



PRESS RELEASE

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2024 Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters Fellows Awarded

sixteen extraordinary Wisconsinites honored for their contributions to the state

Madison, Wisconsin - The Wisconsin Academy is honored to announce the awarding of the 2024 Fellows Award to 16 extraordinary Wisconsinites with high levels of accomplishment in their fields who have demonstrated a lifelong commitment to intellectual discourse and public service. Since 1982, the Wisconsin Academy Fellows Award recognizes educators, researchers, mentors, artists, and civic or business leaders from across Wisconsin who have made substantial contributions to the cultural life and welfare of our state and its people. Being selected as a Fellow is the highest recognition conferred by the Wisconsin Academy. Honorees will receive their award at a ceremony in September of 2024, location and date TBD.

The 2024 Class of Fellows includes activist and educator Dr. Howard Fuller; artist, writer, and curator Michelle Grabner; journalist and producer Steve Paulson; artist and educator Faisal Abdu'Allah; poet, novelist, and playwright Amy Quan Barry; writer, artist, and activist Anne Basting; geographer, inventor, and professor Dr. Brady Foust; hydrogeologist and mentor Dr. Kenneth Bradbury; transplant surgery educator, activist, and provider Dr. Anthony D'Alessandro; Haudenosaunee beader and educator Karen Ann Hoffman; Ho-Chunk leader, Judge JoAnn F. Jones; geographer and writer Dr. Mrill Ingram; playwright, actor, and director Marie Kohler; interviewer and media personality Anne Strainchamps; artist, author, and geneticist and cell biologist Dr. Ahna Skop; and nonprofit leader and environmental advocate David Ullrich.

"The Academy Fellows award honors Wisconsin citizens who through their creativity, their scholarship, and their commitment to the state have enriched all of our lives. By recognizing their contributions to Wisconsin and the world beyond, we seek to inspire others to follow in their footsteps," says Robert Mathieu, Fellows Committee Chair.

These 16 Fellows are being honored for their profound contributions to the state of Wisconsin:

Dr. Howard Fuller

Dr. Howard Fuller has committed his life to activism and educational reform, specifically serving Black children from low-income backgrounds. He was born in Shreveport, LA. He moved to Milwaukee with his mother at a young age, where he emerged as a gifted student, athlete, and leader. He played basketball and served as student body president at Carroll College (now University). He was the only Black student at Carroll when he enrolled there in 1958. He is the first Black male to graduate from Carroll. He went on to earn a master's degree from Western Reserve University (now Case Western Reserve) and a doctoral degree from Marquette University. His experiences in his youth enabled him to "... see all races as equals, hate income disparity and choose civil and human rights activism as the only career" for him. Dr. Fuller spent his early career years as a community organizer in North Carolina. He worked in community action programs that were created by the Economic Opportunity Act, which was a part of President Lyndon Johnson's effort to attack poverty in the United States. Returning to Milwaukee in 1976, he has spent the past four decades in Wisconsin tirelessly committed to improving outcomes for the Black community, especially for children from low-income backgrounds. In 2004, Dr. Fuller along with 8 Black Faith Leaders founded a 9-12 Christian high school (CEO Leadership Academy) to serve mostly low-income Black students living on the Northside of Milwaukee. The school was originally a part of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, a state-funded voucher program in Milwaukee. In 2011, the school became a tuition-free, non-profit, public charter high school open to all students in the city of Milwaukee. In 2019 the school was named after Dr. Fuller. Since 2012 the Dr. Howard Fuller Collegiate Academy has had a 100% college acceptance rate for its graduating seniors.

