2014 Laura J. Kraska Awards

Disability Services is pleased to again partner with the Kraska family to present the Laura J. Kraska Award and Scholarship to three high-achieving students with visual impairments. This award is named after Laura Kraska, who received two degrees from Ball State - a Bachelor’s degree in 1990 and her Master’s in 1993 in Information and Communication Studies. Laura’s legacy at Ball State lives on through a generous gift provided by her father Tom, his wife Kathleen, and Laura’s siblings, Kristen and Tim.

The Kraska Award is given to those with visual impairments who have excelled in the classroom and have been involved in the Ball State community. The three students receiving this award this year received a scholarship for the upcoming year as well as a nice commemorative plaque. The Kraska family attended the Disability Services awards program on April 8 to present the awards to this year’s recipients.

**Tim Allison** is a senior Entrepreneurial Management major with a 3.8 GPA. He is a member of the Delta Sigma Pi professional business fraternity as well as a senator with the Student Government Association. Tim has also been involved with Martial Arts Club, Economics Club, University Review Board, and the College Entrepreneurs Finance Society.

**Alex Gilland** is a sophomore Telecommunications (Audio Production) major with a 3.6 GPA. Alex has been actively involved with WCRD Productions during his time at Ball State, including Cardinal Sports Link, Indiana Outdoors, and BSU Tonight. During his freshman year, Alex was involved with the Faculty Mentorship Program.

**Preston Radtke** is a sophomore Public Relations major with a 3.9 GPA. He currently serves as the Issues and Facilities Director for the Residence Hall Association as well as a member of the Public Relations Student Society of America. In addition to writing his own blog, Preston has also served as a back-up feature writer for the Ball State Daily News.

2014 Laura J. Kraska Award winners pictured with The Kraska Family (from left): Tim Allison, Tim Kraska, Kristen Schneider, Preston Radtke, Kathleen Kraska, Alex Gilland, and Tom Kraska.
David W. Amick: 2014 Harris-Rose Outstanding Alumnus Award

This year’s Harris-Rose Outstanding Alumnus Award winner is David W. Amick. The Harris-Rose Outstanding Alumnus Award is named after Disability Services’ Director Emeritus Richard Harris and alumnus Bruce Rose, who assisted Harris in transforming Ball State’s campus into the accessible place that it is today. The award is presented to an alumnus who has proven successful in life after Ball State.

David majored in Management Science with a concentration in Human Resources and graduated in 1978 with his Bachelor’s degree. David has said that his life changed on April 1, 1973, the day that he and his parents first met with Richard Harris to discuss being a Ball State student.

David is the Executive Director of the Premier Capital Corporation, a position he has held since April of 1994. Premier Capital Corporation serves the state of Indiana with a mission to create jobs by providing fixed asset financing with third-party lenders via the U.S. Small Business Administration’s loan program. David has been in the financial services industry for 30 years, the first 13 of which he spent working in various capacities at commercial banking institutions. In addition to his position, David serves as President of the Board of Directors of the Damien Center, Indiana’s largest HIV/AIDS organization. Last year, he received the Miller College of Business Outstanding Alumni Award.

Harris said in presenting Amick with the award, “The purpose of this award is to recognize people such as David who have accomplished so much and to present role models because currently there are not many role models for young people with disabilities. David is an outstanding representative for Ball State University.”

Adrienne Paige Gilbert Scholarship

Dustin Gilmer, a senior majoring in both Telecommunications and Journalism, has been selected as the 2014-2015 Adrienne Paige Gilbert Scholarship recipient. Dustin is the captain of the Ball State Power Soccer team and will lead the team in the national tournament this summer.

This scholarship was established by Kay and Jeff Gilbert in memory of their daughter, Adrienne Paige. Adrienne was born with Osteogenesis Imperfecta. She only lived for four months, but her life touched all who knew her. It is the Gilberts’ hope that this scholarship will allow others with disabilities to further their college education in honor of their daughter.

