2021 BSUAA Award Recipients

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY
Alumni Association
**Honorary Alumni Award - Dr. Joe Rinard**

Joe Rinard began his higher education career at Ball State before transferring to Indiana University. He completed his DDS in 1955 while serving as an Omicron Kappa Upsilon National Dental Honor Society member. Joe trained under the renowned Dr. Ralph Phillips in dental materials. His late wife received her bachelor's degree from Ball State, a fact he proudly shares. Joe is passionate about the College of Sciences and Humanities and was the lead donor in establishing the Dr. Joe and Alice Rinard Orchid Greenhouse, which opened in 2014. The 3,600 square foot greenhouse holds over 2,000 species of orchids and many other tropical plants and is open to the public. Joe regularly volunteers with the greenhouse and committed $1.2 million towards its expansion. Joe and Alice also established the Dr. Joe R. and Alice Pursley Rinard Scholarship for the Ball State Speech Pathology and Audiology program. Joe credits his philanthropic nature to Dr. Robert Cooper, head of the biology department, during his undergraduate studies at Ball State. Joe received the IUPUI Spirit of Philanthropy Award in 2014 for his support of the IUPUI dental materials program and building project. Joe also supports his high school each year by awarding a generous annual scholarship.

**Benny Award - Christy Horn**

Christy Horn, '81 M.A. '10, Christy's 40-year career encompassed non-profit leadership and fundraising, public relations and marketing, and 18 years running her own businesses. The 11-year higher ed portion of her career culminated as the Vice President of University Relations, South Dakota School of Mines & Technology. Christy holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Ball State, a Certificate in Fundraising Management from Indiana University, and completed two of Harvard's executive courses in higher education. A loyal Ball State alumna, Christy served over 10 years on the BSU Alumni Council, the final two as its Chairman. She currently serves on the Miller College of Business SOAR Advisory Board. In retirement, Christy enjoys traveling and working closely with Catholic Campus Ministry at the University of Central Florida. Since her early days on campus, Christy has embraced the spirit of Beneficence, giving generously of her time as a volunteer for the university and the communities she has lived across the United States over the past 40 years, her talent as a leader, and her treasure as a 30+ year donor to university.

**Benny Award - Thomas Gayda**

Thomas "Tom" Gayda, '98 M.A. '05, is a teacher and student publications director at North Central High School. Beginning as a student worker in the Journalism Workshops Office planning and coordinating J-Day's and Summer Workshops, Tom has continued working with the department year after year promoting and coordinating secondary outreach events, teaching as a part-time journalism instructor, and serving on the Journalism Alumni Society Board of Directors and CCIM Alumni Group, currently serving as President of both organizations. Outside of his full-time teaching job, Tom has taken on various roles within the BSU Journalism Workshops office over the years, having served as a summer workshops instructor, program coordinator, and assistant director. Last spring, after the pandemic shuttered our plans for J-Day and our traditional summer workshops program, Tom took the lead in creating a virtual summer workshop experience for secondary students and teachers where participants could take student media courses free of charge. In roughly 20 days, Tom, along with our summer journalism workshops staff, was able to assemble a definitive list of volunteer speakers and put together a program that was better and more robust than most other summer journalism workshops programs that charged registration and participation fees - and he did it without compensation. Since then, Tom has continued to work with the Outreach Office planning virtual professional development events for the journalism department. In October, he coordinated a panel discussion for journalism department majors on "Covering the Election" with retired journalist Ron Claiborne of ABC News and Good Morning America and Kevin Rader, a retired political reporter for WTHR-13 Indianapolis. Currently, Tom is assisting in the planning and developing of our Summer Journalism Workshops for secondary students and teachers - which will also likely be a virtual workshop experience.
William “Bill” Baker, ’95, is a principal and one of three owners of MSA Design, a national Architecture, Interior, and Graphic Design practice headquartered in Cincinnati with offices in Columbus and Florida. At MSA, one of Bill’s key responsibilities is leading MSA Sport, one of the “Top Twenty” Sports Architecture practices in the United States. Since graduating, Bill has been a supporter of Ball State. He has served on the Department of Architecture’s advisory board since its inception. Bill has been a tireless contributor to advancing the quality of all the departmental programs and initiatives. He also frequently returns to campus and participates in reviews with current students. In his leadership role at MSA, Bill has consistently supported CAP’s student internship program, hiring Ball State student interns and Bachelor and Master of Architecture graduates. According to Andrea Swartz, Associate Dean of CAP: “He is a bright light of Ball State love in Cincinnati.” Bill is also a member of the local Cincinnati BSU Alumni Chapter. Reinforcing Bill's knowledge and love of sport, he is a professional associate member of the National Association of Intercollegiate Directors of Athletics and NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation. Bill is a native of Central Ohio and resides in Cincinnati's Mt Lookout neighborhood with his wife, Amanda (Fritz) Baker ’95 and their three children. Bill is an active participant in multiple community-based organizations, including the Cincinnati Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati, Hyde Park Community United Methodist Church, and the Cincinnati USA Sports Commission. Currently, Bill is serving on the Cincinnati World Cup 2026 Local Organizing Committee, a group dedicated to bringing the FIFA 2026 World Cup Soccer Tournament to Cincinnati.

