2020 BSUAA Award Recipients

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY Alumni Association
Alumni Award of Achievement - Sarah Hempstead

Sarah Hempstead, BS'98, BAR'98, graduated cum laude with two degrees, from Honors College and the R. Wayne Estopinal College of Architecture and Planning (CAP). She is active with CAP's Alumni Engagement Committee and advisory board, and recently served on the Dean's Search Committee. Her work also includes activating Indiana CAP alumni and assisting with the growth and development of CAP's Indy Design Center. Hempstead served with Project Partnership assisting CAP students on the Tumaini Innovation Center Master Plan in Eldoret, Kenya. Hempstead's work at Schmidt Associates merges with her love for BSU serving as the Principal-In-Charge of the Higher Education Studio, leading the firm in its contributions to transform the Muncie campus, including designing five residence halls. Under her leadership, Schmidt Associates funds a scholarship to support aspiring architecture students at Ball State. Hempstead is credited with leading Schmidt Associates to its status as the fourth largest architecture firm in Indianapolis and its 68th ranking on the ENR Midwest's list of Top Design Firms. She plays a critical role in the profession as one of very few female CEO's of an Architecture/Engineering/Construction (AEC) firm. In 2018 Hempstead received the AIA Indiana Juliet Peddle Award and has received numerous other honors earlier in her career. She serves on multiple non-profit organizations, including the Indy Chamber and chairing its Transportation, Infrastructure, and Environment (TIE) committee as well as board president of the Junior Achievement of Central Indiana.

Benny Award - Stephanie Arrington

Stephanie Arrington, Executive Director of Presidential Events and Operations, has been employed by the University’s Office of the President for more than 16 years. She is as passionate as she is professional in executing more than 100 events annually on behalf of the University. She works closely with the president and the president's spouse to manage the strategic planning and execution of events for the office; major academic events such as Commencement ceremonies; and significant University-wide and community events. In 2018–19, she co-chaired the Centennial Celebration and organized a variety of events and projects to celebrate the University’s proud past and bright future. Arrington also manages Bracken House, and she led the remodel and redesign of the presidential residence in 2015. In addition to her event responsibilities, she also serves as the president’s scheduler and oversees the administrative operations for the office. Having served four presidents during her tenure, she has earned the respect of her peers who recognize that her creativity, flexibility, and strong work ethic enable her to succeed at creating memorable experiences for our campus community. She is a member of the Leaders and Loyals and of Cardinal Varsity Club.

Benny Award - Brian Hayes

Brian Hayes, BS'96, MA'02, MAE'10, has been teaching and directing programs within Ball State's Department of Journalism since 2005. As a senior lecturer and assistant department chair, Hayes teaches courses in journalism graphics, directs the department's internship program, coordinates the journalism education major and oversees the outreach and engagement efforts to secondary schools. A former high school journalism teacher and professional newspaper designer and graphics editor in four cities, Hayes’s contributions to journalism education have been recognized at both the state and national levels, most prominently through working with the Indiana High School Press Association, the Indiana Department of Education, and the Journalism Education Association (JEA). At Ball State, Hayes serves on multiple department and university-level committees and is a past-president and member of the Journalism Alumni Society, which recognized him in 2019 with its President's Award. In 2017 he received the JEA Medal of Merit, and he holds several other honors related to journalism education and publication design. Hayes is a member of the Leaders and Loyals and former member of Cardinal Varsity Club.
Gayle Hartleroad, BS’95, MA’97, directs Student Services for the Miller College of Business. She is known for her work with the Miller Scholarship and Miller Business Honors Program for high achieving business students which has won recognition from the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). Former students cite her for “developing a program that challenged them appropriately as advanced students and provided the support and tools to manage these challenges.” One of her former students indicated that Hartleroad “LIVES for her students to support them in their academic, professional and personal growth.” She earned an EdD degree from Nova Southeastern University in 2003. Hartleroad has maintained relationships with her former students and connected them with current students, helping both groups feel valued. In 2004 she was named a Graduate of the Last Decade (G.O.L.D.) and as a student, Hartleroad was a member of Golden Key, a campus tour guide, peer advisor, and Color Guard Captain of Ball State’s Pride of Mid-America Marching Band.

