ZOMBIE SOUND MAN

GULPS, GROANS, AND GORY GURGLES
BRING THE UNDEAD TO LIFE
The Big Picture

Physics graduate student Kevin Waters, left, and computer science major Keagan Rasmussen are backed up by the video wall in the Immersive Visualization Studio. The studio is part of the Paul and Susan Williams Center for Computer Systems Research, and the wall, along with its mini-supercomputer, allows researchers to store, process, and see massive amounts of
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Sound design student Chris Trevino learned to make zombie noises while interning at a Detroit sound effects studio. Here, he downs around with the unreal thing during one of the funnest photo shoots ever, at an old, abandoned warehouse near the village of Mason, just a few miles from campus. Sarah Bird photo
Effervescent enthusiasm for students and the classroom marks both winners of Michigan Tech’s 2014 Distinguished Teaching Award. Tess Ahlborn ’86 ’87, an associate professor of civil and environmental engineering, received the award in the associate professor/professor category. Scott Miers ’95 ’01 ’04, newly promoted to associate professor of mechanical engineering–engineering mechanics, was honored in the assistant professor/professor of practice/lecturer category.

“Dr. Ahlborn is enthusiastic, almost to the point of being weird—and I mean that in the best possible way,” wrote one of her students. “It’s contagious! Absolute genuine enthusiasm. This woman loves concrete.”

Ahlborn teaches structural engineering courses focusing on concrete and the design of concrete buildings and bridges. She strives to relate her teaching to the real world and to the rest of the curriculum and perks up her classes with jokes you could tell to a six-year-old without blushing.

She credits most of her success to her students. “I used to think I was there to inspire them, but a couple years ago, I realized, these guys are so engaged, they are inspiring me,” she said. “And all of a sudden, my teaching changed. It’s their reactions that keep me going.”

Miers has won his department’s teaching award twice, and it’s easy to see why. “Scott’s a ball of fire,” said Bill Predebon, chair of the Department of Mechanical Engineering–Engineering Mechanics.

The students agree. “Scott makes every topic interesting and exciting . . . It’s very clear that my class is a priority,” wrote one of his students. “He has enthusiasm, passion, and effort that he brings to the class.”

Miers, who teaches internal combustion engines and thermodynamics, also brings his industry experience to the classroom. It pays off. “I’ll get emails from former students who say that when they were first hired, they were better prepared than many senior engineers.”

He finds the process very satisfying. “I like being a part of the aha moment, when that light bulb goes on,” Miers said. “There are many days I walk down the hall and think, ‘I get paid to do this?’"
Go outside and play! Win prizes!

Michigan Tech is among ten colleges and universities chosen to compete in the Outdoor Nation Campus Challenge. Contestants will record their outdoor activities, and the school that logs the most will win a valuable prize package, a scholarship for an outdoor program assistant, and an outdoor festival for students. The Outdoor Adventure Program is spearheading the Outdoor Nation Campus Challenge at Michigan Tech. Learn more at http://outdoornation.org.

Michigan Tech students among the smartest (but you knew that)

*Business Insider* has rated Michigan Tech number 11 among the top-20 public universities with the smartest students. In assembling its list, *Business Insider* used data from the website Niche and its College Prowler, a service that provides college reviews by students.

“We see all that our students accomplish and all the companies seeking them out for employment,” said John Lehman, associate vice president for enrollment, marketing, and communications. “It doesn’t take long to see that there is something pretty special about the students here. They are smart—amazingly smart.”

Quoted in *Business Insider*, a student said, “I love my professors—all of them seem dedicated to their job, as well as understanding. The workload is more than most schools, but the best isn’t the easiest!”

*Business Insider* also ranked Tech as Michigan’s “most underrated university.” Only one university was selected from each state. The ranking reflects the university’s high academic standards and acceptance rate.
Linda Ott receives inaugural Diversity Award

Linda Ott has received Michigan Tech’s first Diversity Award for tireless efforts to interest girls and women in computing. “It really troubles me that so many young women don’t understand what exciting, rewarding careers they can have in computer science.”

Among her many endeavors, Ott has been working with Admissions to increase the number of women enrolled in computing programs. Her efforts are paying off. Applications have risen 14 percent in the year that she has been involved in recruitment.

“Boys get the message that computing is a great career, but girls don’t, and that drives me crazy,” she said. “Computer programming is so exciting, so rewarding, and it impacts everything. And girls don’t know this.”

Wallace wins Faculty Service Award

Charles “Chuck” Wallace, associate professor of computer science, has received the 2014 Faculty Distinguished Service Award for his outreach activities in the community.

Wallace was recognized for his involvement with two programs: Breaking Digital Barriers and Copper Country Programmers.

Breaking Digital Barriers brings Tech students to the Portage Lake District Library once a week to help senior citizens with technology issues. The program will soon expand its work to introduce computer skills to unemployed citizens.

Copper Country Programmers teaches basic programming skills to local middle- and high-school students. It helps students develop logic and strong problem-solving skills.

UpLode

A student’s-eye view from The Michigan Tech Lode.

“Some students are forced to park very far from their destinations . . . this long walk can be dangerous in severe weather conditions or with severely low wind chills, even when dressed appropriately.”

A fifteen-minute walk to campus is just too much, according to Simeng Li. (April 8)

“Last year, due to bad weather, the oozeball tournament had to be held in the SDC, which took away the ‘ooze.’ . . . ‘We are in an awkward zone where it is too cold for oozeball and too warm for snow volleyball,’ said Neil Momsen, president of MTSF.”

John Reynolds provides further proof that banking on Spring Fling occurring during actual spring weather is a risky gamble. (April 15)

Headlines from The Daily Bull

Tech’s (mainly) satirical student newsletter

Prospective Student on Tour Upset About Lack of EERC Tree
BP Becoming Senile, Leaking Oil Everywhere
Student With 3 Exams Next Monday “Quits,” Enters Fetal Position
404 Day Not Found
MUB Board Forgets to Invite Spring to Spring Fling
Tuition up 2–3 percent, financial aid up 9 percent

Students’ tuition rates vary based on their majors starting this fall. The new formula brings Michigan Tech’s existing differential tuition structure in line with other research universities in the state.

First- and second-year students pay $7,020 a semester plus $150 in fees for 12 to 18 credits. Third- and fourth-year students pay the same tuition and student activity and Experience Tech fees totaling $150. They will also pay fees of $150, $300, or $900 a semester, depending on their major.

“Most students will see a 2 to 3 percent increase,” said Les Cook, vice president of student affairs and advancement. “Varying degrees cost varying amounts to deliver. This plan is more equitable because the fees are based on the cost of the programs the students are taking.”

Although tuition is increasing by about 2 percent, scholarship funds available to students will increase 9 percent.

No more road trips to take the GRE

Michigan Tech is now an official test site for the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), an entrance exam required by most US graduate programs. The testing center is located in the new William G. Jackson Center for Teaching and Learning.

Previously, students had to travel hours to take the GRE. The closest test sites were Sault Ste. Marie and Duluth, Minnesota.

The center, funded by a $1 million gift from Jackson ’58, is also home to a suite of technological tools to enhance teaching, learning, learning assessment, and student evaluations.

Blizzard in bronze

Next time you see this impressive creature, it will be standing guard in Husky Statue Plaza, in front of the Van Pelt and Opie Library. The statue, the showpiece of the new Alumni Way, was sculpted by artist Brian P. Hanlon.

Change, change, change

You may notice that this Michigan Tech Magazine is a little different. Designer Clare Rosen and art director Brandy Tichonoff have been reworking our look, and we hope you like the result: cleaner and brighter, with more room for Sarah Bird’s superb photos.

Starting now, we’re also going to send two longer magazines a year, in the fall and spring, instead of three shorter ones. The aim is to save money on postage, so we can be better stewards of the University’s funds.

Finally, this is my last magazine. Thanks to everyone who shared their thoughts, both kind and critical. I feel lucky to have been able to tell so many stories of Michigan Tech and its amazing people.

—Marcia Goodrich, editor
A sound design student orchestrates the clamor and creak of the zombie apocalypse.
Chris Trevino brings life to the undead, whooshes and whams to superheroes and villains. He sets the scene for every noisy medium imaginable, from video game to vlog to TV show. And as an up-and-coming sound effects producer, he’s got one of the coolest (and sometimes sloppiest) jobs around.

Trevino, a sound design major with graduation on the horizon, has been an incurable video game junkie since a young age. He’d play any game he could get his hands on. “The music in the games has always really gripped me,” he says. “It wasn’t until after I came to Tech and discovered sound design that I realized how potent non-musical sound could be. It’s the perfect major for me.”

After a few semesters of study, Trevino took a summer internship with Detroit Chop Shop, the largest producer of sound effect libraries in the world. There, the crew spends weeks recording myriad sound effects centered on a specific topic. Trevino helped build two libraries during his back-to-back summer internships with the studio: one for a zombie apocalypse, one for superheroes and villains.

The intern team is involved in the process from start to finish, recording and making sounds and then editing in post-production. With interns’ help, the studio puts together sets of hundreds of sounds for every scenario imaginable.

Take AMC’s popular end-of-times zombie show, *The Walking Dead*. When one of the undead manages to get a hold of a potential meal, producers turn to sound effects experts like the Detroit Chop Shop to serve up the groaning, gnashing, and gulping they need to make their viewers squirm. One of Trevino’s zombie snarls was picked up by the show—a big highlight of his time as an intern.