Janet Holcomb, ’92 M.A. ’96, First Lady of Indiana, uses her incredible public platform to advocate on behalf of our state's residents and has made a significant impact in the lives of many Hoosiers. As a student, Janet was passionate about art at Ball State - she earned a BFA in Visual Arts in 1992 and an M.A. in Art in 1996. In her extracurriculars, Janet was involved with Greek life, and she served as a graduate assistant at the David Owsley Museum of Art. In her professional career, Janet entered the business world. She served as Vice President of R&R Engineering in Summitville, a company dedicated to producing high volumes of custom U bolts, J bolts, and other products integral to manufacturing and building. Janet took a leave of absence from the company when her husband Eric was elected Governor of Indiana. Janet has advocated consistently on behalf of various programs and special interest groups, including the arts, veterans', social service providers, animal welfare, 4-H, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and women in the Indiana business community. In her role as First Lady, Janet lends her support to the Governor’s goals and agenda items, in particular, lowering Indiana’s infant mortality rate and reducing recidivism (the tendency of a convicted criminal to re-offend). She sits on boards of the Riley Hospital Children's Foundation and the Hoosier Art Salon. She is also a member of the Indianapolis FBI Citizens Academy Alumni Chapter. More than anything, Janet is a shining star, and she represents Ball State brilliantly.
Alumni Achievement Award - Timothy Stoner

Timothy "Tim" Stoner, '93 M.S. '94, has led dual lives connected to the military, as a thirty-three-year member of the Army National Guard and Army Reserves, and his professional work. After earning his master's degree from the Center for Information and Communication Sciences, Tim gained professional consulting experience culminating in being named Partner of Advisory Services at Pricewaterhouse Coopers. With a focus on healthcare and insurance, Tim has led and delivered enterprise risk-mitigation strategies across multiple industries. His professional achievements include being a U.S. Veteran Leader with the Office of Diversity & Inclusion and a U.S. Tanium Alliance Leader. As a soldier, Tim serves as commander of the 55th Medical Detachment. He has the rare distinction of being a Ranger and a Black Hawk Pilot. He has received numerous commendations, including the Bronze Star and the Meritorious Service Medal. His unit was awarded the Valorous Unit Award, the second-highest decoration which may be bestowed upon a U.S. Army unit, awarded for displays of extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy. He is also an involved father with four children, Briggs, Gage, Emerson and Campbell.