Michelle Grabner

Artist, writer, and curator Michelle Grabner is an internationally known cultural powerhouse who has remained committed to her Wisconsin origins, nurturing local artistic communities and celebrating the state's craft traditions. As an artist, she works in multiple media - in drawing, painting, video, and sculpture. Much of her art draws on the repetitive, and meditative, nature of patterns found in the craft traditions of Wisconsin and foregrounds domestic work and objects, honoring all of the unseen labor that attends everyday existence. She shows her work internationally, in museums and art fairs, with several galleries, including James Cohan and Milwaukee's Green Gallery, but is fiercely committed to her Wisconsin-based studio practice and community. She most recently curated an exhibition on painting for the Milwaukee Art Museum. In addition, Grabner runs two spaces in Wisconsin – The Suburban in Milwaukee and The Poor Farm in Waupaca. Both of these act as regional, experimental incubators for contemporary art and artists – connecting Wisconsin to a national art conversation. Grabner is a 2021 Guggenheim Fellow and a National Academician in the National Academy of Design and is currently the chair of the Painting and Drawing Department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Like her artistic practice, Grabner finds inspiration and resiliency on the edges of the dominant. She has remained a steadfast Wisconsinite, insistent that a renowned and deserving artistic life can be found in the Midwest. She brings people in, establishing a rich claim to Wisconsin's identity, here and now.

Steve Paulson

Steve Paulson is a curious journalist and co-creator and executive producer of the Peabody

Award-winning show “To the Best of Our Knowledge,” a nationally syndicated radio show produced by Wisconsin Public Radio that has been a cornerstone of Wisconsin’s intellectual landscape for more than 30 years. Paulson recently started another podcast series entitled “Luminous,” which explores the philosophical and cultural implications of psychedelics through conversations with scientists, healers, and religious scholars. He is an avid writer, contributing to *Nautilus* magazine, a New York-based science magazine that connects science to its impacts on culture and our daily lives. Paulson also contributes to the publicization of scientific research through his moderation of the International Forum on Consciousness, an annual conference focused on exploring dimensions of consciousness. He has served as a vanguard in public media, continually elevating the standards of discourse and understanding.

Faisal Abdu’Allah

Faisal Abdu’Allah is an influential British and Afro-Caribbean artist and educator at the University of Wisconsin-Madison who enriches Wisconsin’s cultural landscape with thought-provoking art that bridges diverse communities. His work, deeply influenced by his Islamic faith and British upbringing, challenges and expands cultural narratives. His notable works like “The Last Supper” and “Silent Witness” showcase artistic brilliance and foster crucial dialogues on identity, faith, and race. In Wisconsin, Abdu’Allah has significantly contributed to the arts and academic community. His role as an educator has shaped the perspectives of numerous students, encouraging them to explore complex social themes through art. His exhibitions in Wisconsin have served as vital platforms for cultural exchange and understanding, showcasing his commitment to inclusive art that speaks to diverse audiences.

Amy Quan Barry

Amy Quan Barry is a decorated poet, novelist, playwright, and the Lorraine Hansberry Professor of English at UW-Madison. Barry is the author of eight books of fiction and poetry and a full-length staged theater production. Born in Saigon and raised on the north shore of Boston, she spent summers with her grandparents at the northern tip of Door County next to the ferry landing that serves Washington Island. Barry’s work is fueled by fearless curiosity and her orbit has spanned all seven continents. Her upbringing and travels—Saigon to Boston, Antarctica to Mongolia, and beyond—metamorphose into literature that ranges wildly from one publication to the next, but all of her works involve complex journeys toward what it means to be human. With poetic lyricism and sharp wit she activates themes of race, identity, colonialism, patriarchy, misogyny, climate disaster, displacement, spirituality, physics, mythology, pop culture...the whole of life in question and at hand. Barry is one of a select group of writers to receive an NEA fellowship for both poetry and fiction. While her work has garnered national and international audiences and has earned her multiple literary honors and residencies, her impact can be felt most acutely here in Wisconsin through her deep commitment to her students and community as she has helped to maintain the reputation of the MFA program in Creative Writing and Wisconsin Institute of Creative Writing as one of the most well-regarded programs in the country. Writer in Residence at Forward Theatre, Amy has also served on their Advisory Board as the company continues to expand their vision towards evermore diverse and underrepresented voices.

