

Retired judge and alumna to address graduates

The May 2018 graduating class at SVSU will hear from an alumna who enjoyed a distinguished career as a judge and whose captivating personal story is the subject of a recently published memoir. Marylin E. Atkins will deliver the Commencement address during ceremonies Friday, May 11 and Saturday, May 12.

The graduating class consists of 999 individuals expected to complete degree requirements who have indicated that they intend to don regalia and march in their respective ceremonies. In all, SVSU will welcome 1,083

people to its alumni rolls.

Atkins is the longest-serving chief judge in the history of Michigan's 36th District Court in Detroit, having served in that position for nearly 13 years when she retired in 2012. She holds the distinction of having been appointed by Gov. James Blanchard, a Democrat, as a magistrate for the 36th District Court in 1991, and later as a judge in that court by Governor John Engler, a Republican, in 1994.

After retiring from the bench, Atkins wrote her autobiography "The Triumph of Rosemary: A Memoir," which

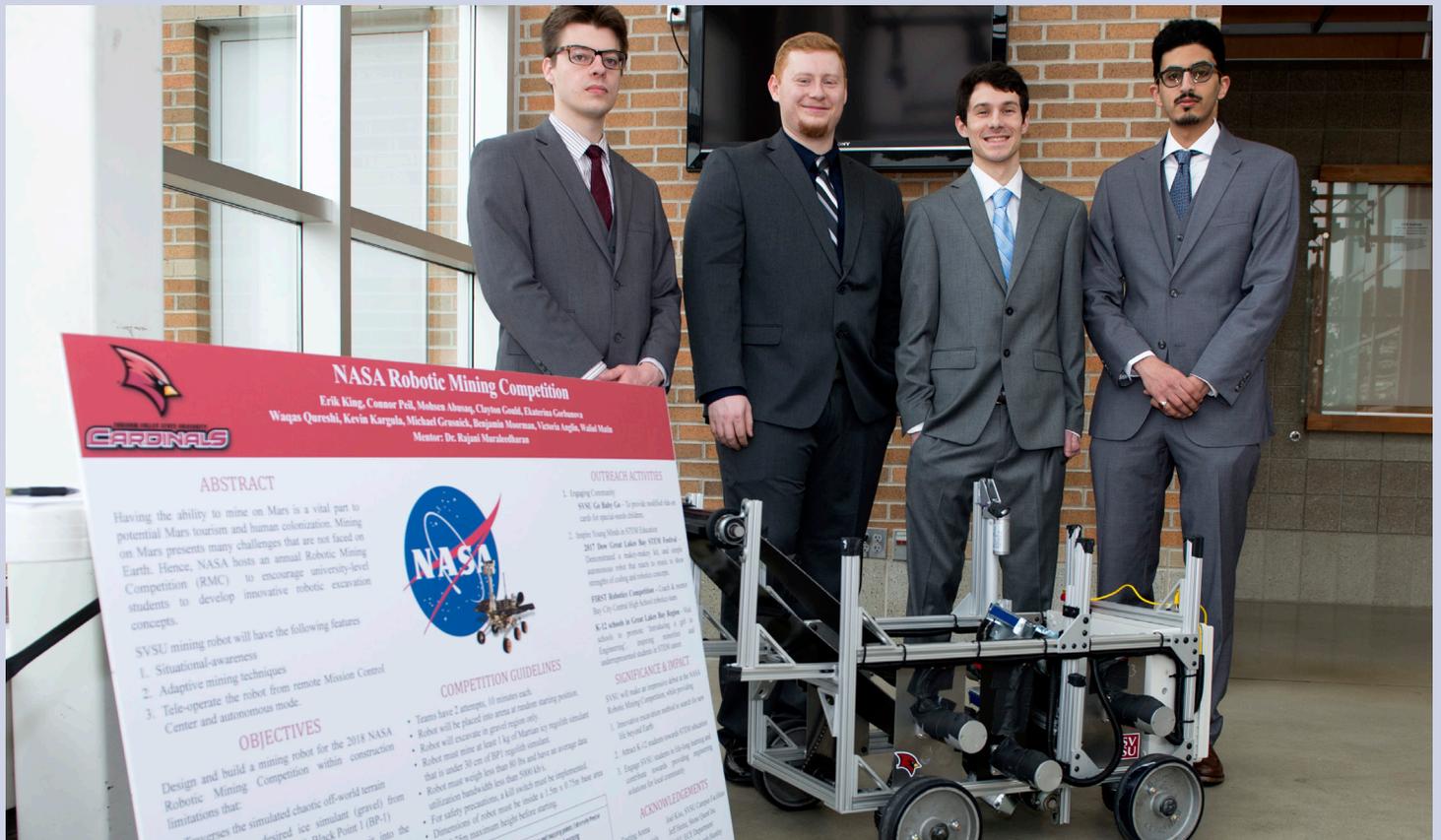


Marylin E. Atkins

was published in 2017. The memoir addresses important topics of diversity and social change. Born to an Italian

teen and a married black man in Detroit in 1946, Atkins was adopted by a black couple in Saginaw. At age 19, she sparked a racial and religious scandal by marrying former Roman Catholic priest Thomas Lee Atkins, who was white and 25 years older than she.

Active in her community, Atkins has worked extensively with Detroit youth in schools and churches. She is frequently a guest speaker at youth rallies. Atkins completed a bachelor's degree in psychology at SVSU and a law degree at the University of Detroit Mercy. She has two adult daughters.



For their senior project, electrical engineering majors Connor Peil, Erik King, Clayton Gould and Mohsen Abusaq collaborated to build a mining robot for Mars. They plan to enter the robot in the NASA Robotic Mining Competition. The students presented the project to the public Friday during the annual SVSU Science and Engineering Symposium. The event was one of two public student showcases scheduled that day. During the Undergraduate Research Program symposium, students presented work completed for academic programs from all five colleges.

Kaustav Misra

Associate Professor of Economics