2014 Adrienne Paige Gilbert Scholarship winner Dustin Gilmer.
This is the sixth consecutive year that Disability Services has presented students with Fehribach Awards. The awards, named after alumni Greg Fehribach and his wife Mary Beth, are given to students who maintain high academic standards for themselves, while also being involved in the Ball State community outside of the classroom. Greg was elected as the student body president during his time as an undergraduate at Ball State and went on to serve as a member of the Board of Trustees. Greg is a prominent Indianapolis attorney as well as a national expert on ADA and accessibility issues. He is a Distinguished Fellow at Ball State’s Bowen Center in the Political Science department.

The recipients of the Fehribach Award receive a nice plaque as well as a cash reward. Greg and Mary Beth Fehribach attended the Disability Services awards program on April 8 to recognize the 2014 Fehribach award winners. Greg said in presenting the awards, “The students who are receiving these awards are in a sense turning over a new leaf, going from the early years to now searching for jobs and internships. Friends and family should also receive recognition for assisting in this process.”

**Jamie Barnes** is a senior Special Education major who maintains a 3.4 GPA. In addition to focusing on her studies, she is involved with Ball State Dance Marathon and helps coach Special Olympics. She also works 30-40 hours a week as a respite care provider at Bridges of Indiana. During her freshman year, Jamie was involved in the Faculty Mentorship Program, a program that pairs students with disabilities with a faculty mentor in their field of study.

**Kasey Herrington** is a senior Special Education major with a GPA of 3.6. Kasey has been involved with the Alliance for Disability Awareness as well as the Students for Education Reform. She has served as a personal care attendant, physical assistant, and note taker for students with disabilities. Kasey is also currently taking part in the Pathways to PhD program.

**Emmy Kaiser** is a graduate student, studying for her Master of Arts in Sports Psychology, with a 3.7 GPA. A 2012 Paralympian, Emmy is the #1 ranked women’s tennis player in the United States and does many presentations and demonstrations on wheelchair sports and the experiences of Paralympic athletes. Here at Ball State, Emmy has started a wheelchair basketball group with fellow Fehribach Award winner Sarah Sims for students with and without disabilities.

**Jacob Lipson** is a senior Theatre major with a 3.0 GPA. Jacob is the first Theatre major who is a wheelchair user at Ball State. He has written a play that has been read twice here on campus and continues to write many reviews for films and plays. As a freshman, Jacob took part in the Faculty Mentorship Program.

**Colin McIntire** is a junior Computer Science major. As a member of the Honors College, Colin maintains a 3.7 GPA. He is a member of the BSU Power Soccer Club, something he has been a part of for three years. Colin has travelled with the team to tournaments throughout the United States and plans to participate in the national tournament this summer.

**Sarah Sims** is a junior Social Work major with a 3.5 GPA. Sarah has been involved with both the Alliance for Disability Awareness and the Faculty Mentorship Program. She is a member of Grace Village Lutheran-Episcopal Campus Ministry and also worked there for a semester. Along with fellow Fehribach Award winner Emmy Kaiser, Sarah helped to start a wheelchair basketball group for students with and without disabilities.
Disability Services’ top student award, the Max Adamson Award, was presented to Alliance for Disability Awareness (ADA) President, Syd Comer. The Max Adamson Award is given every year to one student who excels academically, shows involvement on campus, and believes in creating access and opportunity for others. The award is named in honor of Max Adamson, a Ball State student from 1976-1975, who was instrumental in promoting accessibility at Ball State. Though he passed on several years ago, Max’s memory lives on in those who knew him.

Syd is a Journalism major graduating in Spring 2014. She has been a copy editor for the Ball State Daily News, worked with NewsLink Indiana, and has also contributed as a staff writer for Cardinal Life: Year in Review. She has served as the president of ADA for over two years, during which time she has helped to put on numerous successful programs. Syd has done much volunteer work during her time at Ball State and serves as a big sister for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Delaware County. In 2013, Syd was a contestant in the Miss Wheelchair Indiana pageant and also interned at the Spina Bifida Association of Kentucky.

