2022 BSUAA Award Recipients
Dr. Dennis Morrison, PhD '86, MA ’84, MA ’74, BA ’73. Dr Morrison is the owner of Morrison Consulting which provides consulting services to the behavioral health information technology field. For 17 years, Dr Morrison served as the CEO of two behavioral health organizations. These organizations were recognized in IBM’s Smarter Planet Series and won the Best Practices Award from TDWI (Transforming Data with Intelligence) for Leading Innovations in Business Intelligence and Data Warehousing, The Joint Commission's (TJC) Ernest A. Codman Award for excellence in the use of outcomes measurement and the Health Information Management Systems Society (HIMSS) Nicholas E. Davies Award for Excellence in the implementation of Electronic Health Records. He served as the first Chief Clinical Officer for Netsmart Technologies.

From 84’-85’ Dr Morrison taught Undergraduate and Graduate Crisis Intervention for the Department of Counseling Psychology. He has served on Ball State Advisory Councils for the past eleven years. From’ 11 to ’16, Dr Morrison represented the Department of Counseling Psychology on the Teachers College Advisory Council, also serving as its Chair. Since 2017, he has served as the Founding Chair of the College of Health Advisory Council assisting Dean Whaley in its construction and management and Dean Rutledge in its ongoing development supporting alumni, faculty and staff. In 2017 he was the Speaker for the College of Health Inaugural Commencement.

Dr Morrison is a prolific author, frequent presenter (including a TEDx talk), podcast host and co-inventor and patent holder for a behavioral healthcare outcomes software product. He serves on several academic, non-profit and international boards. He was an officer in the United States Navy serving as an Aerospace Physiologist training, among others, members of TOPGUN in the physiological hazards of flight and land and water survival. He is a licensed, instrument-rated private pilot and triathlete.

Alumni Achievement Award - Ashley C. Ford

Ashley C. Ford, College of Science and Humanities ’18, celebrated becoming a New York Times bestselling author with her memoir, Somebody's Daughter in 2021, which began as an essay assigned in a Ball State University classroom by Professor Jill Christman. She has profiled some of the most powerful women in America in mainstream magazines, including Missy Elliot, Anne Hathaway, and Kamala Harris. Ashley has hosted several popular podcasts, including Lovecraft Radio for HBO and Authorized for Audible. While working for Buzzfeed, Ashley also hosted the TV show PROFILE. She interviewed some of America’s most well-known figures, such as Serena Williams, Jeff Goldblum, Chris Christie, Colin Quinn, Padma Lakshmi, etc. As Ball State’s Writer in Residence for Fall 2021, Ashley donated her honorarium back to the Ball State/Muncie community by the purchase of books for Burris Laboratory School, Muncie Community Schools, the Youth Opportunity Center, the Ball State Multicultural Center, and even the Office of Inclusive Excellence. Ashley has led several successful fundraising campaigns using her Twitter platform for causes such as elementary school lunch funding and racial injustice in Ferguson, Missouri. A lifelong Cardinal, Ashley even met her husband on campus and now joins the ranks of Ball State's most famous alumni.
Juli Metzger, BS '85, MS '88. Since graduating, Juli has maintained strong connections with the university. As an editor of three newspapers and publisher of three others, Juli often recruited on campus and hired Ball State students. She worked for the Gannett Company for more than 20 years and was named Gannett Editor of the Year in 2001. She was Executive Editor for Digital and Custom Publications at the Indianapolis Star, and Group Director of niche publications before joining Ball State in 2011. For 10 years, she was a board member of the Journalism Alumni Society and later president of that organization, leaving once she joined the faculty in the department. She was the founding coordinator of the $4 million, 8,000 square-foot Unified Media Lab, working with units across in the College of Communication, Information and Media to usher in an era of cross-platform trans-disciplinary media education. Juli has taught across the news curriculum, leading the school's capstone course - JOUR 413 - examining Solutions Journalism, covering social problems through the lens of solutions. But what Juli is best known for are her industry and local connections. She's led several immersive projects, from Unmasked: The Stigma of Meth to Inform Muncie, a digital and print newsletter focusing on Muncie's underserved segments. She's a former fellow at the Virginia B. Ball Center for Creative Inquiry and was formerly a fellow at Arizona State University in Entrepreneurial Journalism. Since 2015, Juli has raised more than $40,000 and taken about 50 students to the annual Associated Press Media Editors (now News Leaders Association) conferences, putting students in front of hiring editors and testing their skills in covering the event in real time. She was the first educator in the country to be part of the APME Editor-Educator Exchange program that put editors in classrooms and educators in newsrooms, exposing them both to new tools and techniques. She and her husband own The JMetzger Group, a boutique public relations and content marketing company.