Michael Smith, BS’73, had a successful career as a journalist, professor, administrator, and volunteer for Ball State. After graduating in 1973, Michael established a successful career as a journalist and editor for 23 years. In 1982 he was part of a team at the Ft. Wayne News-Sentinel that won the Pulitzer Prize for local reporting. He later moved to a 20-year career in teaching and administration at Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management and Medill School of Journalism, retiring in 2011 as executive director of the Media Management Center. Smith is the author or editor of several monographs, including “Values, Culture, Content,” “The Newsroom Brain,” and “The Changing Reader.” His volunteerism to Ball State has been extraordinary having served at the highest level on the Alumni Council, the Journalism Alumni board, the CCIM Dean’s Advisory Committee, various search committees and task forces, fundraising campaigns, and the Ball State Foundation Board of Directors. Michael is an avid Cardinal fan, holding season tickets and traveling from Evanston for many sporting events.

Robert “Bob” G. Hunt, BS’69, LLD’18, is chairman emeritus of Hunt Construction Group, now known as AECOM Hunt. Hunt worked more than 40 years in the company, serving as its third generation CEO. AECOM Hunt hires Ball State graduates and is one of the country's largest builders of sports facilities and convention centers. It is responsible for more than 95,000 employees in 150 countries. Hunt is committed to the communities in which he has lived and is well regarded as a national civic and business leader. He served on numerous boards in both Indianapolis and Arizona, including Saint Luke’s Hospital Board of Directors, the Phoenix-based Stardust Foundation, and the Anasazi Foundation. He involved Ball State students from architecture, construction management and business on the first inter-disciplinary immersive design project: Intermodal Transportation Terminal in Venice, Italy in 2010. This project led to Hunt’s hiring of students for internships and permanent positions, some of whom are still with the firm. Hunt has made numerous trips to campus, conducted online forums, and spoken to classes in CAP, Miller College of Business and Applied Technology and Science. In 2011 he sponsored six students and their faculty coach to participate in a Construction Management regional competition where they captured first place in the new Concrete Solutions category. In 2016 Ball State dedicated the Robert G. Hunt Center for Construction Management, honoring him and his family’s philanthropic investment. He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate Degree and named Commencement Speaker in 2018. Earlier, Hunt received the Miller College of Business Award of Distinction and served on its Entrepreneurship Advisory Board.
Megan Gish Carrico, BS'12, has worked in public affairs for the Indianapolis Airport Authority (IAA) since 2015. Newly promoted to the role of Director of Public Affairs, she previously was the Manager of Communications and Senior Marketing Specialist serving the millions of passengers that travel through the Indianapolis International Airport (IND) each year. Prior to joining the airport, she was a Social Media Account Executive at BLASTmedia working with consumer tech products and business to business high tech clients. Carrico’s support of her alma mater includes hiring Ball State students and alumni for internships and positions, whenever possible. Throughout her career, she’s returned to the university to speak with various classes in the College of Communication Information and Media and with students through the Career Center. Since 2015, she has served on the Ball State Journalism Alumni Society Board. Carrico is a member of Alpha Chi Omega sorority and participated on the Panhellenic Council as a student. In addition, she was a Ingelhart News Scholar and held multiples positions in the Student Government Association. Carrico actively serves the community through major tourism and sporting events held in Indianapolis, including the 2024 NBA All-Star Game, 2022 College Football Playoffs, 2021 NCAA March Madness, 2020 Routes Americas, 2019 National Urban League Conference, and 2016 U.S. Conference of Mayors, as well as annual events such as the FFA National Convention. She is an advocate for leadership development and improving the community around her, which is visible through her participation in the Indy Chamber Leadership Exchange with immersion into the infrastructure and culture of major metropolitan regions such as San Antonio, Denver, and Seattle. Carrico is a graduate of the Stanley K. Lacy Executive Leadership Series Class XLIII.