Distinguished Alumni Award - Daniel Prickel

Daniel "Dan" Prickel, '76 MBA '80, is the former principal, CFO and a co-founder of BSI Engineering, LLC. which has offices in Cincinnati, Chicago, Cedar Rapids, Dearborn, and Louisville. The company has been on the Inc. 5000 list of fastest-growing companies in America for the last nine years and voted one of Cincinnati's Top Workplaces for the past five years. 5% of the annual profits earned at BSI are given back to charitable causes each year. He retired from BSI on January 31, 2021. Dan received his undergraduate accounting degree and his MBA from Ball State, and also lettered four years on the men's Varsity soccer team here at Ball State. Dan has been a committed and enthusiastic supporter and advocate for Ball State through the years. His efforts have included being an inaugural member of the Greater Cincinnati Alumni Chapter, 2014, and being a sponsor for Cincinnati's Cardinals & Conversations Networking events. He received the 2004 Miller College Award of Achievement and has served on the Miller College Executive Advisory Board and the Miller College Alumni Association Board for over 30 years. Dan is also a member of the Sigma Chi Alumni Association, supports the Paul Parkinson Scholarship, and is a member of Leaders & Loyalts. Dan is a proponent in church, school, and community work and has served as volunteer leader as Parish Council Chair and Finance Committee Chair in the several Catholic parishes of which he has been a member. He has been active in his local Chamber of Commerce, and served stints as President and as Treasurer. Dan has enjoyed marriage to his wife Gina for forty years, and they have raised five children, all of whom are now married and have children of their own. He also coached numerous soccer, football, and baseball teams through his children's formative years.

Distinguished Alumni Award - Mary Dollison

Mary Dollison, '64 MAE '74, is a retired educator in the Muncie Community Schools system. In 1987 she co-founded Motivate our Minds, a children's education learning center in Muncie. She has received numerous awards, including the Delaware County Personal Integrity Award in 1998, the Muncie Star Press Person of the Year in 2009, the 2014 Muncie-Delaware County Economic Development Alliance Legacy Award, and the 2018 Sagamore of the Wabash Award. Mary has given a lifelong commitment to education, because learning is inherently joyful and she wants to pay forward that delight by helping others to learn. Mary has given hundreds of hours of community service, including serving on the Community Foundation board and volunteering with the Whitely Neighborhood Council.
Distinguished Alumni Award - Roy Weaver

Roy A. Weaver, ’68 MAE ’71, had a long and prestigious career at Ball State University which began in 1980 as an Associate Professor of Curriculum. He became Associate Dean in 1983, then Dean of Teachers College and Professor of Curriculum in 1993. He returned to teaching in the Department of Educational Studies in 2009 until his retirement in 2016. He returned to serve as Interim Dean, 2017-2020. During his tenure as Dean, he collaborated with colleagues on the creation and development of significant innovations, including: the Indiana Academy for Science, Mathematics, and Humanities; charter school authorization; one of the first Apple laptop requirements in teacher education in the nation; live and interactive K-12 electronic field trip programs (EFTs), accompanied by web-based teacher guides, curricula, and activities and aired globally, in concert with such noted institutions as the Holocaust Museum, the Smithsonian, National Park Service, NASA, and the Baseball Hall of Fame; an EFT spin-off called Electronic Author Visits (EAVs), partnering with Simon & Schuster and Booksource to bring authors and their books free to children nationwide, accompanied by live presentations, interviews, and online activities to teachers and students; the longest-standing and most recognized student teaching program of its kind with the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools in Baumholder, Kaiserslautern, and Ramstein, Germany; one of the longest-standing and largest university-school professional development and school partnership networks in the nation; extensive online teaching programs led by chairs and faculty in six departments resulting in one of the largest growths in student enrollments in over 30 years. As Interim Dean, he worked with a university-school district partnership team on the Innovation Plan for Muncie Community Schools that is in operation; traveled with colleagues to China and helped secure a Memorandum of Understanding with Beijing Normal University; and chaired the search committee that resulted in the hiring of Dean Anand Marri. Reflecting on success at Ball State, he said: “I never accomplished anything by myself and can never take sole credit. I was blessed to be surrounded by others who were visionary, creative, dependable, intelligent, thoughtful, hard-working, and talented risk takers.”