Rest assured, no interns were injured in the making of even the nastiest sound effects. In fact, Trevino says creating the zombie apocalypse library was largely a vegetarian affair. “We went to the market and bought hundreds of dollars of fruits and veggies,” he says. “We took them back to the recording studio and completely destroyed them. Ripped ‘em apart. Smashed ‘em on the ground. Bit chunks off. Playing with food can yield some deliciously horrific results.”

Mid-produce destruction, Trevino wondered how he could repurpose some of the Chop Shop’s props to land an even better sound for the library. In a moment of auditory ad-libbing, he thrust a plunger in and out of a cut watermelon. Much to the delight of his coworkers, it made some of the goriest gurgles imaginable.

“I’m really into the psychology of these sounds,” he says. “They’re not always what you think they are, and that’s fascinating.”

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**TRICKS OF THE TRADE**

1. **BREAKING BONES** The horrific cracks and pops you hear when someone gets a gnarly fracture are usually just the sound of snapping celery.

2. **FALLING BODIES** Almost any time you hear a falling body hit the ground, it’s actually the sound of a leather jacket being thrown on a hard floor.

3. **GALLOPING HORSES** Monty Python was right. Clapping coconut halves together can make convincing horse-hoof beats.
When police seize a suspicious baggie, someone has to ID what’s inside, be it heroin, talcum, or the latest designer drug. In Michigan, that someone is often Sandy Orlowski.
Nothing about the packet on the bench in front of Sandy Orlowski ’08 ’10 seemed out of the ordinary. As a forensic scientist, she was used to police bringing her small, plastic-foil envelopes with cheery, whimsical labels totally at odds with the contents. This one said “Ivory Wave” and featured a relaxing beach scene complete with bare feet and palm trees.

Donning gloves, safety glasses, and a surgical mask, she opened the package, weighed the contents, and reminded herself, “This is an unknown white powder.” Orlowski is a player in Michigan’s war against illegal drugs, but above all, she is a chemist. While attorneys may be trying to build a case that will sway judge and jury, her responsibility is cut and dried: identify what’s in that packet.

She dissolved a few milligrams of the powder in a solvent, placed the solution in the lab’s gas chromatograph–mass spectrometer, and ran the analysis. The results raised her eyebrows. They should have matched any of hundreds of compounds described in the lab’s library, but they didn’t. “I’ve seen lots of white powders, but I’ve never seen this,” she thought. “But someone must know what it is.”

So she began contacting crime labs throughout the Midwest. The Drug Enforcement Administration lab in Chicago got back to her right away: her white powder was naphyrone, a member of the big, bad family of designer drugs known on the street as bath salts.

Four years later, Orlowski knows naphyrone and its cousins like the back of her latex-gloved hand. “They are not the kind of bath salts you buy in a department store,” she says. These chemicals are synthetic derivatives of the cathinone molecule found in khat. The flowering plant is chewed as a stimulant in the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula but is illegal in the United States.

The ever-inventive manufacturers of illicit drugs had made bath salts by fooling around with the cathinone molecule: slapping on a ring structure here, a carbon chain there, maybe a fluorine or a bromine.

“The idea was to circumvent the law,” Orlowski explains. At the time, most illegal drugs were defined in Michigan by their precise chemical structure. Thus, manufacturers reasoned that they could transform a controlled substance into a legal (though no less pernicious) high, simply by tinkering with that structure.
The chemical hanky-panky wasn’t limited to bath salts. Also finding their way into crime labs were synthetic cannabinoids, like JWH-250, designed to mimic the pain-killing and anti-inflammatory properties of marijuana. Then there were the synthetic phenethylamines, a far-flung suite of compounds that includes MDMA, which often goes by the street name Ecstasy. Not to mention tryptamines like DMT, close cousins of the hallucinogen psilocybin. The designer drug industry was seriously on a roll.

Then in 2012, the Michigan legislature put an end to some of the confusion by passing a law regulating classifications of compounds, not just the compounds themselves. “That allows us to report out the specific compound’s name instead of ‘no controlled substance detected,’” says Orlowski.

Their legal status may be settled, but that doesn’t change the fact that designer drugs have made the already perilous underworld of substance abuse even scarier. While forensic scientists can identify what’s in that packet, it’s virtually impossible for the consumer. “That’s the mystery, and the risk,” says Orlowski. “When you are buying something that doesn’t have legitimate quality control, you don’t know what you are going to get.” Case in point: in one drug-related prosecution in Houghton County, Orlowski analyzed twenty-one packets of unknown powder and plant material. Two were synthetic cathinones (mephedrone and MDPV), five were synthetic cannabinoids (JWH-250), and the rest were not controlled substances.

The consequences of such confusion can be fatal. In the US, several people have died from overdosing on heroin spiked with fentanyl. This synthetic opiate, prescribed for severe pain, is many times more powerful than the refined extract of *Papaver somniferum*.

Orlowski’s expertise occasionally takes her out of the lab. When she identifies an illegal drug, Orlowski sometimes appears in court, giving testimony that could put a defendant away for a very long time. She calls it “providing a voice for the evidence.”

“I understand that the powder can’t talk, but to me, it says, ‘This is what I am,’ and if it’s a controlled substance, I can tell you what it is,” she says. “And if it’s not, that’s equally important. Every time we analyze something, one way or another, people’s lives are at stake.”

Orlowski is at ease on the witness stand, but the lab is her home. “I love analytical chemistry, and I love what I do,” she says. And she loves solving puzzles like naphyrone. Should the ever-resourceful illegal drug chefs cook up yet another designer drug, she’ll be ready.

**4 TIPS ON BECOMING A FORENSIC CHEMIST**

What should you do if you (or your child, or your grandchild) want to do this type of work? Sandy Orlowski offers these suggestions.

1. **Earn a bachelor’s degree in a hard science.** You don’t need a forensic science degree. If you want to identify chemicals, which involves complex instrumentation, consider a chemistry degree. Orlowski had already earned a BS in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology in 2008 when she realized that a BS in Chemistry would be a better fit; she finished her second bachelor’s two years later. If you would rather unlock clues found in DNA or body fluids, a biology major might be a better fit. In any case, you should enjoy laboratory science.

2. **Get an internship.** That’s probably the only way to determine if you like forensic chemistry enough to make a career of it. In the middle of your sophomore or junior year, contact a crime lab in your state and ask about interning for the summer. The internships are unpaid, but that shouldn’t stop you. Orlowski calls them “free education.” The Michigan State Police Forensic Science Division has seven labs throughout the state.

3. **Know your lab techniques and equipment.** Lab courses and undergraduate research are great preparation for forensic chemistry. They also teach teamwork skills, which you will need on the job.

4. **Attend a college where critical thinking is emphasized, like Michigan Tech.** Orlowski says Tech grads stand out because of their thinking skills and their hands-on experience in the labs.
Come on,” he says, adjusting the volume on his police radio, the voice of the dispatcher fading out. He looks the student opposite him straight in the eye. “You can’t seriously believe that.”

The student is taken aback, opening his mouth to say something, then closing it again.

“There’s no way the PS4 is better than the Xbox One. I mean, look at the games that are out for the Xbox!”
It’s an early dinner in the Wadsworth dining hall, and Public Safety Officer Reid DeVoge is sitting among students, more than keeping up with the talk of video games. “I got the Wii U for my kids,” he explains later. “It is a lot of fun. Don’t tell these guys that, though: hardcore gamers would never admit it.”

Heading out from dinner, he stops a half dozen times to greet students, making small talk on topics ranging from mountain biking to Johnny Manziel’s NFL draft status. He is obviously well liked. “Officer DeVoge is an extremely awesome man,” said one student. “He is approachable and relatable, and he really cares about the residents and wants to get to know them. Plus, he has a gun and will be useful in the event of a zombie apocalypse.”

A few years ago, such an endorsement would have been unheard of. “The only time the police were in the halls was when something criminal was happening,” says DeVoge. “It was a bit of us versus them. We weren’t a part of the community.”

Then DeVoge became Michigan Tech’s first residential public safety officer, a position spawned by a new spirit of cooperation that arose between two departments: Housing and Residential Life, and Public Safety and Police Services.

The new program has made all the difference, says housing director Travis Pierce. “Since Officer DeVoge has been here, students don’t fear the police. Instead, they invite them in to play video games, sit down and have a meal, or attend a student program,” he said. “We aren’t seen in the community as much. We aren’t as approachable.”

A third-year student fulfilling a class assignment comes by to interview DeVoge about his position and Public Safety’s work in the residence halls. The questions center on policies and procedures in the halls and Public Safety’s role. DeVoge tells him ResLife handles most disciplinary issues, just as they always have. “We don’t do checks with beer-sniffing dogs.”

The interview winds up, but the chat with the student continues. “Have any classes left today?” he asks. “Are they going all right?”

Later, in the patrol car, DeVoge shares his insights on the residential officer program, which has roots going back decades, to the days when cops walked a beat. “Policing has changed so much over the last century,” he says. “Back before World War II, officers literally walked the neighborhood. They didn’t have radios or phones or anything. They’d ask a resident if they could use their house phone to check in with the station.”

The drive around campus is calm in the late afternoon. Reid waves to other drivers and pedestrians. “Then with cars and later radios, officers could respond a lot faster to incidents. The flip side to that is that we aren’t seen in the community as much. We aren’t as approachable.”

As if to emphasize the point, he pulls to a stop at
McNair Hall. “Let’s take a walk through, see how everyone’s doing.”

Walking along, he continues. “This is what we need to get back to doing. This is why we have the residential officer program. It’s really important that everyone knows we’re a part of this community and we’re here to help.”