Megan Farley, BFA'12, is the Associate Director for SIX the Musical on Broadway. Prior to her move to New York, she held an extensive career as a freelance director, choreographer and performer in the Chicagoland area. Farley also works as a coach, teacher, and mentor in all areas of musical theater and dance performance. She has taught at many institutions within the Windy City including Visceral Dance Center, Joel Hall Dancers and Center, Lou Conte Dance Studio, The School at Porchlight, and the National High School Institute at Northwestern University. Her professional career began as a Ball State student when she spent summers performing at King's Island and Cedar Point Amusement Parks in Ohio. After earning her degree, she moved to Chicago for her first union gig performing at Drury Lane Theatre in Singin’ in the Rain, directed by Theatre and Dance Department Chair Bill Jenkins. In addition to performing throughout the Chicago area, as a young performer she landed a contract at sea onboard Holland America Line’s MS Volendam. Known for her tremendous skill and tireless work ethic, Farley has fostered connections which led to teaching, directing and choreographing opportunities professionally, and that benefitted Ball State. She returned to campus to choreograph Shrek the Musical, which was co-directed by Tony Award winner and honorary alumna Sutton Foster, and Bill Jenkins. Maintaining her campus contacts, Farley often returns to Muncie to share her passions with future Cardinals. Her next endeavor will be serving as Director and Choreographer for Ball State's upcoming production of Bring It On: the Musical slated for Fall of 2021. One of her former instructors said that Farley's work “inspires others to connect, entertains those in need, and encourages acceptance of each other.”
Joseph “JD” Dalfonso, BS’10, is President and CEO at Peoria (Illinois) Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. He was cited as a driving force in helping Peoria win the prestigious national All-America City Award in 2013. That same year, Dalfonso was named one of the “40 Leaders Under 40” in the Peoria area, as well as a Distinguished Alumnus from his undergraduate Communications Studies Department at Ball State University. Prior to his current position, he served as the Communications Director for Illinois Congressman Darin LaHood from 2015-19. His career after graduating Ball State started as the Social Media and Web Marketing Coordinator at Bradley University. Other community organizations include sitting on the board of the Peoria Civic Center Authority and formerly serving on the board of the Young Professionals of Greater Peoria. Dalfonso is a 2016 alum of former Illinois Governor Jim Edgar’s Fellowship Program at the University of Illinois. One of his former professors indicated that Dalfonso “has consistently embodied Ball State’s enduring values—excellence, innovation, courage, integrity, inclusiveness, social responsibility and gratitude.” He returns to campus often to meet with students, conduct workshops and talks with large groups, has participated in the BSU social media outreach.

Rachel Handt, BS’13, is a Doctor of Physical Therapy at the IU Health Neurorehabilitation and Robotics Clinic. After graduating cum laude with a major in Exercise Science, she enrolled at IUPUI to study Physical Therapy. She became a research assistant to one of her professors, where she worked on several research projects and co-authored three published research articles before earning her Doctorate in Physical Therapy from IU in 2016. Handt then worked for a year at Community Health Fort Ben, which allowed her to serve patients with both neurologic and orthopedic diagnoses. The next year she was admitted into a prestigious neurologic residency at the University of Southern California and Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center. In addition to her clinical practice during her residency, she also completed research and assisted in teaching three different doctoral level classes. She went on to complete her residency in 2018, and successfully passed her Board Exam to become a Certified Neurologic Clinical Specialist through the APTA in 2019. She has also served as adjunct faculty at IU in the Doctor of Physical Therapy Program for five years and works part-time at Methodist in Neurologic and Orthopedic Trauma Acute Care. She continues to participate on various panels at both Ball State and IU, has helped to assist with the Jeff Clevenger 5K at Ball state, and volunteers for several community-based service projects and not-for-profit organizations.

Emily McGowan, BS and BFA’11, is a Medical Planner Design Professional with Hellmuth Obata Kassabaum (HOK) in Washington, DC where she has been employed for the past three years. She graduated with double majors in architecture and in visual communications. McGowan then enrolled in Clemson University’s Architecture + Health master’s program, where she earned that degree in 2016. From there she was a Global Health Corps fellow and served in Rwanda with the Ministry of Health and nonprofit firm MASS Design Group, to assist with the planning and designing of healthcare facilities in areas with substandard medical care. In 2019 she was recognized by the Healthcare Design Magazine as a Rising Star in the architecture category. McGowan reflects “that if there is one thing I’ve learned over the past decade working at the intersections of healthcare, advocacy and the built environment, it’s that architecture is not neutral; it either helps or it hurts.” McGowan is a LEED Accredited Professional Associate with AIA licensure in progress, and member of the Academy of Architecture for Health Union of Int’l Architects - Public Health Group USGBC. In 2019 she was invited to speak on Health and the Urban Environment at Georgetown University and at UMD, College Park. She is a member of Phi Mu sorority.
Michele Murday, BS’13, is the Northwest Indiana Branch Manager with EnviroForensics, an environmental consulting and engineering firm. She began her career in the Indianapolis area as a field geologist, staff geologist and project manager before advancing to her current position with EnviroForensics. In 2019, Murday was named an Up & Coming Woman of the Year in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) by the Northwest Indiana Influential Women’s Association (NWIIWA), an organization that supports women in their career development and provides leadership support, networking and educational opportunities. She volunteers as a board member for the Dunes Learning Center, a non-profit that provides year-round, environmental education opportunities to students, educators, and learners of all ages. She is also the environmental committee chair of the Northwest Indiana Forum, the regional voice for the business community that promotes economic development and retention of quality jobs. In addition, Murday is an active board member with the Ball State Geological Society Alumni Board and Water for Empowerment, a nonprofit that helps women and girls build healthy futures through clean water initiatives. As a student, she became a member of the Ball State Geological Society and joined Sigma Kappa Sorority and Rho Lambda.