G.O.L.D. Award - Grace Jefferies

Grace Jefferies, ’16, Teachers College, is a sixth-grade teacher at New Palestine Intermediate School. Grace graduated from Ball State University summa cum laude in 2016 with a degree in elementary education with a double concentration in reading and gifted/talented studies. After a year of teaching, she took the expert studies exam and obtained her high ability license. She has been teaching for a total of five years now, and for the past two years, has been her school’s lead high-ability teacher and math bowl coach. The math bowl team placed third last year, the best they have done in years, and was on track to do well this year before school was closed. Last year, she co-founded the school’s archery club and single-handedly started the Genius Hour club, a place for high-ability students to create their projects and follow their passion. She also volunteers at Connersville High School as the head color guard and winter guard coach. Connersville was the first public high school in the United States to have a marching band, but the color guard was disbanded many years ago. Being in the Ball State color guard all four years of her undergrad and captain for two of those, she changed this. In 2017, she helped the band director re-establish a color guard program and has helped build it for the past three years. She has helped to write three color guard shows in the fall and three winter guard shows. She loves volunteering with all ages in her community and has helped multiple students achieve great things by teaching them to persevere and pursue their passion. Her ultimate dream is to be a high-ability coordinator for schools to establish and run a gifted/talented program. Grace and her husband are excited to welcome their first child to the world this October.
G.O.L.D. Award - Anthony Gary

Anthony Gary, '12, College of Architecture and Planning, is an assistant vice president, development, at Village Capital Corporation, a Pedcor Company. Anthony used his architecture and construction management education to first break into commercial real estate with Simon Property Group as an owner's rep and construction project manager. Simon recognized Anthony's talent, put him through their emerging leader program, and he quickly advanced with the company. While at Simon, Anthony enrolled in a Master of Business Administration program to expand his real estate skills beyond architecture and construction. He was presented with an opportunity within his MBA program and made a career pivot, joining his current company. He was the first in his family to go to college, and he views his position as a real estate developer providing affordable housing as an opportunity to positively impact communities. That said, Anthony is making an impact outside his day job as well. He started a YouTube channel about two years ago, and he has been teaching people about personal finance, budgeting, and real estate. He's also had a few other Ball State graduates join him in videos to talk about their entrepreneurial efforts. On top of this, he also serves at his church, coaches youth sports, volunteers, invests in real estate, owns his own real estate brokerage, and has a two-year-old daughter.

G.O.L.D. Award - Angela Parks

Angela Parks, '12, College of Health, is a resourceful, service-oriented professional who has served in countless Human & Social Service settings for at least 16 years. She is the newly appointed Child & Family School Mental Health Clinician for Danville-Pittsylvania Community Services & Danville Public Schools. Where she provides individual, family and group outpatient therapy counseling services while under licensure supervision to grades K-12 in six schools through a grant funded program in Danville, Va. Angela has proven expertise in establishing rapport and building trust with diverse populations (including first-generation college students, low-income families and poverty-stricken communities). Angela served and invested significant volunteer contributions to several well-known Indiana community agencies during her time as a resident here. Just to name a few—Angela served at the Second Harvest Food Bank of East Central Indiana for four years, in partnership with their poverty initiative program called Forward STEPS. During Angela's time in Project Leadership she volunteered for almost 4 years where she provided mentorship, advising and counseling to high school and college-age students on a weekly part time basis—who were 21st Century Scholarship participants. During her volunteer time at First Choice for Women she volunteered for almost 6 years where she provided community faith-based counseling, mentorship, advocacy, resources and met with clients and gathered information regarding their background and experience to develop individualized lesson plans based on their specific needs. Angela is a active member of the NASW NC Chapter, The Journey Fellowship, AYC organization and former NAMI - Indiana Chapter member. She was elected and served as an official board member for five short months on the NAMI - Muncie Chapter Board before her recent relocation to Greensboro, NC in November 2020. She is a devoted wife and mother of two beautiful daughters and a self-published author of two books and a co-author of one book, with several more books waiting to be published. She is an inspirational speaker, empowerment coach, catalyst for change, nonprofit small business owner and United States Army Veteran. She is trailblazing the way as she continues her impactful endeavors to inspire individuals in the world to walk in their God given purpose. Since her short time in North Carolina she has already had her children’s book and poetry book featured in a local family own business, featured in our very own Ball State Alumni Magazine Winter 21' Edition, national magazines for women entrepreneurs, started inspirational blog writing for a nonprofit ministry worldwide, Co-Presented at the National VAISEF conference for educators, a newly appointed member of the Guilford County Parent Academy Engagement Network and a Participant in GPA FEN Parent Voice Group.
Zachary Huffman, '16, College of Communication, Information, and Media, is the CEO and founder of Hyvion, an electronic media platform that connects leading brands with collaborative aerial storytellers. Hyvion works with television networks and digital platforms throughout the U.S. to provide stunning aerial content for broadcast. In addition, Hyvion works with universities to create STEAM curricula for drone use in key industry professions. The company's protocols provide both safety and brilliant cinematography. Under Zach's leadership, many organizations have recognized his company, including the National Association of Broadcasters, Broadcast Education Association, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, Associated Press, Society of Professional Journalists, and many others. Zach earned a Master's degree from Central Michigan University where he oversaw the university's television station and nightly newscast. His leadership paved the way for numerous awards and recognitions from the Michigan Association of Broadcasters and other journalistic organizations. Zach competed in Central Michigan's New Venture Competition where his company won best technology venture, and has since grown to be the top innovative, high-growth tech venture to ever compete. In 2019 Hyvion and Ball State announced a partnership that culminated in a state-of-the-art drone program. Students, faculty, and staff receive unparalleled access to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) training, the most up-to-date gear, and working directly with Hyvion's team. Since the program's inception, multiple Ball State alumni have joined Hyvion's leadership team, and current Cardinals are participating in active internships with Hyvion throughout the U.S.

