

NMSU Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni 2016
College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

Arthur “Butch” Blazer



Arthur “Butch” Blazer has spent almost his entire professional career as a public servant. Butch graduated from NMSU in 1975 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Range Science and worked with various federal, tribal, and state entities as well as numerous non-profit organizations in executive management and leadership positions.

Having recently retired from his position as Deputy Under Secretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources and the Environment within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Butch culminates a federal career spanning 32 years. Prior to his USDA appointment by Secretary Tom Vilsack, he also served for eight years as the first ever Native

American State Forester, working for former New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson.

As a member of the Mescalero Apache Tribe, Butch grew up on the beautiful one-half million acre Mescalero Apache Indian Reservation, which is located in southcentral New Mexico, where he developed a deep appreciation and concern for the health of our Mother Earth.

Moving forward, Butch intends on dedicating the majority of his time to tribal youth education initiatives which address the needs and success of future generations.

On June 28, 2016, Butch received one of the greatest honors of his career. He was presented with the Presidents Lifetime Achievement Award for Volunteerism, signed by President Barack Obama.

Butch served on the NMSU Foundation Board of Directors from 2004 to 2006 and the NMSU International Board of Directors from 2003 to 2005. He supports students in a variety of ways, most significantly by establishing a scholarship in the Colleges of ACES. He is also a supporter of the NMSU Range Management student organization and is a guest speaker for the group.

The opportunities Butch received because of his successful career with the Department of the Interior and USDA has afforded him the ability to stay connected to the university and students in many positive ways. In his words, “I am very honored in having been named as a Distinguished Alumni. This selection has also reminded me of an important personal obligation in my working with the university to expand and enhance learning opportunities for its students.”

NMSU Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni 2016
College of Arts and Sciences

Dr. Stephen Hanzély



This is the year of recognition for Dr. Stephen Hanzély. In April 2016, just months before being selected as an NMSU Distinguished Alumni, he was selected to receive the Youngstown State University (YSU) Heritage Award, the most prestigious honor YSU bestows on its former faculty and staff. Stephen's dedication to his alma mater and his students is apparent in everything he does.

Stephen, who received a Master of Science and a Ph.D. in Physics from NMSU, spent 39 years teaching Physics and Astronomy at YSU in Ohio. While at YSU, he received several awards including four Distinguished Professorship Awards, the YSU Centurion's Outstanding Professor Award, two Student Services Awards, and two Faculty Service Awards issued by the Faculty Association. Stephen served as Chairman of the Physics and Astronomy Department for five years and was appointed by the president of YSU to become the university's first director of Faculty Relations. A native of Hungary, Stephen returned to that country in 1994 as a J. William Fulbright Scholar and taught one semester at the University of Veszprém.

"NMSU gave me an opportunity to finish my graduate studies and prepared me for a successful career as a professor at Youngstown State University," he says.

After his retirement from YSU in 2002, Stephen started volunteering for Habitat for Humanity of Mahoning County, Ohio; first swinging a hammer at construction sites, later becoming president of the Board of Directors and interim executive director. He also served as principal grant writer and succeeded in securing \$1.5 million in funds for the local Habitat affiliate. While attending a Habitat for Humanity International conference, he had the good fortune of being photographed with former President and Mrs. Jimmy Carter at their Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, Georgia. His work with Habitat for Humanity was truly recognized when he received the State of Ohio Habitat Volunteer of the Year Award in 2009.

As refugees from Hungary and former international students themselves, Stephen and his wife Brigitta feel a moral obligation to find some way to repay the generosity that they were afforded upon their arrival in the United States. The couple has supported NMSU financially since the late 1960s, and in 2012 they established the Dr. Stephen and Brigitta Hanzély Endowed Scholarship. The endowment provides financial assistance to undergraduate students, including international students, majoring in Physics at NMSU.