Hannah Fluhler, College of Health, Honors College BS '19 was awarded the GOLD Award. Fluhler, after attending Burris Laboratory School kindergarten through high school and Ball State undergraduate studies program as a nursing major, graduating Magna Cum Laude, received a Fulbright Research Scholarship to Melbourne, Australia (2019-2020). After completing the program, Fluhler pursued a Ph.D. in Nursing and one year of full-time coursework completed at Northeastern University (2020-2021).

“I formed influential relationships at Ball State with my nursing and honors college professors, classroom and sorority/extracurricular peers and mentors, and with my freshman dorm mates, too!,” Fluhler said. Ball State reciprocated the support Fluhler represented through the Beneficence Pledge, and continues to support further academic endeavors. She has completed numerous academic research presentations as a result of undergraduate research funded by BSU Honors College Ruebel Fellowship (National Association of Neonatal Nurses [NANN] Research Summit and national conference, IU Health Regional research conference, Indiana Center for Nurses Research Summit, IUH Ball Memorial Hospital nurse’s week presentation). She continues to practice nursing as a Registered Nurse and Pediatric Home Care Nurse with Maxim Healthcare.
G.O.L.D. Award - Alicia Herder

Alicia Herder, '14, is an independent producer and writer-director whose work explores the dark side of human nature and how that darkness impacts our societies. Alicia is a GLAAD Media and Independent Spirit Award nominated producer whose credits include LA LEYENDA NEGRA, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in the NEXT Category (a category known for shaping the next wave in American cinema). LA LEYENDA NEGRA features first-time actors freshly graduated from Compton High School and was shot on a budget of under $100k. LA LEYENDA NEGRA is now streaming on HBOMax. Other producerial credits include THE BLUE DRUM (sponsored by NETFLIX and NALIP’s Latino Lens), GREAT AMERICA (Urbanworld Film Festival, Official Latino Film Festival), among others. She recently completed principal photography on the indie horror film, FLESH AND BLOOD, which will premiere in 2024. Alicia's directorial credits include the short films GOOD GIRL (Indy Film Festival, Refilmery Winter Festival), DIEGO ON MY MIND (recipient of Award of Recognition from IndieFEST, streaming on Amazon), and two webisodes of GHOST TOWN (to premiere in 2023). Alicia is currently in development for her directorial debut feature film of THE GIRL WHO CRIED WOLF. Alicia is also a co-host of a comedy educational podcast Witch, Yes! where she and her co-host, Terra Keck (Ball State '13), look into different spiritual and witchy topics, research them, and talk about them in a fun and fresh way. The podcast has an annual fundraiser where they raise donations for organizations, including Black Girls Code, Trees for a Change, and Safe Child Africa. Alicia holds a Master of Fine Arts in Film Production from UCLA and two Bachelor of Arts degrees from Ball State University, where she was a Finalist in Theater Directing at the American College Theater Festival at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC.

G.O.L.D. Award - Katie Ittenbach

Katie Ittenbach, MBA '12 currently serves on the Ball State MBA Advisory Board. She received the Miller College of Business Award of Achievement and has been a guest speaker at Alumni Day, LEAP Seminars, Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, and Professional Women's Conference. Katie has also completed the Columbia Club Leadership Training Program and leads her company in annual service day projects. Under Katie's leadership, SMARI was named one of Indiana's best workplaces. She also is Mom to her son, MJ, and enjoys training horses in her free time.
Brian Main, ’12, is the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation for the Town of Bremen. At Ball State, Brian served in many roles, including Undergraduate Representative on the Provost’s Education of the Future Taskforce, Co-Creator and Coordinator of the College of Architecture and Planning’s First-Year Mentoring Program, and Vice President of the Ball State Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects. Brian was awarded the prestigious Smith/Litten/Keys Award for outstanding research and creative endeavor as an undergraduate at the Ball State University Student Symposium. Since graduating Magna Cum Laude from the College of Architecture and Planning with Academic Honors in Writing, Brian has returned to campus in various capacities, including a speaker for the College of Architecture and Planning’s 50th Anniversary Symposium. Financially, he makes monthly contributions to the Illinois-IndianaNavigators and CRU ministries, which provide leadership and guidance for the Ball State Staff teams and their student members. Brian partners with community groups, including the Boys and Girls Club, local churches, businesses, and philanthropic organizations to bring new and exciting programming to the Bremen Park System. Professionally, Brian is an Indiana Parks and Recreation Association member and has become a Certified Aquatic Facility Operator. He is currently overseeing the design of a nearly $3M aquatic facility project made possible through Marshall County Crossroads’ designation as an Indiana Stellar Communities Grant recipient. Brian has received the distinguished Young Professional Award from the Indiana Parks and Recreation Association for “exhibiting the attributes of an emerging leader, as displayed through his initiative, innovation, and contributions to the park and recreation field.” Brian has been designated a Michiana Forty Under Forty Recipient by the South Bend Regional Chamber and the Young Professionals Network of South Bend, an award established to “shine the spotlight on 40 of the region’s most talented and dedicated young executives, leaders, professionals, employees and adults who demonstrate career success and community engagement, all before the age of 40.”