That plays out in subtle ways. Students rarely report criminal activity—nobody wants to be a snitch. But sometimes they come to DeVoge when they are worried about a friend’s drug use, or underage drinking, and he gives them strategies to address the problem. “I’m not here to get people in trouble,” he says. “But if they need advice on how to handle something, I can help.”

A student is working out in the weight room. DeVoge goes to enter, but the door is locked. “Ah well,” he shrugs. “I was going to give him some grief, tell him we got a report of a couple of guns in this room.” He flexes his arms.

We stop by the ResLife office in McNair on our way out: DeVoge wants to know when one of the staff members wants to hit the bike trails again.

“When there’s not a foot of snow on the trails!”

Back in the car, DeVoge explains that his bike isn’t just for fun or exercise. “It’s a better way to patrol, where I’m accessible, I can talk with people. And I get to know the trails really well. If there’s an accident, I know how to guide the first responders there.”

It’s 7:00 pm, the campus settling into an evening rhythm. He pulls into the parking lot next to the Alumni House.

“There are probably half a dozen or so things going on any given night,” he says. “I know Friday there will be a bunch. Film Board has a movie—I wonder what they’ll be showing this week.”

The sun is still up, the car warming, the windows down a bit. DeVoge stirs.

“I’ll swing by everything Friday night, see if they need anything,” he says. “The biggest thing I want them to know is that I’m here if they need something.”
After her husband disappeared, Estelle Thornton was doubly determined to do right by their seven children. Now her firstborn wants America to do right by all its sons and daughters.

BY MARCIA GOODRICH

He is tall, well over six feet, powerfully built, at ease in both pinstripes and army fatigues. His smile draws humans like stadium lights draw bugs. And he is the face of the National Parent Teachers Association.

Anna King will never forget the first time she met Otha Thornton ’01.

“It was 2008, my first National PTA convention,” she recalls. King was by herself in a place she’d never been, surrounded by people she didn’t know who all seemed to be each other’s best friends. Then out of the blue, Thornton walked up. “He said, ‘You look lost.’ I told him I didn’t know what I was supposed to do, and he showed me around,” King says. “He asked me if anyone had spoken to me, and I said no. Then he looked right
at me and said something I have never forgotten: ‘If they don’t speak to you, you speak to them. We are all in this together.’”

Six years later, King is a National PTA board member, and Thornton is president of the four-million-member, century-old association. He made national headlines—and Ebony magazine’s Power 100 list—a year ago when he became the first African American man to head an organization emerging from its white, female, suburban chrysalis. And if Thornton has a mantra, it may be the one he shared with Anna King: “We are all in this together.”

That attitude—that each person is somehow his special guest at a really great party—is hard to resist. “He’s captivating,” says Heidi May, National PTA’s media relations manager. “People get very excited to be in his presence. We have to have someone walking with him to make sure he gets from one point to the other.”

It’s the first day of the 2014 National PTA Convention in Austin, and the job of keeping Thornton on schedule falls to PTA Executive Director Joanne Dunne. He is making his way through the cavernous exhibit area in a flawless blue suit, blue shirt, and yellow tie, cutting a wide, button-down swath through a roomful of business casual. Every few yards, someone catches his eye; he stops, powers up his megawatt smile, shares a big hug, poses for a selfie, and settles down for a nice chat.

Dunne peers down an aisle lined by about twenty booths, each featuring services and products for kids and educators, and sighs. How long will Thornton have to introduce himself to these exhibitors, learn about their wares, maybe build some relationships, before he has to get to the next item on his agenda? “We have fifteen minutes to get through here, and I’m not sure we can do it,” she says as another fan pulls him aside. “In the PTA, Otha is Brad Pitt.”

This is the last place Thornton expected to find himself.

CHILDHOOD INTERRUPTED

Thornton grew up in Georgia, in a working class family, and when he was thirteen, his father abandoned them. “He just left my mom with seven kids, including a six-month-old, a two-year-old, and a four-year-old,” he says.

As the oldest, Thornton did his best to help support the family. He worked in restaurants, supermarkets, and in the woods, stacking cut timber and loading it on trucks. They received some public assistance, and neighbors would bring garden vegetables, but it was a meager, uncertain existence.

“I was a skinny kid,” Thornton remembers. “Although our mother did her very best, it was a challenge feeding and caring for seven children. When school was out, we worried, because we knew were not going to get that meal.”

Estelle Thornton, however, was not the type to let hard times beat her children down. She insisted that they study and succeed in school, and Thornton listened. He enrolled in nearby Morehouse College and dreamed of becoming a city planner. Then, when he was a junior, he learned his father was in town. “I drove about ten miles up the road, and we sat down for a couple hours,” he remembers. “I said, ‘How could you leave a woman with seven kids?’”

They talked for two hours. Thornton’s father tried to explain how unemployment and hopelessness had driven him to desert a family he could no longer support. “And at that point we finished our conversation, and I walked out with a big burden lifted,” said Thornton. “That’s when I turned the page on that chapter of my life. I said to myself, ‘I never want to be in that position. I’m going to get my education.’

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“My dad passed away in 2002, and on his deathbed he tried to call all of us and asked, ‘Do you forgive me?’ And I said, ‘I forgave you a long time ago.’”

ABOUT FACE

Thornton did not originally plan a career in the military. He wanted to uphold a family tradition and serve his country, then, after the requisite four years in the US Army, try his hand at city government. But four
years came and went, and Thornton advanced quickly through the ranks, gaining expertise in intelligence, communications technology, and, ultimately, combat.

“I didn’t understand the wisdom at that time,” he grins. “With two years of Russian [language instruction], they’re making me a grunt? But as an infantry officer, they gave me 35 soldiers, 18 to 21 years old, and their lives were in my hands. The leadership experience was invaluable.”

His time in the infantry earned him unexpected benefits. “When I went into the military intelligence community, the combat leaders saw my background and performance and realized that I knew what I was talking about.”

Thornton went on to a classified special assignment out of the country. When he returned to the US, his intelligence and communications savvy launched him into positions of more and more responsibility. Then, when he was stationed at Fort Stewart, in Georgia, he discovered that the Army was not quite the bias-free organization it’s been cracked up to be. He had been excelling at his job when an aviation commander recruited Thornton for an important post. “He had never met me in person; he just saw my work and witnessed the support being provided to his unit.

“When I went to meet him, I walked in the door, and he turned red,” Thornton says. “I just ignored the color change and said it was great to meet him. We talked about ten minutes, and he said, ‘I’ll give you a call.’ I didn’t meet with him after that.”

Thornton says he couldn’t prove the slight was racial, but it sure felt that way. Nevertheless, he let it pass, noting, “I believe that all things happen for a reason.”

Soon after, the senior aviation commander appointed him to a post with even greater responsibility. Then Thornton was called to Michigan Technological University to be a recruiter and professor of military science. As with the infantry training, coming to the Snow Belt was not his first choice.

“I hate cold weather,” he says. “I said I’d go anywhere but the UP—I’d go to Saudi Arabia!—but they had me in the queue to go to a university. My advisors recommended that I go and earn a master’s while I was there to advance my career.”

So he came north, enrolled in a master’s program, and still hated the weather. “My first winter was . . . interesting. I was listening to the radio, and I heard them say so-and-so died today and a spring burial is planned. I had a neighbor, Don Smith, and I said, Mr. Don, what’s a spring burial? He said, ‘Otha, look at the ground.’

On stage at the 2014 national convention, state PTA presidents from all over the United States crowd around for a selfie with Thornton.
Winter and summer, Thornton cut the same wide swath at Tech that he has at the PTA. “He was so active in the community, just because that’s what Otha does,” said his advisor, humanities professor Patricia Sotirin, whom Thornton has since appointed to the National PTA Board. “He’s so outgoing and forthcoming, he makes everyone feel specially included. I see him doing that with everybody. He’s very passionate about that, very genuine.”

He was also unafraid to shine a light on shortcomings in the military, even if doing so might put his career in jeopardy.

“He did a very brave master’s thesis, on the structured bias in the Army’s evaluation system,” Sotirin says. “I even asked him if he was sure he wanted to do this, and he said he did. It was courageous, but quite like Otha.”

Thornton was not penalized for his thesis. Instead, he was invited to present his study on the Army’s Officer Evaluation System to new senior human resource officers and senior Army leaders. And the Army used his research as part of professional development sessions.

Armed with an MS in Rhetoric and Technical Communication, he was promoted to major and left Michigan Tech for the US Army Intelligence and Security Command, the largest counterintelligence unit in the Department of Defense. There he held a key post managing and supporting counterintelligence agents stationed around the world.

Thornton then moved to the White House Communications Agency, where he served as the human resources director and presidential communications officer. Lastly, he received orders to deploy to Iraq and served as the chief of personnel operations for the Iraqi Theater.

“It was very stressful,” he recalls. “I was responsible for the planning of people coming into and leaving Iraq, postal planning, casualty management. We had to work under fire, and I probably got mortared at least a couple dozen times. Thank God I wasn’t hurt and all my troops came back.” For his service in Iraq, Thornton received the Bronze Star for exceptional performance in combat.

“Out of the decade of war, there was only one person that I knew personally that we lost,” he said. Benjamin Hall ’05 had been an ROTC cadet at Michigan Tech. “He was killed by a sniper in Afghanistan. I visited his grave at Arlington National Cemetery. Ben was a great kid.”

SPEAKING UP FOR KIDS

Now retired as a lieutenant colonel, Thornton is applying his talents, some innate, others forged in the crucible of military service, to a different type of organization.

