalaureate Education Conference, Nov. 19 in Chicago.

New Cardinals

- **Grace Djapri Ahn**, assistant professor of history, welcomed a daughter, Cory Djapri (4 lbs., 9 oz., 17 in.) Dec. 15.
- **Holly Child**, assistant professor of criminal justice, welcomed a son, Quinn Royston (7 lbs., 15 oz., 20 in.) Dec. 12.
- **Bill and Amanda Gleason** welcomed a son, Connor Michael (7 lbs., 20.5 in.) Dec. 9. Bill and Amanada are support center technology specialists.
- **Joshua Ode**, assistant professor of kinesiology, welcomed a daughter, Joslyn Amanda (7 lbs., 11 oz., 20 in.) Dec. 26.

Condolences

- To **Tierra Tivis**, assistant professor of teacher education, on the loss of her father, Harold Bernard Tivis, who passed away Nov. 17.
- To the family of **Wayne Vasher**, former director of school and university partnerships, who passed away Nov. 20.
- To **Josh Webb**, purchasing manager, on the loss of his mother-in-law, Jacqueline White, who passed away Dec. 15.

Briefly Speaking

- **Mike Major**, interim director of career planning and placement, presented "Building Online Tutorials for Career Preparation" through a National Association of Colleges and Employers virtual seminar Dec. 10.

The Interior is published on the last Tuesday of each month for faculty and staff at SVSU. University departments sponsoring activities or events listed in the Interior will provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities when contacted at least three days in advance.

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