Anne Basting

Anne Basting is a writer, artist, and activist for the power of creativity to change lives by inviting

people of all ages and abilities into the creative process. She works with artists and non-artists collaboratively to create plays, stories, and art projects. A Professor of English at UW-Milwaukee, she is also the Founder of the award-winning nonprofit Timeslips, which for 25 years has helped bring meaning and purpose into the lives of elders and their care partners through creative engagement. TimeSlips has created a global movement to train, inspire, and support caregivers to infuse creativity into care. Her writing and large-scale public performances extend creative and meaningful expression from childhood, where it is expected, to late life, where it is too often withheld. Basting has worked to infuse creative engagement into nearly every aging care system, including Meals on Wheels, libraries, home care companies, senior centers, memory cafes, adult day programs, and long-term care facilities. She is the author of four books, many articles, and over a dozen plays and public performances, including *Beyond Memory*, a large-scale production in which Basting and TimeSlips brought the Creative Community of Care organizational training to 50 nursing homes throughout the state of Wisconsin. Basting's impact on the power and potential of creative meaning-making practices to change the experience of aging has also been recognized through many grants and awards, including being named UW-Milwaukee's first MacArthur "Genius" Fellow in 2016.

Dr. Brady Foust

Dr. Brady Foust is a geographer, inventor, professor, and patron of arts who has revolutionized insurance geospatial databases, patented new technology, served as a professor at UW-Eau Claire for 37 years, and was president and patron of the Pablo Center at the Confluence in Eau Claire, WI. As a scientist specializing in geography, Dr. Foust utilized his understanding of geographic information systems to revolutionize how data could best support insurance coverage, ensuring the most up-to-date information for all. Dr. Foust's work at QMSoft helped spur the initial geospatial underwriting processes for the likes of State Farm, Travelers, and The Hartford. As an inventor, he changed the way geospatial databases update information to be near real-time. This effort, in conjunction with his team at HazardHub—the company he co-founded—allowed him to patent his work. As a professor, Dr. Foust dedicated 37 years to the Department of Geography at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, where he taught thousands of students—and later founded HazardHub—with two of them. As a patron of the arts, Dr. Foust played an instrumental role in the formation of the Pablo Center at the Confluence. Dr. Foust has also financially supported the literary arts throughout the Eau Claire area, supporting Barstow & Grand literary journal, the Chippewa Valley Book Festival, and the expansion of the L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library. In addition to his philanthropic efforts, he also served as the Pablo Center's board president throughout the COVID years.

Dr. Kenneth Bradbury

Dr. Kenneth Bradbury is a nationally recognized hydrogeologist, mentor, and coordinating force for bringing together diverse communities to advance better management of Wisconsin's groundwater resources. His entire career was spent with the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey (WGNHS) where he served as Director and State Geologist for 7 years. At the WGNHS, he also conducted numerous research projects addressing groundwater issues of concern to the citizens of Wisconsin and has used those applied research projects to make substantial contributions to the science of hydrogeology. Through his work, he has advanced understanding of the hydrogeology of fractured aquifers, aquitard hydrogeology, groundwater recharge processes, and virus transport in groundwater systems. Dr. Bradbury's contributions to science also extend to the scientific community, where he serves as a mentor for students,

young professionals, and the overall hydrogeologic community of Wisconsin. He also serves on numerous formal committees that address the groundwater needs of the state and nation; his work on national problems is represented by the report of the committee he chaired for the National Academies on groundwater systems at regional and national scales where the case is made for the importance of conducting regional scale groundwater studies that transcend local political boundaries. Through his leadership and knowledge of hydrogeology, Dr. Bradbury has made lasting contributions to the nation's knowledge of its essential groundwater resources.