Thornton has been involved with his kids’ education since his Michigan Tech days, when they were in grade school in South Range and Houghton. “I just basically moved tables around, whatever my wife told me to do,” he says. Then he found himself assigned to Fort Meade, in Maryland, where the post commander “volun-told” him to serve as a leader of the local PTA chapter. “We moved from about twenty members to about two hundred the first year,” Thornton says.

His energy, enthusiasm, and leadership did not go unnoticed. Thornton went on to serve at the state level and was appointed to the Maryland Education Task Force by the governor.

After retiring from the Army, he settled in his home state of Georgia working as a senior operations analyst for General Dynamics in Atlanta. There, he again threw himself into the PTA, where, before advancing to the National PTA Board of Directors, he served as state legislative chair.
That position involved him in matters well beyond the purview of the typical local PTA district. “We had a problem with sex trafficking of teenagers,” he remembers. “These guys would come out of the suburbs into the cities and prostitute these thirteen-, fourteen-, fifteen-year-old girls. We got a bill passed that didn’t criminalize the young ladies; it put stiffer penalties on the men and got the young ladies treatment and support. I mean, they were arresting thirteen-year-old prostitutes! We alerted people, got them to contact their state representatives and state senators, and the bill passed.”

He brings that same passion for justice to the national organization, where his aim is to make the PTA bigger, better, and more powerful on behalf of all America’s children.

“It’s been challenging and rewarding,” he says. “We’re fighting for things like early childhood education, so students don’t start kindergarten at a disadvantage. And as the country goes through the next round of educational reform, we want to ensure that we get all the elements of that right.”

For Thornton, one of those right elements is the Common Core. This set of minimum standards in math and English language arts for K-12 education got its start in 2009 as a bipartisan effort among the nation’s governors “to try to get our education system on track.”

It has since become politicized. “You hear arguments from some in the Republican Party that Common Core is the federal government attempting to reach into our local schools and tell us how to teach our kids,” says Thornton. “That’s blatantly false.”

When the governor of Oklahoma was on the verge of approving legislation to overturn Common Core in her state, Thornton tried to talk her out of it, arguing that the system benefits the thousands of military kids in Oklahoma who transfer from one school system to another with no assurance that they will have comparable academic standards from one grade to another and from state to state. “She didn’t buy it,” he sighs. “She still signed the bill.”

In Thornton’s ideal world, the governor would have paid more attention. He envisions a PTA with more members and more political clout. He repeats the lesson over and over throughout the National PTA Convention: your congressman and your governor are much more likely to listen if you have a thousand members in your chapter instead of a hundred. More pointedly: “If you don’t have a seat at the table, you are probably on the menu.”

Thus, a big worry has been a longtime downward slide in PTA membership, which has ticked up in recent months by about 7 percent. And the fastest-growing demographic is men. “We’ve seen male membership move, thanks to Otha and others before him,” said Eric Snow, a PTA member and executive director of Watch D.O.G.S. (Dads Of Great Students), a group that encourages fathers to volunteer in schools. “He is such a champion for children. It’s just who he is. He has that in his heart and soul.”

Ray Leone has known Thornton since his days in Maryland and credits his emphasis on diversity for building membership. “I’m impressed with what he’s done, putting the harder conversations on the table, like diversity,” said Leone, president of the Maryland PTA. “There are groups that haven’t been at the PTA table, and he wants to get them there.”

Reaching out to bring others into PTA isn’t just the right thing to do, it’s the smart thing, Thornton believes. “This fall, minority students will be in the majority in America’s schools,” he says more than once, as he hustles from breakfast meeting to workshop to keynote address in the sprawling Austin Convention Center. To serve those school kids, the PTA needs more members who look like them and their parents.

Early in his presidency, Thornton knew that PTA needed to extend its reach, but he was made pointedly aware of that when he was traveling around the country. “People would say, ‘What about our kids?’ And I would say, ‘We are for all kids.’” So he went back to the PTA and spearheaded a program called Every Child in Focus, which highlights different children every month.

“They were arresting 13-year-old prostitutes,” he said. “We got a bill passed . . . that put stiffer penalties on the men and gave the young ladies treatment and support.”
from Hispanic and African American to military and suburban. “Did you know the poorest children in the country are located in suburbia?” he asks. “This month, it’s the rural child. Every child fits in at least one of these categories.”

Diversifying PTA also means expanding access. If you want working moms, single parents, and fathers, notes Rita Erves, you can’t hold your meetings at ten o’clock on a weekday morning.

Erves, president of the Georgia PTA, got to know Thornton during the years they bounced around the state in crowded vans firing up the local districts. “He’s very strategic, a very critical thinker, but what’s even more important is his integrity and character,” she says. “When he was running for president, one of our past National PTA presidents said, ‘He has to win the election. He’s the perfect person for the job. He’s a noble man.’

“Otha is not really concerned about doing the popular thing,” Erves says, by way of explanation. “His interest is doing the right thing.”

Sometimes, the right thing is rescheduling your PTA meetings to a convenient time for working people. “He said we were going to have it in the evening,” she said. “It may not seem like a big deal, but it was; it was very uncomfortable, because people said, ‘That’s how we’ve always done it.’ But he did it anyway. We wanted everyone, including working people, involved in PTA for the sake of all the children.”

Everywhere he went, Thornton shook things up. He got people thinking about the importance of advocating for all children, about legislation. “He made it so simple. There was one council we frequented that grew from seven thousand to eleven thousand members overnight. It was incredible.”

That’s the power of diversity, Erves says. “We need everyone to be involved for the children’s sake. It’s not just about color: it’s about single parents and grandparents, people that do not even have children, and of course, males. If a child’s father is involved, the chances are much greater they’ll be successful.”

**“TREAT PEOPLE RIGHT, AND WE’LL BE OK”**

Thornton did not have the benefit of his father’s involvement. He credits his success to his mother, his faith, and one remarkable American.

“A week or so after my dad left, I asked my mom, ‘What are we going to do?’ She said, ‘Son, we are going to keep God first, make sure we take care of this family, and make sure you get your education. Treat people right, and we’ll be OK.’

As moms often are, she was right. “Our mother’s love and commitment to her faith and family has paid off tenfold,” said Thornton. “All of her kids are proud of her and the struggle that she led the family through.”

As for the “treating people right” part, that came to Thornton easily, especially when, as a teenager, he embraced the message of the gospels. “At the end of the day, the essence of my faith is, you love people. In PTA, my way of showing love is helping kids and helping families.” Paraphrasing Luke, he adds, “To whom much is given, much is required.”

Sometimes more is required of Thornton than might be expected.

“When I go to places that have old ideas or are not as accepting, I remember Jackie Robinson and what a great role model he was,” Thornton says. “I feel that I have to be a great role model too, because of the people who will follow me, just as others followed him. And what really keeps me going when I run into . . . situations . . . is that I don’t want someone else’s prejudice to prevent me from helping others.”

Fundamentally, that’s why he is sacrificing so much time and effort to be the face of the PTA.

“I feel blessed to be in this job,” he says, “because it lets me speak for all the kids.”
When Penn State added a varsity hockey program and the Big Ten decided to sponsor men’s ice hockey as a sport beginning in 2012–13, the landscape of college hockey shifted. Twenty of the fifty-nine college hockey programs in the nation changed conference affiliation in the offseason prior to 2013–14.

Michigan Tech remained in the Western Collegiate Hockey Association, the nation’s most-storied league, along with three others, while six new members joined.

One year into the reformation of college hockey, we checked in with Michigan Tech coach Mel Pearson ’81 to see how the changes have affected the Huskies.
Old WCHA

Originally formed in 1951, the WCHA is home to a record 37 national championships and a record 16 Hobey Baker Memorial Award winners—given annually to the top player in Division I college hockey.

New WCHA

The new-look WCHA covers a wide, diverse geographical area that spans five time zones and consists of ten quality institutions that offer the best in both educational and athletic environments.
Q: What has been the overall impact of college hockey conference realignment on Michigan Tech?

A: In most ways, it’s been good. We’ve been able to create some new rivalries and also maintain our old ones. One of the big advantages is having our rivals Northern Michigan in the league and playing them four times in meaningful conference games. The realignment has also allowed us to travel downstate more often and play in front of our large alumni base there.

Q: How has non-conference scheduling been affected?

A: Scheduling has been great. We’ve been able to schedule some really high-quality, non-conference opponents like Michigan and Michigan State for the first time in years, and we’ll play Wisconsin this season. We’ve also been able to maintain our rivalry with Minnesota Duluth and continue playing in the Great Lakes Invitational, which is one of the best college hockey tournaments in the country. Having both Alaska schools also helps, because every game you play in Alaska, you get to add another game to your schedule. We played up there four games last year and added four non-conference games to our schedule.

Q: Has there been an effect on recruiting?

A: I don’t think the changes have had a major impact on recruiting. We’re still trying to get the same type of player and person that fits our program from the same areas. Every school is still recruiting the same type of players. If anything, the conference alignment has helped us with visibility in Lower Michigan and trying to recruit in that area.

Q: How has travel been affected?

A: I think it’s been roughly the same. There are probably fewer flights, since we don’t go to Denver and Colorado College anymore. Instead we go to Ferris State and Bowling Green. In terms of bus travel distance, it’s probably very similar.

Q: What have the changes meant to the program’s opportunity for success?