Brittany Moran, ’19, is a fourth grade teacher in the Metropolitan School District of Wayne Township. She is a centennial scholar and received departmental honors from the elementary education department. She created her summer reading program, “Readers to Leaders,” for low-income Hispanic youth in her hometown, Palatine, IL. She designed and implemented this program to counteract the effects of Summer Reading Setback. She created an organization plan, recruited and managed volunteers, developed a curriculum, sought grant opportunities to fund the project, and directed the program. While leading the reading program, Brit tracked data on student growth. Her students managed to maintain or surpass their original reading scores on their district’s standardized reading test. Brit followed that up by writing a thesis on her summer reading program to be published in an academic journal. She hopes to create or help lead a similar reading program in the Indianapolis area. During her time at Ball State, Brit held several leadership roles. This included her role as Kappa Delta Pi President. She also regularly volunteered at MP3, an after-school program. During her second year of teaching, Brit was nominated by a classroom parent and recognized by the Indy Fuel Hockey Team for her student-centered teaching. Currently, she enjoys volunteering with the middle school youth at her church, leading an after-school math intervention group for students in her class, and volunteering with her school’s dance club.
G.O.L.D. Award - Maris Schiess

Maris Schiess, BA ’13, is an Integrated Media Director at Merkle, a Dentsu Agency, where she leads the agency’s US B2B media team for Intel, and the global B2B media team for VISA. After graduating from BSU, Maris became VP at an Indianapolis advertising agency within two years of working there. There, she developed marketing strategies for USA Track & Field, Endangered Species Chocolate, and other key accounts. In 2015, she was awarded as one of “Indy’s Best and Brightest” finalists through Junior Achievement of Indiana, recognizing the top 100 young professionals in the city. She also garnered multiple ADDYS and Hermes Creative Awards for her agency strategic work. In 2019, she started serving as Director of OmniChannel Marketing at Simon Property Group, where she oversaw the national marketing launch and owned marketing efforts for the Fortune 500 retail giant’s first-ever e-commerce platform, ShopPremiumOutlets.com. She also contributes outside of her work to causes close to her. As an ovarian cancer survivor, she advocates in her local community as the President of the Board at Ovar’Coming Together. She previously served as the Marketing Vice President at the Junior League of Indianapolis for two years during her five year membership. She gives back to Ball State and advertising by serving as an AAF guest speaker, judging AAG’s “Thrive or Die” competition, and regional judge for the 2020 National AAF ADDYS. Additionally, she devotes her free time to volunteering at the Indianapolis Zoo and National FFA Organization; and managing her own small vintage goods business; recently featured in Architectural Digest's Clever in 2021.

G.O.L.D. Award - Kean Zimmerman

Kean Zimmerman, College of Science and Humanities ‘12, is a Claims Counsel at Tokio Marine HCC - D&O Group. During Kean's tenure at Ball State, he made a point to support students and staff from all aspects of his on-campus and off-campus life. When he wasn't helping to plan and promote community events with the Student Honors Council, he volunteered his time with the Residence Hall Association as the Issues and Facilities Director. Kean was also involved as a competitor with Ball State's Mock Trial Team. After graduating with honors from Michigan State University College of law on a full scholarship, Kean took and passed the Connecticut bar exam. Since that time, he has also been admitted to the Federal District Court for the District of Connecticut and the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Court. The Super Lawyers publication recognized Kean as a Rising Star in 2018. Recently Kean was also recognized as a Top Law Under 40 by the Hispanic National Bar Association, as well as a New Leader in the Law by the Connecticut Law Tribune. Additionally, Kean has published articles with The Defense, the journal for the Connecticut Defense Lawyer's Association, and the newsletter for the Defense Research Institute. In his free time, Kean has contributed content to The Legal Geeks, a blog recognized by the American Bar Association as one of its Journal Blawg 100. Kean has held multiple executive board positions for the Connecticut Hispanic Bar Association, including President. Kean currently serves as the Co-Chair for the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee for the Connecticut Bar Association and a Deputy Region 1 President for the Hispanic National Bar Association.
Alexa Leisure is a Legacy Scholar from the Alumni Association and served as the General Chair of the Homecoming Steering Committee in 2022. She was a recipient of Ball State's inaugural Top 100 Student Award and was a member of Alpha Omicron Pi sorority.