Rebekah "Beka" Steele, '12, College of Communication, Information, and Media, is the Regional Vice President with Primerica Financial Services. She oversees the recruiting, training & licensing of 50+ agents and has helped open two offices in Indianapolis since 2015. Beka has coordinated and facilitated quarterly community events to improve financial education and company brand awareness. She also started an online community through a Facebook Group (Smart Money, Smart Momma) which currently serves over 850 women. Beka's commitment to serving is evident by her service on several boards, including Ladies of Little Wish Foundation, the Network of Women in Business, and the Women in Primerica council. Beka recently started a Women Business Connect group through her church (itown church). Beka has received two top company awards based on leadership and work ethic. Out of 2400 nominations, she won the EHRI 2017 GRIT Award. Out of 400 nominations, she earned the 2018 & 2019 MVP award, the first person to win the MVP award two years in a row. She also worked with the #lizzystrong foundation, where she has helped raise awareness and funds to aid women caught in sex trafficking. Beka committed to running 1 mile every day for 411 days to help raise awareness for the foundation. Beka has given back to Ball State by mentoring graduating seniors, and she consistently participates in CCIM career days and mentoring opportunities. Beka lives in Fishers, Indiana with her husband, Aaron and their 16-month-old daughter, Sloane.
G.O.L.D. Award - Kayla Davion

Kayla Davion, '17, College of Fine Arts, is a current Broadway actor. Kayla was a musical theatre student who took part in BSU's Senior Showcases her last semester on campus. Through that process, she booked her first job on Broadway (before graduating) in the musical WAITRESS written by acclaimed musician and performer Sara Bareilles. For the next fourteen months, she worked in that show and became the first-ever black performer to play the role of Dawn, one of the major supporting roles in the show. Following WAITRESS, Kayla moved to her second Broadway show when she was cast as a member of the ensemble and understudy to the lead in KING KONG. This opportunity led her to her current role as one of the "Ikettes" and the understudy of the title role in the musical sensation THE TINA TURNER MUSICAL. This level of success within the musical theatre industry is unheard. Throughout it all, Kayla has been devoted to her alma mater. Currently, she serves on the Theatre and Dance Alumni Society as the youngest member of that organization. She also assumed the role of Chief Alumni Ambassador for the Department in the fall of 2020. The Alumni Ambassador program helps provide free training to aspiring BIPOC high school performers, teachers, artists, designers, and singers. This group aims to help BIPOC students gain the training and mentorship needed to be better equipped to succeed within this competitive industry. Kayla has also served as a mentor to graduating seniors each year since leaving Ball State, conducted multiple master classes for our students, and hosted President Mearns, donors, faculty, and students at performances on Broadway.