A: One of the real benefits has been from a competitiveness standpoint. All the schools currently in the WCHA are similar in size and resources. Last year, we really saw a close league race that went down to the last game of the season to determine who would make the playoffs. It’s a really well-balanced conference, and it’s a good conference with talented coaches and players. You saw Ferris State being an overtime goal away from the Frozen Four. Minnesota State was an NCAA Tournament team as well. What I like about it is everyone has a chance to win the league, and that’s what you want as a coach. I feel like we have a chance to win this league and get to the NCAA Tournament.

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**2014–15 Hockey Schedule**

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All times Eastern; *indicates a WCHA game.
Fisher Hall has reached a milestone this fall: the big 5-0.

Anyone attending Tech within the last fifty years knows this campus landmark, which has been many things for many people—home for mathematics and physics majors, headquarters for gen ed courses, terror for first-years in chemistry, budget entertainment, and even a venue for true love (more on that later). Fisher has a character all its own—an identity that is as much tied to the Huskies who walked its halls as it is seated in the building’s physical attributes.

BACKGROUND

In 1963, the State of Michigan passes a new constitution establishing the Michigan College of Mining and Technology as a university. (The University’s name changed the following year.) “The state was ramping up for the influx of baby boomers in higher education in the sixties and seventies,” says Jim Heikkinen, director of engineering services at Tech. “Fisher Hall was one of the buildings constructed on campus to accommodate them.”

Tech creates a master plan for the campus in conjunction with the effort to make room for the rising tide of boomers. “They knew we would get a lot bigger, and they wanted some direction. President Ray Smith presented it to the legislature, and they were so impressed, they began to require other campuses to provide a master plan when requesting funding. So we were the trendsetter.”

Ralph Calder & Associates, a Detroit-based architectural firm, designs Fisher Hall, as well as a number of other buildings on campus, e.g., the J. R. Van Pelt Library (now the J. R. Van Pelt and John and Ruann Opie Library), Dillman Hall, and Wadsworth Hall. “Fisher Hall’s exterior has stood the test of time—it still looks nice,” says Heikkinen. “You have slate, limestone, brick, and the aluminum curtain wall on the classroom side. Those are classic design elements used on campus, but the slate is a little unusual.”
“The 1964 design of lighting was pretty much obsolete after ten to fifteen years. They had these old fixtures called egg crates that would light up the entire ceiling, but only a fraction of it actually filtered through. It was attractive in those days.”

Fisher 135 becomes Tech’s premier auditorium, seating over six hundred for lectures and transforming into a movie theater on Friday nights. The building’s crown jewels are an IBM 1620-II, on lease to the University, which eventually earned the universal nickname CADET (Can’t Add, Doesn’t Event Try); an analog–digital computer housed on the second floor; and drawing rooms stocked with 8-1/2-by-11-inch workbook paper, allowing students to work with the drafting triangle instead of the antiquated T-square.

“Dr. McMillan’s computer lab [on the second floor] was shoehorned in right after the building was constructed,” says Heikkinen. “Retrofitting the space was a challenge. The building wasn’t set up for computer technology. Computers were tremendous energy hogs, and so they needed additional infrastructure. Auxiliary cooling, electric, raised floor—all this stuff was new back in those days. The second floor was set up to accommodate that.”

FISHER HALL BOASTED SUCH IMPRESSIVE NUMBERS AND CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY WHEN IT OPENED THAT THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS INCLUDED IT IN PHYSICS BUILDINGS TODAY.

AMONG ITS HIGHLIGHTS:

- **IT WAS ILLUMINATED BY MORE THAN A MILE OF FLUORESCENT TUBING.**
- **THE MECHANICS LAB WAS EQUIPPED WITH STATE-OF-THE-ART TIME-LAPSE POLAROID CAMERAS.**
- **CLASSROOMS FEATURED CLOSED-CIRCUIT TELEVISIONS AND 13,000 SQUARE FEET OF BLACKBOARDS**
- **IN 1964 DOLLARS, FISHER COST $2.4 MILLION TO BUILD, $330,000 TO EQUIP.**
James Fisher, aka “Mr. Michigan Tech”

James Fisher (1873–1962) arrived as a student in the late 1880s and then joined the faculty, ultimately serving as its dean. Fisher earned three degrees from Tech and practically lived at the University, thus earning the moniker “Mr. Michigan Tech.” He rarely missed a day until his final illness and continued to teach (sans compensation) for a year after Michigan law required him to retire in 1945. He also served as secretary of the Alumni Association and as a trustee of the Michigan Tech Foundation.

He had a reputation for being a “stern taskmaster in the classroom” with a “droll sense of humor.” According to his associates, he knew every graduate by name until the enrollment boom.

Fisher was also a visionary scientist. He conducted pioneering research in geophysics and in X-radiation; the latter permanently scarred his wrists and hands.

FORTY YEARS LATER: FISHER GETS A FACELIFT

Fast forward to the summer of 2006. Fisher Hall gets a much-needed makeover, from energy-saving updates to classroom technology upgrades to cosmetic improvements. The Aftermath Café opens. Students return in the fall to new flat-screen displays in the lecture halls; modern, roomy seating in Fisher 135 (where the Michigan Tech Film Board still shows movies); renovated classrooms with added workspace, high-tech projectors in the ceiling, and expansive whiteboards; and enhanced lighting (though the fluorescent tubing does not boast near the length it did in the ‘60s).

“The capital outlay for 2006 allowed us to do remodel- and infrastructure-related projects—so we took that opportunity to modernize Fisher,” says Heikkinen. “This renovation added pretty good utility to that building and extended its life.”

The high-tech updates of 2006, including new projectors and other instructional technology, improved both the teaching and learning experience. The Aftermath Café, pictured above, opened as part of the building renovations.
RECENT HISTORY

Thanks to a gift from Richard ’48 and Elizabeth Henes, two dozen physics research and advanced teaching labs receive improvements in 2012. Updates include improved safety features, new metal cabinetry and countertops, and new research equipment, such as the in-house Martin Expert system for astrophysics research.

TODAY AND BEYOND

If Fisher's walls could talk, they would tell of not just the bygone technologies and trends of half a century, but also of the Tech constant reflected in this building and its activities: possibility. This fall, a new class of first-year students walks through its doors, and as it has done for generations, Fisher will no doubt earn a special place in their hearts and minds.

UPGRADES AND OVERHAULS HAVE EASED THE OLD BUILDING COMFORTABLY INTO THE 21ST CENTURY.

Memories of Fisher Hall

Selected with difficulty from your many excellent submissions to the TechAlum newsletter and the Alumni Association Facebook page.

MOVIE NIGHTS IN FISHER 135

Greg Mooren ’06 and I were at Tech for a visit in February 2007, and Greg told me he wanted to check out the changes to Fisher 135. It was a Saturday night and a little before the early movie showing. Suddenly, all the lights went out in the room, and I thought we were in trouble . . . Greg told me to calm down and look at the movie screen. He had been Film Board president as a student and had gotten a couple of his buddies who were still in school to play a “movie” he had made of our history together as a couple. At the end of the movie I looked down, and he was kneeling in front of me with a ring.

—Molly (Crouch) Mooren ’06

(We) watched Kevin Kostner in Bodyguard. When he . . . said something like “The atomic weight of lithium is 123,” the crowd yelled out that he was wrong and what the correct answer was.

—Dannette Bowman Utecht ’94

DOC BERRY

(What) sticks in my mind is one of my first lectures as a freshman in 1978. It was Chemistry 101. Doc Berry told us to look left and then right as those people would most likely not be there at graduation. I was determined that I was going to be the one out of the three of us who did make it—and I did.

—Marcia Ross ’82

When the upperclass students played “Another One Bites the Dust” over and over and passed out drop slips as we headed towards Fisher 135 to take our first finals exam.

—Kari Eskridge ’01

After the first Doc Berry chem test . . . the car out front with the sledgehammer, provided by one of the frats, so we could all beat on it after the test.

—Linda Rodgers Milicia ’77

Doc Berry and his lectures in General Chemistry. He could pick you out regardless of where you sat, gave fantastic talks, and would bend over backwards to help you if you were really trying and still struggling. I was and he did. I was in the freshman chemistry class of 1973 and by the time I left Tech in 1978 I had a friend for life.

—Jim Heim ’79
Ever since we’ve been the Huskies, there have been husky mascots. They’ve been carved in snow, and real dogs have roamed the sidelines of athletic events for years. So, too, has a student or two dressed as a dog (or something vaguely resembling a dog).

The earliest recorded human mascot we discovered goes back to the late 1960s and early 1970s. Looking more Yogi Bear than a Siberian husky, he had a female co-mascot in white “fur.”

**1970s**

“We embellished my costume with goalie shin pads painted in gold and black saying ‘Go Tech,’” says Bill Wassberg ’71. “A goalie blocker, stick, and glove rounded out my outfit. For [wife] Kathy, we found a clown costume pattern and made the body out of fluffy white material and added a tail. Neither of us was a proficient skater.”

Laura Reeve ’80 wore a different version of Yogi. “I would do a strip act when the band played the stripper song. I threw the bra into the crowd and was really surprised on graduation day to see it hanging from someone’s rearview mirror!”

**1980s**

Next came the “Bear.” He or she was too stout and fuzzy of face to be taken seriously as a husky, but, when it was replaced, cheers of “Where’s the Bear?” were heard at athletic events.

“I was ‘the Bear’ for hockey season 1981 or ’82,” says Jim Hollenbeck ’85. “There were two of us, one for each game each weekend. I did signs a lot. I carried three: ‘Lets.’ ‘Go.’ ‘Tech.’”