NMSU Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni 2016 College of Business

Loren R. Cook



When Loren R. Cook enrolled at NMSU, he wanted to do something that sounded exciting like architecture, but he settled on accounting, something a little more structured at his Dad Glenn's recommendation. Loren worked hard, graduated in 1986 and got a job. Loren realized that he longed for something different from an accounting career, so after working two years in Public Accounting for Elms Faris & Co and three years in financial reporting at El Paso Electric, he returned to NMSU to work as a teaching assistant and earned a Master's Degree in accounting, focusing on Federal taxation.

It was during his second stint at NMSU when Loren discovered that tax was really about public policy, which was something he found very interesting. Loren applied to Law School at the recommendation of his graduate school mentor Dr. Peter Dillaway and he was accepted to Thurgood Marshall School of Law. Loren worked as a Controller for an international freight forwarding company and as CFO for an oil and gas services company while he earned his Law degree. After Law School, the sky was the limit for Loren, who said he and his siblings found success in work ethic and discipline because of the influence of their parents, Glenn and Eleanor.

In 1996, Loren founded a consulting law firm and a separate accounting firm with a focus on cradle to grave business and tax planning for entrepreneurs. Cook Legal Group, LLLP and CTH Partners, LLLP, are a business consulting firms that secures and maximize client assets by providing personalized and in-depth legal structuring and tax consulting services. Utilizing work experiences, combined with all he learned from NMSU and the Thurgood Marshall School of Law, Loren provides clients with proven practices, and new insights to preserve accumulated wealth, including structuring businesses and other financial situations and minimizing tax obligations and potential controversies. Loren's success is apparent in the growth of his professional services firms, which he has grown to three offices, 27 employees and over 2,000 clients.

"I believe I am successful in business because of many reasons, and I have a lot of people to thank. NMSU is one of those reasons, and I owe a lot of thanks to the University and the people within it," Loren says.

Because Loren enjoys working with entrepreneurs and has a passion for teaching others a bit of what he has learned, he mentors four young business owners in the Houston area as well as Aggies who pursue internships and careers in the Houston area.

Loren is married to Paula and the couple has four children: Abbey, Connor, Madeline, and Olivia. Together the couple established the Loren and Paula Cook Current Use Scholarship, which benefits the Masters of Accountancy program, as well as a permanent scholarship endowment for accounting students. They have been contributors to numerous scholarships over the years including the Jim Bullock Accounting Scholarship; Lionel Haight Accounting Scholarship; President's Associates Scholarship; and the President's Excellence Scholarship.

NMSU Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni 2016

College of Education

Amy B. Heil



Amy B. Heil began her journey at NMSU when she received two Bachelor's Degrees in 1996, double-majoring in Criminal Justice and Psychology. In 2008, she completed graduate studies at NMSU and earned a Specialist Degree in Education in School Psychology. Amy is currently a forensic interviewer at Phoenix Children's Hospital, and serves as an expert witness throughout the state of Arizona in judicial proceedings regarding child abuse cases.

Amy's professional excellence is driven by her chosen role as a child advocate. She has combined knowledge from each discipline related to each degree she earned at NMSU—criminal justice, psychology, and school psychology—to shape a noteworthy career. Amy spent nearly a decade working with the Doña Ana County District Attorney's Office screening child sexual abuse investigations, creating a program in the juvenile crime unit, and assisting crime victims as their cases were being prosecuted and working their way through the criminal justice system. She also worked with New Mexico and Arizona public schools as a school psychologist. It was in 2013 that Amy began working on the Child Protection Team at Phoenix Children's Hospital. Her role requires her interview children for law enforcement when they have possibly been victims and/or witnesses of a crime, including cases of sexual and physical abuse, homicide, neglect, and kidnappings.

As an advocate for children, promoter of self-care among her colleagues, and a trainer for law enforcement in the field of child abuse, Amy says, "I have a specific job. I am just one spoke in the wheel of this difficult process. My role is to let a child feel comfortable enough to tell me what happened, giving them a voice. I am incredibly proud in my small role in their lives."

Amy is an avid supporter of the NMSU Alumni Association Phoenix Chapter, working closely with the chapter to raise money for NMSU student scholarships, and provide a venue for new graduates from NMSU to feel like they have a group to connect with when they relocate. She is also passionate about speaking to college students interested in school psychology and criminal justice, and is scheduled to return to NMSU for a speaking engagement this fall.