After seeing over 20 of his articles published in noteworthy peer-reviewed journals and giving more than 70 presentations at national and international conferences, Kaustav Misra is still hard at work finding new and innovative ways to enrich his area of study. An associate professor of economics, Misra conducts the majority of his research in the fields of public economics, international economics and family business.

This year's recipient of SVSU's Earl L. Warrick Award for Excellence in Research, Misra was honored for his significant contributions to the advancement of knowledge in a recognized field of scholarship. Alongside other faculty members, Misra is currently researching market efficiency, particularly in relation to family businesses.

"Family business is dear to my heart because we have millions and millions of family businesses but the corporations are getting all the attention," Misra said. "The contribution from a family business is not at all lesser than that from the corporate world."

Misra said this area of research remains a growing field and he is excited about the opportunity to contribute to it.

Having earned several awards for his research contributions, including the Best Doctoral Paper in the Entrepreneurship/Information Technology/Innovation track for 2011 for the South Management Association, Misra works closely with many of his students as they begin to build their own academic portfolios.

"The advice I like to give to students who are looking to begin a research project," Misra said, "is to identify their connection to the topic. Because if they are not interested in the topic, then they are not going to be persistent. They need to be persistent if they want to produce good research."

Misra also is an experienced leader of study abroad expeditions. He enjoys introducing students to different global markets and business models.

"Any study abroad that I conduct, I divide into two parts: the academic part and the experiential part," he said. "Since most of the students are business majors, we develop an itinerary where they have opportunities to go and visit companies while abroad and listen to speakers in the industry."

Misra also is developing a new study abroad program — called Study Abroad at Sea — that he hopes will set sail in spring 2019.

A member of SVSU's faculty since 2011, Misra said he is proud to be a Cardinal. Not only is SVSU made up of a thriving and vibrant community, Misra explained, but it is a place that fully appreciates diversity.