“I was the Husky dog in the Tech Centennial parade,” recalls Monica Rovano. “I remember having a lot of fun with the kids, and I really wanted to be the ‘walking’ dog because I’m not a skater. I remember being very warm in that costume.”

**1990s**

From the late-1980s to mid-1990s, the Bear gave way to a “Wolf” and a “Mouse.”
Again, both were the brunt of many jokes. One of them even inspired the chant: “The Mouse is in the house!”

“When he [a 1980s classmate] became the mascot, his mom sent up a care package complete with a new collar and ‘rabies certificate,’” said Dee Sweet ’89.

“Bob Olson [radio voice of the Huskies] and I hired a woman to make the suit,” said Don Kilpela Sr. “The band ridiculed it by calling it a mouse. It was a terrible suit. I can’t remember how long we used it, but it was too long. The current one is perfect.”

Today’s mascot looks more like the real thing. He can be seen high fiving young and old at many sporting events and graces t-shirts with his always-happy mug.

In 1997, a contest was held to name him, with Blizzard winning out over Harley, Heikki, Howie, and Yoopie. Should you be wondering, his middle name is “The.”

2000s

Wherever he goes, he attracts attention. In 2010, Blizzard T. Husky traveled to Cape Canaveral, in Florida, in hopes of seeing one of the last space shuttle launches, and ended up starring in Space.com’s story “Attempted Shuttle Launch Attracts Billionaire, Google . . . and a Mystery Man in a Dog Suit?”

People can’t seem to get enough of him. “The men’s basketball team made it to the NCAA playoffs in Missouri [spring 2014],” says a current, anonymous Blizzard. “I went with the Pep Band. We won the first game, and there was a St. Patrick’s Day parade that night. I was handed a set of cymbals to play, with the paws. We hitched a ride on a trailer ahead of us; so, I was riding a jet ski in a parade while playing cymbals. What other mascot has done that?”
What do you and a nineteenth-century Prussian factory worker have in common? The kind of income you are going to rely on in retirement, says Pat Joyce, professor emeritus of economics. Social Security was conceived by Otto von Bismarck, best known for unifying German states into a powerful empire. Germany was the first country to adopt a workers’ pension system. The system, passed by parliament in 1889, provided retirement and disability benefits. Participation was mandatory, with contributions taken from employee, employer, and the government.

Across the sea, politicians were paying attention. During the Great Depression jobs were scarce, and the government wanted to encourage older workers to retire so younger ones could take their place. But it seemed that the only way to get people of a certain age to stop working for pay was to pay them to stop working.

So President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act in 1935. The government began collecting Social Security taxes in 1937, and monthly benefits began in 1940. At first it worked fine. Enough money came in to pay the benefits going out. But that has changed, says Joyce, and Americans now face a fractured Social Security system that needs more than a simple splint.

In his memorable final lecture at Michigan Tech, Joyce details some of Social Security’s challenges.

FUNDING FALLS BEHIND

Some people think that the money they put into Social Security through their payroll taxes supports their retirement. That’s not how it works, says Joyce. Social Security was designed as a “pay as you go,” system, i.e., contributions from today’s workers cover benefits to today’s beneficiaries.

But at the rate it’s going, Social Security is only partially funded. That’s an accident of demographics.
With the baby boom generation starting to retire and the number of people over 65 expected to increase 250 percent by 2040, funding Social Security is going to be increasingly problematic, says Joyce. The number of workers won’t grow by nearly as much. “The future solvency of Social Security depends on the prosperity of future workers,” Joyce points out, as well as the number of beneficiaries.

AN UNDER-THE-MATTRESS INVESTMENT STRATEGY

And there’s another problem. Private pension plans can invest in higher-yield assets like stocks and corporate bonds.

Social Security, on the other hand, can only buy low-interest US government bonds with its extra revenues from payroll taxes. They are less risky, but they also yield less income. When payroll taxes don’t cover payments to beneficiaries, Social Security sells some of those government bonds to make up the difference.

As tax revenues fall, Social Security will have to sell more bonds to meet its obligations to beneficiaries. What happens when the bonds are all sold, which could happen around 2032? At that point, Social Security payroll tax revenues will cover only three-fourths of the benefits going out. The other 25 percent of the benefits that retirees expect to receive will have to come from additional taxation, Joyce says. The only other option: benefits will have to decrease.

“Excess benefit growth compared to revenue growth has created this problem, which is not a catastrophe in the making, just a problem that will correct itself when all the baby boomers die off,” he adds with a twinkle in his eye.

CHICKEN LITTLE OR ALFRED E. NEUMANN

In his Social Security presentation, Joyce outlines two typical views about Social Security. One camp says, “The sky is falling.” The other: “What, me worry?”

The Chicken Little camp projects disaster as the number of people over 65 skyrockets. As they age, their health will fail, and nursing homes will fill to bursting, just like the elementary schools of the 1950s, all on the taxpayers’ dollar. “If the sky is falling, we should assess the costs of propelling it back up on the baby boomers now, while they are still working,” says Joyce.

The Alfred E. Neumann optimists project that people will be healthier longer and put off retirement until later in life. That means they will pay more taxes, rely less on Social Security, and require less medical care. “If ‘What, me worry?’ is correct, increasing taxes now will disrupt the savings and retirement plans of the very ones we want to help,” he says.

So what should we do about Social Security?

“There is no simple solution,” Joyce admits. “The problem is exacerbated by people retiring early and living longer.” An obvious strategy—freezing Social Security benefits at some level—is unlikely to succeed, he adds.

“That won’t work, because it will penalize those close to or in retirement,” Joyce says. “Also, they vote.”

“A complicating factor is the attitude of many on Social Security who don’t realize that it is a tax-supported government program or whose attitude is: ‘I have mine, so to hell with you.'”

A particularly jarring misconception is that the payments workers make into the system cover their own retirement benefits. “The average worker receives more in benefits than the sum of the contributions and interest—a lot more,” says Joyce. “As a retirement plan, Social Security is a good buy, especially for those whose lifetime earnings are average or below.”

As for employers’ contributions, they pump up the checks of those who don’t receive much Social Security because of their wage history. “This is a redistribution from those earning more to those earning less and is designed to keep retirees out of poverty.”

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

The professor does have a few suggestions for rescuing America’s favorite entitlement program. “If we were to put more people to work, say, rebuilding the deteriorating US infrastructure, that would increase Social Security income and might actually reduce early retirement. Another solution is to slowly raise the full retirement and early retirement age and to give people greater financial incentives to wait to retire.”

There’s a more fundamental question that needs to be considered too, Joyce says. “For the most part, people are incapable—or certainly seem to be—of saving enough for their own retirement without Social Security,” he says. “Most people retire with less than $50,000 in assets, not counting equity in their homes. That doesn’t last long. And who wants Dad and Mom to knock on their door and say, ‘We’ve run out of money, and we’re moving in?’”
The 2014 award winners: A legacy of success and dedication

OUTSTANDING YOUNG ALUMNI AWARD

Jillian J. Rothe ’06
BS in Business Administration, BS in Mechanical Engineering

Jillian Rothe has established a sterling career at Caterpillar in a short period of time, using her mechanical engineering and business administration degrees with a minor in Spanish. She’s also given her time and talents to many worthwhile causes over the years.

She is currently Caterpillar’s energy and transportation marketing support representative for Asia Pacific based in Singapore. Within this newly created role, she ensures that business partners have the Extended Protection Products to support their go-to-market strategies. Rothe has held increasingly responsible management roles in Peoria, Illinois; Monterrey, Mexico; Minneapolis; and Nashville.

Outside of her job duties, she has been involved in the Caterpillar Latino Connection Leadership Team, Women’s Leadership Forum, Military Support Network, Asia Synergy Network, Caterpillar Young Professionals, Women’s Initiative Network, Cat LAMBDA (LGBTQA Group), and the Nashville Chapter of Girls on the Run. She is also a 70.3 Ironman triathlete, an independent marketing executive for Melaleuca, The Wellness Company, and is part of the Michigan Tech Technical Marketing Recruiting Team and Society of Women Engineers.

OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD

Marie Cleveland ’82
BS in Business Administration

Marie Cleveland is a worldwide account manager for FedEx, responsible for bringing in $70 million in revenue annually. While she advanced through management positions, she received many honors from the company, including membership in the President’s Club, FedEx’s highest sales award; and the Five-Star Award, FedEx’s highest accolade.

She’s traveled the globe for FedEx, touching down in Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America, making her an expert in cultural issues within international business. Prior to FedEx, Marie was involved in various positions in quality, human resources, and sales for Roadway Package System, which was purchased by FedEx in 2000.

For her alma mater, Marie is a member of President Glenn Mroz’s Advancement Council, the School of Business and Economics Advisory Board, the Presidential Council of Alumnae, and the McNair Society. She also assists the University with student recruitment and hosts numerous alumni events in the Chicago area.

Marie enjoys visiting Michigan Tech as a guest speaker, sharing her many insights.

HONORARY ALUMNI AWARD

George and Susan Robinson

George Robinson and his wife, Susan, have been synonymous with Michigan Tech’s A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum for nearly two decades, George as curator and Susan as honorary curator. Together, they elevated it to international status.

George also taught mineralogy and conducted research in mineralogy, characterization of new mineral species, and mineral occurrences. He wrote an extensive update to E. W. Heinrich’s Mineralogy of Michigan and coauthored the books Lake Superior Iron Ranges with Gene LaBerge and The A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum with Robert Rann. In 2012, a mineral discovered in the Mammoth-St. Anthony mine in Arizona was named in his honor: georgerobinsonite.