G.O.L.D. Award - John Hesser

John "Jack" Hesser, '16, College of Sciences and Humanities, is a current seventh grade teacher at H.L. Harshman Magnet Middle School in the Indianapolis Public School system. Jack has contributed a tremendous amount to both his profession and community. Through his effective leadership, he has been a positive change-maker and inspiration to those around him. Jack's leadership was recognized this past year as he was named Indianapolis’s Teacher of the Year. In addition to that, he took on leadership as a Team Leader for his teaching staff, the Membership Chair for the Indiana State Teachers Association, a leader for the district's student teachers, began his journey for certification as a National Board-Certified Teacher, and more. In addition to this, he regularly contributes to his profession and community through submissions of Op-eds, advocacy work, and commitment to creating a more equitable education system for teachers and students alike. Jack has also changed his students' lives, and many of them stay in touch for mentoring through college application processes, leadership development pursuits, and more. He has had a profound impact on these students. Outside the profession, Jack also contributes as an active member of Indiana Young Democrats, a youth mentor for the Starfish Initiative, and a volunteer for voter engagement initiatives.
G.O.L.D. Award - Jenna Martin

Jenna Martin, '11, College of Science and Humanities, is the Asset Manager for Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity where she oversees chapter house facility operations, occupancy management, contract and vendor management, and loan and collection administration. Prior to Sig Ep, Jenna was the engagement & Development Manager for KIC-IT. Jenna is an integral member of our Ball State alumni community, serving on the Ball State Young Alumni Council, the Indianapolis Ball State Alumni Chapter, and the Alpha Gamma Delta Alumni Chapter. Jenna is passionate about personal growth and empowerment - she earned a B.A. from Ball State in Sociology and Leadership Studies and then earned a M.S. in Training and Development from Eastern Illinois University. She has been a leader in the military family programs community for many years, serving as the chair of the Indiana National Guard Family Readiness Group since 2017. After starting a career in living-learning communities and new student programs in higher education, Jenna turned her attention to real estate, where she worked as a staff development administrator and property manager for Hayes Gibson Property Group and ROCO Real Estate. Jenna also served as a national Chapter Development Manager for her sorority, Alpha Gamma Delta. She is a proud wife to her husband, Thorne Martin, who recently returned after nearly a year from overseas with the U.S. Military. In this time, Jenna is not only working full time and navigating motherhood, but she continues her service with Ball State -serving on not one but two boards.

G.O.L.D. Award - Zachary Hartley

Zachary "Zach" Hartley, '13, is a music agent at leading global talent, entertainment and sports company United Talent Agency. During his tenure at UTA, Hartley has negotiated deals on behalf of some of the biggest names in sports and entertainment, including Don Felder, Grand Funk Railroad, Elvie Shane, Matt Stell, and more. In 2019, Hartley was awarded Young Professional of the Year by the International Entertainment Buyer Association alongside the world’s top agents, promoters and venue executives. Before coming to UTA, Hartley was an agent at Paradigm Talent Agency where he rose through the ranks after starting in 2014 as an assistant. Prior to Paradigm, Hartley worked in the TV department of Gray Talent Group in Chicago. Hartley graduated from Ball State University’s Miller College of Business in 2013. During his years at the university, Hartley was heavily involved on campus including through his affiliation with Sigma Chi Fraternity and his leadership roles with the Interfraternity Council (IFC). Hartley held several leadership positions on IFC including President. Outside of Greek Life, Hartley dedicated his time to the WCRD radio, hosting and producing events such as Air Jam and the Student Body Elections. Additionally, he spent two years as a recruiting assistant for the football team. Upon graduation, Hartley continued his involvement with his Alma Mater as a tenured member of the Young Alumni Council and through several trip to campus to participate in the Miller College of Business’ Dialogue Day series.
Robert E. Linson Award - Amelia Lynas

Amelia Lynas served on the Ball State Homecoming Steering Committee for two years as the Social Media & Publicity Chair. She grew a diverse awareness for Ball State Homecoming students and alumni and is a current advertising student at Ball State University. She has also served as a student leader in the classroom and at the McKinley Avenue Agency, Ball State Admissions, and Ball State Homecoming. At the agency, Amelia worked on the P.R. team working with local Muncie clients and training the next generation of leaders. She then worked for Ball State Admissions this school year and has been running all social media efforts to engage, interact, and answer questions for prospective and incoming students. She plans to maintain contact with Ball State after she graduates in December.