"I know I can contribute to this institution — not only through research and teaching — but I can contribute to the community on and off campus," he said. "I'm totally invested in my work. That's the biggest thing I try to teach students: be invested. Whatever you do, make sure that you are passionate about it."



LaToya Peoples

Event Coordinator • April Staff Member of the Month

The elliptical is the go-to piece of exercise equipment when LaToya Peoples makes her regular visits to the Ryder Center.

"That's my thing," she said of the machine's steady, consistent ride. "Every time."

She visits the piece of equipment during lunch breaks from a job responsibility that is far from elliptical. In Peoples' profession, no two days are the same.

"I like that about it," said Peoples, an event coordinator with The Conference Center at SVSU.

The job involves working with different people and groups — including members of SVSU as well as the outside community — interested in booking events and ceremonies at SVSU's many venues. Those gatherings include weddings, wedding receptions, high school proms, concerts and dinners involving hundreds of people.

Peoples is more than a calendar coordinator. She enjoys taking a hands-on approach to her assignments too.

"The events I can help decorate are the best," she said.

"Sometimes that means picking the color of linen, ordering a vase or finding a spectacular backdrop. I like to talk to people to get a sense of what they want, help them create that environment, and then watch their face when they see their ideas become real."

Her favorite events to coordinate are weddings and proms, which keep her especially busy around this time of year.

Her journey to become an event coordinator began when she first joined SVSU as an undergraduate in 2010. She started with The Conference Center at SVSU as a student employee and was hired full time in 2012. She received her bachelor's degree in communication in 2015, then decided to continue her education in the classroom. She plans to earn her master's degree in public administration from the university in May 2019.

It's a lot of work — on top of her role as a mother to her 3-year-old daughter, Aniyah — but Peoples is committed to advancing herself educationally and professionally.

"I'm always looking to expand my knowledge and step it up a notch," she said.

Peoples said she has enjoyed her eight years at SVSU in part because of the relationships built with colleagues and clients — which sometimes are one and the same. Among her primary on-campus clients are the Office of the President as well as the Office of Diversity Programs.

"I admire many people who work here," she said. "They show me exactly what I want to be, and they make me feel like this is where I want to be."



Professional Profile

- **Geoffrey V. Carter**, assistant professor of English, was part of a panel that examined the culture and construction of pinball machines for the 4th Annual R-Cade Symposium hosted by Rutgers University-Camden on April 20.
- **Diane Deacon**, ESL specialist in the English Language Program, gave a presentation with Jolene Jaquays (UM-Flint) titled "Sustaining Academic Writing: Spark it up with Creativity" at the International TESOL Conference March 29 in Chicago.
- **Monika Dix**, associate professor of modern foreign languages, presented a paper titled "Translating Text and Image: Trans-Cultural Understanding of the Shirakaba School" at the Annual Conference for the Association of Asian Studies March 24 in Washington, D.C.
- **Jesse Donahue**, professor of political science, and **Conor Shaw-Draves**, assistant professor of English, had their peer-reviewed book on animal history, politics and law accepted for publication with MacFarland Press. The book, titled *Snakes in American Culture*, is expected to be published by October 2018.
- **Margaret Flatt**, professor emerita of nursing, was the opening speaker for the Michigan Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing Update 2018 conference April 14 in Lansing. Her presentation was titled "PTSD: A Qualitative Journey of Discovery." Since 1968, Flatt has used her slides from Vietnam as a backdrop for presentations to a variety of audiences. "Visions of War, Dreams of Peace" is her general population version that contains comparative data from Vietnam and WWII, qualitative data from analysis of published poetry of women who experienced those wars and health concerns of veterans. Honoria, if offered, are donated to the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation.
- **Rachel Florence-Spaetzel**, director of orientation programs, received the Outstanding Orientation, Transition and Retention Professional Award for NODA's Region VII.
- **Chris Giroux**, associate professor of English, presented "Tutoring Training, Efficacy and Confidence (or, When Grammar Rears Its Ugly Head)" at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in Kansas City, in March. Also, Giroux and Josh Atkins presented "Reflecting on our Work in the Community: A Case Study of One Tutor's Reflection Journals Detailing His Work in a Regional Prison" at the East Central Writing Center Association conference in March at Ohio State University.
- **Rosina Hassoun**, assistant professor of sociology, chaired a session titled "The US Immigration System: The Violence of Detention, Deportation, and Wall-Building" and presented a paper titled "Unsustainable Deportations and Exclusions: U.S. Policy towards Muslim and Christian Arabs and Chaldeans" at the Society for Applied Anthropology meetings April 5 in Philadelphia.
- **Cortney Heileman**, assistant director of Student Wellness Programs, and **Michele Gunkelman**, director of Residential Life, received a \$25,044 grant from the Campus Sexual Assault Grant Program of the Michigan State Police. The grant period is March 1 to Nov. 30, 2018. During this time, more than 1,000 students will participate in the Bringing In The Bystander pro-social bystander intervention program and in a video contest that promote pro-social bystander behaviors.
- **Eltaro Hooper**, associate director of Residential Life & Student Conduct, was appointed as the state coordinator for Michigan by the Association for Student Conduct Administrators. This a