Susan is a highly regarded mineral and wildlife artist who volunteered hundreds of hours at the museum. In addition to giving artistic flair to the arrangement of mineral specimens and displays, she helped with the packing and moving of all the specimens from the old location to the new building—all ten semitrailer loads.

George and Susan’s legacy will truly last forever.

HONORARY ALUMNI AWARD

Martha Sloan

Martha Sloan’s impact on people on and off campus has been monumental. She was a pioneer in many aspects of her career and has always had time to help anyone who asked.

Martha was the first woman hired as a faculty member in the Michigan Tech Department of Electrical Engineering and the first to head the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), the largest professional organization in the world. Her honors include the Society of Women Engineers Distinguished Engineering Educator Award, an IEEE Centennial Medal, the Richard E. Merwin Award, and the American Society of Engineering Education Outstanding Young Electrical
Engineering Educator Award.

As a role model and mentor, she has supported women faculty members and women of all walks of life across campus and around the globe. She was honored with Michigan Tech’s Distinguished Service Award, receiving nominations from six departments and two colleges. It is safe to say that Martha Sloan has changed the face of Michigan Tech and engineering education.

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD
Tom Irwin ’63 ’66
BS in Civil Engineering, MS in Business Administration

Throughout his career, Tom Irwin has used his Michigan Tech degrees to the utmost. He believes luck is preparation and opportunity and “Michigan Tech excelled at the preparation, academically and in a very congenial environment.”

During Tom’s years as president of Hodgkiss and Douma (H&D) Construction Company of Petoskey, H&D’s emphasis was highway construction, major recreation projects, developments, and aggregate production. His twenty-seven-year career at H&D began after working with Sivier Construction in Detroit, D&L Contracting in Traverse City, and Dow Chemical in Midland.

His dedication to Michigan Tech runs long and deep, as evidenced by his receiving the University’s Outstanding Service Award in 1999. He served on several committees and initiatives of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, including the Executive Council, the Partnering with the Future Campaign, the Executive Committee of the Educating Graduates of Choice Campaign, the Professional Advisory Committee, and the Transportation Enterprise Program. In addition, he has been a key contact between the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and the pavement industry for many years.

Tom is past president of the Michigan Road Builders Association and the Michigan Asphalt Paving Association. He has also served as director of The Bank of Northern Michigan and as a trustee of both the Charlevoix County Community Foundation and McLaren Northern Michigan Hospital. Most recently, Tom served on the steering committee for the successful Generations of Discovery Campaign for Michigan Tech.

Help us recognize outstanding alumni and friends

Know a great Michigan Tech alumnus/a or friend of the University? Here’s your chance to give them the recognition they deserve.

The Alumni Association is seeking nominations for the 2015 Alumni Awards:
• Outstanding Young Alumni
• Outstanding Service
• Distinguished Alumni
• Honorary Alumni
• Humanitarian

These awards are presented each August at the Alumni Reunion.

Award descriptions and nomination forms are available at http://alumni.mtu.edu/awards or by contacting the Office of Alumni Relations, 906-487-2400, 877-688-2586, or alumni@mtu.edu. The deadline to nominate is December 1.
MISSION STATEMENT
Celebrating Traditions. Creating Connections.

VISION
We are passionate champions of Michigan Tech’s unique traditions and we continuously strengthen our alumni community.

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Kevin J. Walker ’02

If you have a question or suggestion, please contact Alumni Relations at 877-688-2586 or alumni@mtu.edu.

Alumni chapter spotlight: Northwest Michigan
Since 2007, alumni and friends in Northwest Michigan have supported a scholarship fund for their local Michigan Tech students. In addition to social events such as a Tech Trivia night, the chapter invites scholarship winners, students, alumni, family, and friends to show their Tech spirit in the Cherry Royale Parade. Hats off to the Northwest Michigan Alumni Chapter for helping advance the mission of the Michigan Tech Alumni Association: Celebrating Traditions. Creating Connections.

You can find a list of our alumni events on our webpage, www.mtu.edu/alumni, and on our Michigan Tech Alumni Association Facebook page.

Copper Country Snowfall Contest is back
The Alumni Association’s Fifth Annual Snowfall Contest kicks off in November for the 2014–15 season at www.mtu.edu/alumni. If you accurately predict the total amount of snow to fall in the Keweenaw this winter, you could win a stay in a campus guest room and a Michigan Tech Winter Survival Kit.

Thank you to everyone who entered the 2013–14 contest. The official snowfall total for the season was 208.75 according to the Michigan Tech Keweenaw Research Center, but it felt like a lot more than that.

Anna Miller, a 2012 mechanical engineering alumna, wins the grand prize with her prediction of 208.25 inches. She will receive a stay in a campus guest room and a Michigan Tech Winter Survival Kit.

Kaitlyn Sundstrom, a 2012 biochemistry and molecular biology graduate, was chosen from all entries to receive the consolation prize of a Michigan Tech Winter Survival Kit.

Check out the snow memories of alumni and friends at mtu.edu/memories and post your own stories about winter at Tech.

Alumni chapter spotlight: Northwest Michigan
Left to right, Karen (Winn) DePodesta, Kirsten Beyer, Eszter Pattantyus, and Jennie (Sopina) Peters, all Class of 1989, share some silver-anniversary memories over a Keweenawan during Alumni Reunion 2014.

PHOTO: SARAH BIRD

Michigan Tech Alumni Association

PHOTO: SARAH BIRD
Mark Roth, custodian

Roth was the manager of Jim’s Too Foodmart on Sharon Avenue before coming to Michigan Tech to be a custodian in McNair Hall (then Co-ed Hall), where he worked eleven years.

When did you work at Tech?
From 1989 to 2000. Then I took a maintenance position at Chassell School to be nearer my home. I just retired from there.

What did you do at the University?
I was custodial, and I did some maintenance, working on washing machines, dryers, and whatever came up in the summertime.

What was it like working with students?
I tried for fifteen years to get into Michigan Tech, and when I did, everyone told me the students would walk all over me. So in the beginning I was nervous, but within a month, I was hunting with them, fishing with them; my wife, Ann, and I would have them over for supper. All of a sudden, I felt I was part of their family.

What was the best part?
Mingling with the students, chatting with them. And my coworkers. It was always a joy to go to work. And of course, working for Dan Strzyzykowski [the former purchasing agent for Residential Services Facilities]. He was the best supervisor I ever had. They called him Spic-and-Span Dan. I talked with so many parents who had kids in other universities, and they’d be overwhelmed with how spotless McNair Hall was. Dan passed away a few years ago, and that’s why I retired early. He had all these hopes and dreams, and sometimes those dreams don’t come true. I didn’t want that to happen to Ann and me.

The worst part?
Scrubbing them showers on Monday morning. Your shoulders would just be aching.

What do you miss?
I loved doing maintenance. You are always learning, doing something different. And I miss the students. When they’d come back in the fall, it was like when your own kids come home. The hard thing was when they graduated; you might never see them again.

I have helped with move-ins in the fall. It’s fun seeing how grateful the parents are, the look of relief on their faces when they know their kids are in a good place where they’ll be taken care of.

Any memorable students?
We still communicate with Luke Karas. He used to be an RA, and he sent me an invitation to their son’s graduation. I can tell I’m getting old when his kids are graduating from high school. And Matt Cameron, the basketball player—he and the other three guys in that room, all good basketball players and good people. They would come over for Easter dinner wearing suits and bringing flowers for Ann.

What do you do now that you are retired?
I’m painting the house; it’s only my second day of retirement. Anything else?
Just how great the students were. In the beginning, everyone told me they were going to walk all over me, but I got to walk with them.

“EVERYONE TOLD ME THE STUDENTS WOULD WALK ALL OVER ME . . . WITHIN A MONTH, I WAS HUNTING WITH THEM, FISHING WITH THEM . . . I FELT I WAS PART OF THEIR FAMILY.”
1940s

Robert C. Weed ’42 died March 13 in Silver City, New Mexico. He was a rancher and retired president of the Natural Resources Group. In 1996, he was inducted into the Geological and Mining Engineering and Sciences Academy at Michigan Tech. Weed received a BS in Mining Engineering from the Michigan College of Mining and Technology and then served in the US Army Corps of Engineers, rising to the rank of captain. He was awarded the Silver Star by General Patton in 1943 for gallantry in action at the Battle of Kasserine Pass in Tunisia, North Africa.

1950s

Jim Jenkins ’50 (Mechanical Engineering) celebrated his sixty-fifth wedding anniversary June 11 in Ishpeming.

1960s

Allan Pedersen ’60 (Business Administration) serves as the base liaison coordinator for the USO of North Carolina at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsboro, North Carolina. He directs day-to-day activities and planning of services for more than 12,000 individuals and was awarded the USO Volunteer of the Year award in 2013.

1970s

Daniel Hanninen ’74 (Forest Technology) is hoping to be at the fortieth reunion of the Class of 1974 in August. “Hope to see some classmates there, safe trips everyone.” He’s pictured “visiting God’s Country, Lake of the Clouds.” (We hope you made it, Dan.)

1980s

Suzanne Jurva ’82 (Scientific and Technical Communication) took a family trip to the UP to reminisce about the winter of 1978–79. “Besides a blizzard and -22° weather, we were also photo bombed by some friendly alpacas in Hancock!” She and Joe live in the Atlanta area, and their children are in college. “We feel like we’re still in college, which suggests that we’re either crazy or there’s some truth to what we learned in physics about time and space.”

1990s

Michelle Eggart ’96 (Environmental Engineering) announces the birth of a son, Robert Walker, born March 25. He came in at 8 pounds, 10 ounces, and 20.5 inches.