Dr. Anthony D'Alessandro

Dr. Anthony D'Alessandro has dedicated nearly four decades to transplant surgery, education, and advocacy, profoundly impacting Wisconsin's medical community. His tenure includes transformative roles such as Director of the UW Health Adult and Pediatric Liver Transplant Programs and Medical Director for UW Organ and Tissue Donation. He has been instrumental in shaping national policies on organ donation, which have directly benefited the people of Wisconsin by improving organ donation systems and processes. His commitment to the field is exemplified by his receipt of the Association of Organ Procurement Organizations' Lifetime Achievement Award, a testament to his far-reaching influence. Dr. D'Alessandro's work has saved lives and heightened the quality of life for transplant recipients and their families. His legacy includes the cultivation of a robust organ donation culture in Wisconsin, which ensures ongoing support for those in need of life-saving transplants.

Karen Ann Hoffman

Karen Ann Hoffman is a Haudenosaunee raised beader from Stevens Point. A citizen of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, she creates objects of great beauty and cultural significance that reflect Haudenosaunee understandings and honor generational legacies. Hoffman began her artistic journey in the 1990s, learning from artists Samuel Thomas and his mother Lorna Hill, members of the Lower Cayuga Band of the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory in Ontario. Over her 25 years of practicing Haudenosaunee beadwork, Hoffman's focus has evolved to primarily make objects that arise from traditional forms, that incorporate traditional stories and imagery, that are infused with Haudenosaunee understandings of the world, but that are otherwise entirely new. For example, she is the first beader to develop the beaded urn form; Her "Wampum Urn" is now in the permanent collection of the National Museum of the American Indian. Also unique to her beading is her deep infusion of narrative elements through which she shares her deep cultural knowledge. She advocates for Indigenous arts and statewide arts programming through her Wisconsin Arts Board membership. Over the past ten years, she has expanded her practice to include teaching Haudenosaunee beadwork through the Arts Board's Folk Arts Apprenticeship program and individual classes and most recently has begun curating exhibitions of Native art to provide a platform for her fellow artists. Through her work, Karen is extending this art form in highly creative ways, reimagining existing forms to expand their meaning and significance while also building community and supporting other artists.

Judge JoAnn F. Jones

The honorable Judge JoAnn F. Jones is an outstanding Ho-Chunk woman whose leadership, service, and humanitarian qualities have inspired her to become a champion of tribal sovereignty and a bridge builder in cross-cultural understanding. With her political science and social work background, she was destined to be a leader. Judge Jones channeled her energy

toward attaining her law degree where her skills were fully utilized. Early education began at a mission school, an Indian boarding school and rural public high school. With a grounding in Ho-Chunk values and citizenship, her dedication to country and service was evidenced by her service in the U.S. Air Force. After life in urban settings, Judge Jones was approached by elders and leaders to run for tribal office. She was elected and served on the business committee of the Winnebago tribe. It was through her leadership that the tribe asserted their tribal sovereignty and changed the tribal constitution to become formally known as Ho-Chunk Nation. A new era of challenges, economic stability, and prosperity began as JoAnn Jones became the first and only female President of Ho-Chunk Nation. A new department of health and social services evolved, along with an expanded Ho-Chunk language preservation office. In the new government, President Jones helped to shape a tribal court system. Through her leadership, the Traditional Court was developed. The court consists of male Clan leaders who provide counsel and guidance to all. Most recently Judge Jones led the process to create a Peacemakers Court composed of leaders from Traditional Court and Clan Mothers from the Social Services Department. With an approach of service in action and humility, she has provided expert testimony to protect the rights of Ho-Chunk children and families. Through social justice campaigns, economic development, and social services initiatives, she has been a voice for tribal sovereignty. Judge Jones has been a bridge to improving cultural relations throughout the lands.