one-year appointment that will include creating a state leadership infrastructure, resource sharing, facilitating low-cost professional development opportunities for affiliated institutions/companies across a state or province, as well as national and state meetings; just to name a few.

- **Jennifer C. Majorana**, ESL senior specialist, presented "Measuring Vocabulary Development in Intensive English Programs" March 30 at TESOL International in Chicago.
- **Peggy Mead-Finizio**, assistant professor of theatre, attended the U. S. Institute for Theatre Technology's annual conference March 12-16 in Fort Lauderdale. She served as a shadow chair for the session "Entertainment Lighting vs. Mother Nature: Lighting in an Outdoor Stage" and was on the committee to select the posters for presentation for the Lighting Commission. Also, Mead-Finizio was an invited artist for the SUNY Brockport Department of Dance March 7-11 in Rochester, New York, where she choreographed an original dance titled "Homeland" for the Chamber Ballet Brockport.
- **Helen Raica-Klotz**, director of the Writing Center and of the Saginaw Bay Writing Project, and Jordan Hessbrook presented "Developing a Culture of Mentorship: Models for High School/University Writing Center Partnerships" at the East Central Writing Center Association conference in March at Ohio State University.
- **Stephen Taber**, professor of biology, has a manuscript titled "A New Nearctic Species of *Hadroneura* Lundström Fungus Gnat" accepted for publication in *Southwestern Entomologist*.
- **Melojeane Zawilinski**, ELP instructor, presented "Profundity Grid" (a reading strategy for college students) at the Michigan Association of International Educators March 23 at the Double Tree Hilton in Bay City.

Condolences

- To **Ellen Crane**, assistant general counsel/director of Human Resources, whose father-in-law, Richard Freigang, passed away March 28.
- To the family of **Kalen Foreman**, assistant men's basketball coach, who passed away April 19.
- To the family of **James L. Mitchell**, Dean Emeritus of the College of Business & Management, who passed away April 15.
- To **Keith Prueter**, groundskeeper, whose mother, Mae Ann Prueter, passed away April 8.
- To **Anne Reittenbach**, administrative secretary, whose father-in-law, Kenneth V. Anderson, passed away March 29.
- To the family of **Richard Trdan**, retired professor of biology, who passed away April 6.

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.

J.J. Boehm
Director of Media &
Community Relations
jjboehm@svsu.edu • 964-4055

Tim Inman
Director of Marketing Support
tmi@svsu.edu • 964-4086

Submission Deadline:
Noon on Wednesday before the publication date
Please email submissions to: jjboehm@svsu.edu