Kevin Britton ’97 (Mechanical Engineering) was named a Certified Six Sigma Black Belt by the American Society for Quality in October 2013.

A. David Claus ’99 (Civil Engineering) has joined Stantec as their structural engineering manager for the power business group in Denver.

What’s up with you? Submit your own class note and photo online at mtu.edu/alumni/connect/huskylink or email us at techfund@mtu.edu. If you have a new addition to your family, email us at alumni@mtu.edu and we’ll send you a special gift from Blizzard T. Husky!
Ron Helman honored by fraternity

Ron Helman has received the Frank Shepardson Award from Beta Theta Pi for “exemplary devotion and dedication.”

Helman, who joined the fraternity as a sophomore at Miami University, came to Tech in 1976 as executive director of the Michigan Tech Fund and was named vice president for advancement in 1987. He and his wife, Lou Ellyn, were named honorary Tech alumni upon his retirement in 1996.

The Helmans continue to live in the Houghton area and have been notable supporters of women's basketball and many local nonprofits and service organizations. Helman remains active with Beta Theta Pi, serving at the national level as a member of its advisory council.

Dick Henes, Dave House receive Tech’s Melvin Calvin Medal

The University’s Board of Control has bestowed the Melvin Calvin Medal of Distinction on two outstanding alumni and longtime supporters of Michigan Tech: David House ’65 and Richard Henes ’48.

The award is named for 1931 Michigan Tech alumnus Melvin Calvin, who won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry. It has been awarded only six times since it was established in 1985.

After receiving his BS in Mechanical Engineering, Henes went on to earn a law degree at the University of Michigan. In 1958 he founded Henes Stamping in Phoenix and served as president of Henes Manufacturing Company and Henes Products Company. Among their many gifts to Michigan Tech, Henes and his late wife, Elizabeth, established the first endowed chair in the Department of Mechanical Engineering–Engineering Mechanics and endowed three associate professorships.

After earning a BS in Electrical Engineering, House began his career in computing, and in 1974 joined Intel. He led the group that developed the company’s leading microprocessors, including the well-known Pentium processor. House managed the team that developed the highly successful “Intel Inside” marketing program and is currently executive chairman of Brocade Communications Systems and is on the board of Azaire Networks.

House chaired Tech’s successful Generations of Discovery capital campaign. Among his many contributions to the University, he helped establish the Michigan Tech Research Institute and endowed the Dave House Professorship in Engineering.

2000s

Gordon Mosher ’01 ’02 (Forestry, Applied Ecology and Environmental Science) is now living and working in Parker, Colorado, with his wife, Alycia, and their children (Jaxon, 7, and Lilian, 5). Gordie is a program manager at AVID Center (Advancement Via Individual Determination) and oversees College Readiness Systems for the State of Colorado. “Living and working in Colorado is a great reminder of time spent in the Keweenaw,” he says.

Ben Almquist ’04 (Materials Science and Engineering) is joining the Department of Bioengineering at Imperial College London as a new faculty member, where his research will focus on tissue engineering and regenerative medicine.

Heather and Jed Peters ’07 (Civil Engineering) announce the birth of their second boy, Sawyer, on March 18, 2013.
There is strength in numbers. How else could Michigan Tech students have captured the Guinness World Record for the Biggest Snowball not once, but twice? And could one person build a herculean Winter Carnival snow statue in just a month? Nope. When Huskies come together and work toward a common goal, the results are epic.

One $25 gift may not have a huge impact, but when you combine them, the results can be transformational.

Just four $25 gifts might provide a student with a $100 emergency scholarship, which could buy a chemistry textbook, or one hundred $25 gifts ($2,500) might help students attend a national competition.

Your support of the Annual Fund does make a difference. And Huskies know—together does equal stronger!

To give to the Annual Fund, go to www.mtu.edu/giving or call 877-386-3688.
2010s

Kenny ’10 (Computer Network and System Administration) and Kate Barnt ’10 (Communication and Culture Studies) welcomed their second child, Henry Marcus, to the world on New Year’s Day.

Alyssa and Steven Tangney ’10 (Mechanical Engineering Technology) welcomed their daughter, Addison Avarie, on September 20, 2013. Steve works for A and D Technology in Ann Arbor.

Amanda Taylor ’10 (Business Administration) and her husband traveled to Hollywood to run their first half marathon. “It was a wonderful but exhausting experience. We could see the Hollywood sign during part of the run! We finished strong with a 2:34:30.6 time.”

Matthew Carney ’11 (Mechanical Engineering) and Rebekkah Bury ’11 (Civil Engineering) are engaged and are planning a February 2015 wedding in Chicagoland.

In memoriam

The Michigan Tech family extends condolences to the relatives and friends of those who have passed away.

1942
Arthur J. Karam
Robert C. Weed
Arthur J. Wuebben

1943
Allen H. Boelter
Ralph L. Seger Jr.

1948
Edwin F. Koski

1949
Esther A. Seaman

1950
Albert E. Boyer
Wilbert Heikkinen
Mack C. Johnson
Paul R. Lepisto
Erven I. Maki
Robert L. Turnquist Sr.

1951
Hugh C. Ross
Robert L. Todd

1952
Leo J. Foco
Gordon J. Kuivanen

1953
Robert C. Bammert
John Bremer Jr.
John B. Clementi
Paul D. Jahneke
Roy A. Oja

1954
Dale R. Greve

1955
Dale P. Tubbs

1956
Ronald J. Narlock

1957
John E. Fitzgerald
Joanne E. Highdale
Roy L. Johnsen
Dr. John P. Klus

1958
Dr. Robert L. Brown
James A. Mattson

1960
Alfred F. Burkhardt Jr.
Dr. Lee P. Hunt, Deacon
Dr. David G. Leddy

1961
Joseph C. Bagnasco
Thomas K. Beber
Joseph E. Kirby Jr.

1962
John E. Forsberg

1964
Nicholas R. Farkas
Frederick J. Lanari

1966
Robert H. Dean
Lionel J. Grime

1967
John M. Croze

1968
Noel D. Culbert

1970
Donald A. Barber

1972
Susan J. Michaelson
Edward Modzelewski

1973
Bruce R. Leavitt

1974
Kirk G. Czuhai

1975
John D. Trombley
Steven VanderKooi

1977
Richard A. Geno

1981
Peter M. Baker

1986
Adil Shafi

1990
Mary C. Graham

1991
James A. Rheault

1992
Scott J. Huhta

2008
Adam W. Boyd
Transitions

Steven R. Seidel
1951–2014

Professor Steve Seidel, 62, passed away June 26, at his home in Houghton.
Seidel came to the University in 1984 as an assistant professor in what was then the Department of Mathematical and Computer Sciences, joining a cadre of young scientists. One of them was Professor Linda Ott.
“He really cared a lot about the department and the students and doing things right,” she said. “He was demanding of students and had high expectations, but he was fair.”
Seidel spearheaded a new PhD program in computational science and engineering and had an active research program, including a substantial project in Unified Parallel C.
Seidel was known for his model trains and his passion for old cars, which he shared with Charles Wallace, associate professor of computer science. “Steve was a great friend all the time I knew him, but he was especially helpful to me when I was a young assistant professor,” said Wallace.
“I miss him already,” said Ott. “In department meetings, around the office, the things he would say. . . . He was part of everything. I so wish he could have been around longer.”
He is survived by his wife, Ellen Seidel, head of collections and technical services at the Van Pelt–Opie Library; daughter Hannah (Eric Chase) Seidel son Carl (Aimee) Seidel; and grandchildren Sophia, Eva, and Violet.

Robert H. Mount
1927–2014

Professor Emeritus Robert H. “Bob” Mount, a longtime member of the physics faculty, passed away July 2 at his home in Hancock. He was 86 years old.
Mount came to Michigan Tech in 1954 and retired from the University in 2000. For much of his career, he taught introductory physics courses. “His forty-six years of service is the second-longest in department history—the longest being James Fisher,” said physics professor Bryan Suits.
Professor Don Beck remembered his library. “He had an extensive collection of college-level books that he managed to fit into one of our smallest offices.”
Mount donated most of that collection to the Society of Physics students upon his retirement. “Fourteen years later, those books are still in the undergrad physics room and are consulted on a regular basis, sometimes even by grad students and professors,” said Professor Raymond Shaw.
Mount is survived by his children, Becky, Nancy, Rob, and Jeff (Elyssa); and his grandchildren, Rachel and Gabe. He is also survived by his pets, Peppy, Kitsalee, Linky, and Mama, his devoted and adoring lap cat.

George Robert Butler
1928–2014

George Robert “Bob” Butler, 85, former dean of the School of Business and Engineering Economics, passed away July 8 at the Houghton County Medical Care Facility.
Butler earned BS degrees in Mechanical Engineering and Engineering Administration from Michigan Tech before completing an MBA at the University of Chicago. After beginning his career in the oil industry, he came to Michigan Tech in 1967, serving as interim dean of the business school from 1980 to 1985, retiring in 1988.
Butler had an abiding interest in business and entrepreneurship and was a past president of the International Council of Small Business.
He is survived by his wife, Hester; his son Karl of Calumet; daughter Hester (Daniel) Butler-Ehle of Calumet Township; and grandchildren Julia Butler-Ehle and Alexandra Butler-Ehle.
Lending a helping paw.

You can help the next generation of Huskies and even provide security for you and the people you love. To learn more, call us or visit our website.

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Fired up
Students gather for s'mores and camaraderie at Princes' Point.