MSU recognizes top alumni and friends at 2018 Alumni Grand Awards Gala

Members of the Michigan State University College of Engineering community were among those honored at the 2018 Grand Awards Gala on Nov. 9 at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center.

The Philanthropist of the Year Award went to College of Engineering supporter and friend John Reed Koza. Koza has committed $12.7 million to MSU Engineering and the BEACON Center for the Study of Evolution in Action. It is the largest individual gift in the college's history.

Listen to John Reed Koza on his commitment to MSU.

Koza is a computer scientist, entrepreneur, professor, ‘father of genetic programming’ and a Spartan benefactor. He has been a consulting professor in the departments of Medicine and Electrical Engineering at Stanford University since 1988. He is author of four books on genetic programming. The focus of his research is on automatically solving problems using a minimum of human-supplied information. He was co-founder, chairman and CEO of Scientific Games Inc., where he co-invented the rub-off instant lottery ticket used by state lotteries.

The Philanthropist of the Year Award is presented to individuals, families, associations, corporations or foundations with proven records of providing major, on-going financial support and leadership to MSU. Candidates have demonstrated outstanding philanthropic responsibility toward MSU, and their generosity encourages others to take leadership roles in philanthropy toward MSU.

Alumni Service Awards were presented to two Spartan Engineers for their demonstrated continuing outstanding volunteer service to MSU and/or meritorious public service on a local, state, national or international level. The recipients were:

• Marc Sherwood Conlin ('69, Engineering), personnel manager for MSU's Department of Physics and Astronomy. He began his career with MSU's Department of Physics and Astronomy in 1969 as a student stockroom manager and went on to become its administrative assistant and business operations manager before assuming his current role. Once the student manager, Marc served as staff adviser for MSU's campus radio station, WDBM, and was
responsible for obtaining its FM station license.

For his outstanding service and performance, Conlin received the MSU Jack Breslin Distinguished Staff Award in 2009 and twice received the MSU Department of Physics and Astronomy Distinguished Staff Award (1998 and 2014).

Listen to Mark Conlin.

• Elizabeth Anne Shanahan ('78, electrical engineering), an associate vice president for Administration and Operations at DePaul University. Before joining DePaul University, Shanahan was a consultant to MSU's executive vice president for Administrative Services. For nearly 12 years, she served as executive director and CEO of the 20,000-member Society of Women
Engineers, helping make a critical impact on the recruitment and advancement of women in the profession. She spent the 24 years prior in development, engineering management and marketing management for the electronics and software industries.

Upon graduating from MSU, Shanahan became the first female engineer employed at Data General Corporation. She was awarded the 2010 Claud R. Erickson Distinguished Alumni Award from the MSU College of Engineering and in 2013, received an Honorary Doctor of Science degree from the University of Connecticut.

Listen to Elizabeth Shanahan.

Read more on the 2018 Alumni Grand Awards.

Related Website: Story courtesy of MSUToday.
Communications contact: Patricia Mroczek

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