Dr. Mrill Ingram

As an environmental geographer, Dr. Mrill Ingram reaches across Wisconsin's landscapes, connecting the farm field to the street terrace, to champion creative environmental action. The arc of Dr. Ingram's career embraces sustainable agriculture, academic collaboration, progressive media, and community-based research. Across these diverse settings, Dr. Ingram utilizes science and the arts to connect marginalized perspectives and empower all with high-quality information for making sound environmental decisions. Her cross-disciplinary writing and engagements expand ideological boundaries and include diverse perspectives to center equity and build creative, compassionate solutions to environmental challenges. Dr. Ingram's book, *Loving Orphaned Space: the art and science of belonging to Earth*, (2022) won the J.B. Jackson Prize from the American Association of Geographers for work that encourages Americans to look thoughtfully at the human geography of their own country, to understand how that geography came to be, and how to actively engage as citizens. Dr. Ingram offers the concept of "orphaning" of space as a way to revise infrastructure and our relationships with Earth to create welcoming, biodiverse, generative places everywhere we live. Dr. Ingram's long-time work with Wisconsin farmers focuses on the social networks that build trust and support people in improving environmental practices. She currently serves as a participatory action research scientist for the Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, and as a community restoration consultant for Madison's BT Farms regenerative housing project, employing a strong public participation process to bring together neighborhood resilience, food sovereignty, ecological restoration, and environmental justice. Her creative thinking and embrace of the arts reimagine intransigent problems and offer creative and practical solutions for a generous and sustaining world welcoming to all.

Marie Kohler

Marie Kohler has significantly contributed to the theater arts in Wisconsin as an actor, playwright, director, artistic director, producer, and entrepreneur. Her efforts as Co-Founder of

Renaissance Theaterworks exist on a continuum of Kohler's lifelong love of theater's power to tell transformative human stories. That began when her mother took her to all of Sheboygan's Community Players' productions (along with all the others she could get tickets for!). The connection to theater grew in high school where she founded the school's first theater club. It expanded further while studying and performing theater at Harvard University, where she graduated Magna Cum Laude in English Literature. And it fully blossomed after she settled in Milwaukee, where she raised two daughters, earned an MA at UW-Milwaukee, and worked professionally for years as a freelance journalist and actor. Then, in 1993, along with four like-minded women, Kohler co-founded Renaissance Theaterworks, where she served as Co-Artistic Director and Resident Playwright for twenty years. The company's mission, hiring patterns, and play selection created a theatrical ecosystem in Wisconsin that cultivates professional work for women – both on stage and off. This was unparalleled in regional theater. (In fact, Renaissance is the second oldest theater company in the U.S. that focuses on gender parity.) It's still going strong. At Renaissance, Kohler's playwriting career flourished, earning popular and critical acclaim for her plays, as well as nominations for multiple local and national awards, including two for the prestigious Susan Smith Blackburn Prize. Her credits include three published plays, a production at Edinburgh's Fringe Festival, and a sold-out Off-Broadway run. Kohler's service to theater and other arts includes the Regional Kennedy Center American College Theater Festivals, the Wisconsin Humanities Council, and the University of Wisconsin-Parkside's Arts & Humanities Advisory Board. She is proud to have been named "Artist of the Year" and "Friend to the Arts" by the Milwaukee Arts Board. She also helps support performing arts groups, social service organizations, and, serving her passion for the environment, land conservation and freshwater science projects throughout our state.

Anne Strainchamps

Anne Strainchamps is an eminent media personality and co-creator and host of the Peabody Award-winning show "To the Best of Our Knowledge," a nationally syndicated radio show produced by Wisconsin Public Radio that has been a cornerstone of Wisconsin's intellectual landscape for more than 30 years. Through this program, Strainchamps shines while exploring a wide range of topics via a variety of in-depth interviews with thought-provoking guests. Her interviewing and moderation skills have taken her to many stages across the country where she has had the opportunity to speak with key thought leaders from a variety of fields. Strainchamps has encouraged listeners to engage with ideas and issues critically and empathetically, shaping Wisconsin's cultural fabric through her efforts.