NMSU Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni 2016
College of Engineering

Colin P. Cahoon



Colin P. Cahoon earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in chemical engineering from NMSU, then immediately began a career of service as an officer and helicopter pilot in the US Army, where he served with distinction as an Aero-Scout Platoon leader and Assistant Airfield Operations Officer.

After leaving the Army, Colin attended the Southern Methodist University (SMU) School of Law, where he served on the editorial board for the SMU Air Law Journal. Colin graduated from SMU in 1991, second in his class with cum laude and Order of the Coif honors. From there, Colin started his second career as a patent lawyer and co-founder of Carstens & Cahoon LLP, now one of the largest intellectual property firms in the southwest.

In his professional career, Colin has spearheaded his firm's diversity efforts with an emphasis on bringing more women and minorities to the practice of law by, for example, monetarily supporting numerous nonprofit commerce organizations, professional minority law organizations, and events. Because of his efforts, half of Carstens & Cahoon patent lawyers and agents are minorities, a figure well above the national average.

Colin's dedication to NMSU is genetic, both parents met at NMSU where his father later graduated with a degree in electrical engineering. His maternal grandfather, Dr. A.D. Boston, former dean of the NMSU College of Arts and Sciences, introduced Colin to campus with frequent chemistry lab tours and regular attendance at NMSU basketball games. Colin's paternal grandmother earned two degrees from NMSU, and his younger brother, Dr. Joel Cahoon, is also a graduate of the College of Engineering.

Colin continues to support NMSU, most significantly by establishing the Colin and Susan Cahoon Chemical Engineering Endowment in 2005. "So much of my success in life comes from the education I received and experience I gained as a student at NMSU. I feel it is important to pay the university back for the benefits I have received, and ensure that current and future students can take advantage of the same opportunities."

Colin is an inventor in his own right, with four issued US patents and one patent pending in his name. He is also an avid writer and celebrated the recent publication of his novel, "The Man with the Black Box," which was released to enthusiastic reviews in August.

NMSU Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni 2016
College of Health and Social Services

John E. Scarbrough



John E. Scarbrough received his Doctor of Philosophy in nursing from NMSU in 2010, and is currently leading the Western New Mexico University Nursing Program into a successful future as associate dean.

After serving as assistant professor of nursing at NMSU from 2008 to 2010, John went on to teach at the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) in Galveston, Texas. He returned again to NMSU in 2013 to teach in the School of Nursing undergraduate and graduate programs.

While at NMSU, John served on the College of Health and Social Services Research Committee; as President of Sigma Theta Tau, Pi Omega Chapter; and on the NMSU Curriculum Design Committee. John often returns to his nursing roots as a Ph.D. student and assistant professor, and has

demonstrated excellence in leadership in the NMSU School on Nursing. Serving as a role model specifically for male students who have chosen nursing as their profession, John is often available to mentor and support them.

John has taken an active role assisting graduate students with career and educational development, and serves as a mentor for the New American Nursing Association mentorship program. Because of his dedication to student success, John established a current use scholarship in the NMSU School of Nursing to honor his own mentor, his mother.

John has a true dedication to community and is committed to volunteering with community programs that focus on the health of the community. He volunteers with programs that organize annual flu-shot clinics and he is involved with the NMSU Wellness Fair and Junior League KidFit as a faculty liaison.

To share his expertise, John serves as the president of Sigma Theta Tau International, NMSU Chapter; president and member of the Undergraduate Selection Committee at UTMB Galveston; member of the New Mexico Nursing Education Consortium Leadership Committee; and member of the NM Board of Nursing, Nursing Education Advisory Committee.

John has been a committed scholar in a practice-oriented professional setting, and as an educator to professionals and students. John recalls his proudest moments and what motivates him to continue having such an impact in nursing, “When students, who felt that they would never be successful or feared their inability to become nurses, graduate and eventually move on to advanced practice roles. They call, text, and email to tell me of their successes, and this gives my life an awful lot of meaning.”