Joshua Spencer, BS’11, is the Vice President and Chief Actuary for Brotherhood Mutual in Fort Wayne, a 600-employee national insurance company. Brotherhood serves more than 70,000 churches and related ministries, with pricing and risk abatement determined in large part by Spencer’s influence, his actuarial acumen and skills he acquired at Ball State. He majored in risk management and insurance, finance, and actuarial science as a student. He is very active in his community, attending City Council meetings, volunteering on boards for local non-profits and advocating for events and organizations that draw talent to the city. He also sits on the Actuarial Advisory Board for the College of Science and Humanities and has served in the past as board chairperson. Spencer is a member of the CPCU Society, the American Academy of Actuaries, the Society of Actuaries and the Casualty Actuarial Society. Spencer attends regional Ball State events, is a Career Fair employer participant and a member of the BSU Leaders and Loyals.

Samantha Keen Parmerlee, BS’15, is a special education teacher for Brownsburg Community School Corporation at Delaware Trail Elementary where she teaches a self-contained classroom for students diagnosed with emotional and/or behavioral disabilities in grades K-5. As a junior at Ball State, she received the Department of Special Education Outstanding Pre-Service Deaf Education Student Award. Parmelee enjoyed spending time at the Indiana School for the Deaf during her practicum and advocated for both students and adults in the Deaf community. She excels in her current position in a self-contained classroom for students diagnosed with emotionally and/or behavioral disabilities and was named Teacher of the Year for Delaware Trail Elementary in 2018. Parmelee is known as the “ED Queen” on Teachers Pay Teachers, an online marketplace where instructors buy and sell original educational materials. She provides materials related to social skills development, behavior supports, visual supports, IEP development and data collection. She has also created a professional Instagram account advocating for students with behavioral needs and blogging about her journey through teaching. For eight years she was the assistant Camp Director for the Blackford County High Riding Art and Equestrian Camp. The two-week program for children with disabilities included horseback riding, art, science, technology, sports, and other enrichment activities.
Honorary Award - Jeffrey Smulyan

Jeffrey Smulyan serves as the chairman of the board for Emmis Communication Corporation based in Indianapolis and is leading the company’s transition from slower growth traditional media assets to new businesses. He is a former director of the National Association of Broadcasters, past chair of Central Indiana Corporate Partnership, and as a principal shareholder, led the group that purchased the Seattle Mariners baseball team in 1989. In 2017 he received the Lowry Mays Excellence in Broadcasting Award from the Broadcasters Foundation of America. Earlier, he was inducted into the Broadcasting & Cable Hall of Fame and the Indiana Business Hall of Fame, and in 2000 he was named Radio Ink Radio Executive of the Year. Under his leadership Emmis was recognized by Fortune Magazine as one of the “Top 100 Best Companies to Work For.” Smulyan was named by the White House in 1994 to head the U.S. Delegation to the Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunications Union. As an ambassador of the United States, he helped negotiate a landmark agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. Smulyan served on the Ball State University Board of Trustees from 1996-2003 and resides with his family in Indianapolis.

Robert E. Linson Award - Kelly Asiala

Kelly Asiala served on the Ball State Homecoming Steering Committee as the Royalty Chair, Air Jam Chair and General Chair over three years. She helped plan Ball State’s first-ever spring Homecoming in 2021. She was also the communications intern at the Ball State University Foundation, and the sole student member of the One Ball State Day Marketing Committee. She served on the executive board of her sorority for three years. Kelly graduated in 2021, and works at Hirons, a full-service advertising agency in downtown Indianapolis. She continues her involvement with Ball State through the Young Alumni Council and serving as one of the recruitment advisors for Alpha Omicron Pi.