Dr. Ahna Skop

Dr. Ahna Skop is an internationally known geneticist and cell biologist, artist, author, and a vigorous ambassador for women in science. Dr. Skop received a Bachelor of Science in Biology and minored in Ceramics from Syracuse University in 1994, and a PhD in Cell & Molecular Biology from UW-Madison in 2000. After a postdoc at UC-Berkeley, she joined the Laboratory of Genetics at UW-Madison in 2004 where her lab studies how cells divide and communicate, knowing that failures in this process can lead to cancer, microcephaly, and neurodegenerative disease. Her lab focuses on a newly appreciated RNA-based organelle called the midbody that may play a role in the spread of cancer. Dr. Skop and her lab have also demonstrated a commitment to the accessibility and communication of science through art. She mentors art and life sciences communication student projects to make science approachable and fun. She recently published a coloring book about genetics and model organism use in science that

complements her 40-ft scientific art installation called “Genetic Reflections” in the UW-Madison Biotech Center. Dr. Skop is also a passionate advocate for the historically marginalized and women in science through her current and past national service with SACNAS, ASCB Minority Affairs Committee, UW-Madison campus efforts, and social media.

David Ullrich

Dave Ullrich’s career of over 50 years in public service, non-profit leadership, and volunteer work has led to significant improvements in the Wisconsin environment. After growing up amidst the lakes and forests of Northern Wisconsin and earning a law degree from the University of Wisconsin, Ullrich dedicated his life to the protection and restoration of the planet, with an emphasis on Wisconsin. Ullrich successfully integrated the personalities and skills of engineers, scientists, government agency staff, and elected officials, into a cooperative and collaborative approach to addressing major environmental challenges. Upon receiving his law degree in 1973, Ullrich embarked on an illustrious career with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). His initial contributions included developing Clean Water Act permits for pollution reduction for seventeen pulp and paper mills on the Wisconsin River. In 2003, Ullrich began to apply his environmental expertise in the non-profit sector as the first Executive Director of The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (Cities Initiative). From representing just fifteen cities at the start, the Cities Initiative quickly became a strong voice for 130 cities with a combined population of over 17 million people. As a Trustee at Northland College for several years, Ullrich brings the depth of his experience in environmental and sustainability work to the Northland board’s deliberations. Dave also serves on the advisory board of the Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service (WIPPS), an affiliate organization of the University of Wisconsin System. Ullrich has also dedicated himself to integrating the arts and sciences. Camp Manitowish in Boulder Junction has been an important part of Ullrich’s life since his childhood. It was also important to his late wife, Polly Ullrich, who died in 2011 in a tragic automobile accident. As a fitting memorial to Polly, Ullrich and his son Eric have endowed the Arts and Crafts Center at the Camp to help underscore the importance of integrating art with the outdoor experience that young people receive. In addition, Dave has endowed a scholarship with the Manito Art League that recognizes young artists from Northern Wisconsin and supports them in their pursuit of a higher education.

Read more about the Wisconsin Academy Fellows Award at:
<https://www.wisconsinacademy.org/fellows>

**The Letters category is broadly defined and meant to include writers, poets, storytellers, historians, lawyers, philosophers, and those who study or apply language to inform, inspire, or communicate ideas with others.*

About the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters

The Wisconsin Academy creates opportunities for people to connect, learn, and collaborate to improve Wisconsin life through a variety of experiences and events in the sciences, arts, and letters. The Wisconsin Academy showcases contemporary Wisconsin art at the James Watrous Gallery, examines science and culture in *Wisconsin People & Ideas* magazine, and explores pathways to a sustainable future through its Climate and Energy Initiative. Academy Courses and public talks provide opportunities to learn and explore, while making connections with

curious and creative people across Wisconsin. The Academy recognizes excellence through the annual Fiction & Poetry Awards and Fellows Awards for leadership in and across disciplines. We also support the Wisconsin Poet Laureate and many other endeavors that help the Academy create a better world by connecting Wisconsin people and ideas.

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