Courtney Jarrett, Associate Director of Disability Services, who presented Syd with the award, said of Syd’s accomplishments, “Syd has been an excellent president of the Alliance for Disability Awareness for the last several years. She has also been a wonderful advocate for access both in the local Muncie community and her hometown. Syd is always at Awareness Month events and other events, sharing her story. She is talking. She is participating. You can find her in the Atrium talking to four or five different people about disability and access issues. She is very passionate about these things and it has been an honor and a privilege to work with her.”

We wish Syd the best of luck as she marries her fiancé, Nathan, this summer.

The Accessible Teacher Award is presented to a teacher who goes above and beyond to ensure accessibility to all students within the classroom environment. The recipient of this award is chosen by student nomination. This year’s recipient is Jennifer Blackmer of the Department of Theatre & Dance, nominated by Fehribach Award winner Jacob Lipson. Jacob is the first person in a wheelchair to complete a degree from the department, a task he says would not have been possible without Jennifer. Jacob said at the Disability Services awards program, “Jen was instrumental in demonstrating that in spite of all the access issues and everything that pervades theatre in general, there were enough things I could do here to make my choice of this major legitimate and worthwhile and convinced me that I could actually do something.”

Jennifer considers this not only a personal accomplishment, but an accomplishment for her entire department: “It is really our entire department that has helped to make this work,” Blackmer said in accepting the award. Theatre across the board does have accessibility issues, but we are working to fix that. I think just here at Ball State as well as across the nation if we get more artists with disabilities like Jake to tell their stories, a whole new world will open up to them.”
Ball State has a great number of faculty and staff outside of the Disability Services office who advocate for our students with disabilities and work diligently to make sure students with disabilities are appropriately accommodated. The Access Awards are presented to those who go above and beyond in working with students with disabilities and who help ensure that Ball State remains a welcoming and accessible environment for those with disabilities.

**Jackie Buckrop**, Assistant to the Provost, is a great ally for students with disabilities. Dr. Buckrop chaired the University Captioning Committee that set the captioning policies for the university. In 2013 she co-chaired the Electronic Access Task Force, a group of faculty and staff members who helped develop procedures and recommendations for ensuring access for students with disabilities in courses that are online or use elements of technology.

**Joe Hayes** is a maintenance worker in the Student Center, where the Disability Services’ office is located. Joe is incredibly helpful for students with disabilities and has assisted many students repair wheelchairs in an emergency. Joe is very generous with his time and expertise and really enjoys working with students with disabilities.

**Roger Lavery** is the Dean of the College of Communication, Information, and Media (CCIM), a college that has many students and alumni with disabilities. Dr. Lavery promotes access within the whole college for students with disabilities and is a strong supporter of Disability Services. Through his leadership, CCIM has co-sponsored many programs with Disability Services.

**Camille Mason**, Assistant Director at the Career Center, serves as the liaison there for students with disabilities. Camille is very enthusiastic in the work that she does, including facilitating the Workforce Recruitment Program, a program that pairs students with disabilities with internships in the federal sector, for the last three years. Several students who participate in this program are offered internships every year. This year, Camille and the Career Center also collaborated with Disability Services to organize a series of workshops to help students prepare for the Career Fair.

**Yasemin Tunc**, Assistant Vice President for Academic Solutions in Information Technology, oversees the Blackboard academic portal system for Ball State. Yasemin has taken the lead in working with faculty to ensure that they are using accessible technology in the courses they teach. Many professors administer exams through Blackboard, and since test accommodations are one of the biggest accommodations through the Disability Services office, Yasemin helps faculty in creating exams that provide the needed accommodations.

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**2014 Access Awards**

Leah [Boyle] Vickery passed away this past February. Many Ball State students became acquainted with Leah because of her important work with adaptive computer technology. Leah started her undergraduate degree at age twenty-six after losing her sight. She became an apt user of computers and helped to push the university toward providing tech opportunities for others with all types of disabilities. She was the first coordinator of the Adaptive Computer Technology program which has now enabled many BSU students to fuller independence and academic success. After leaving her university position, Leah worked for Cal State Northridge as well as consulting for many agencies throughout the country.

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**Sadly Noted...**
Don’t forget BSU’s Disability Services in your giving plans.

Funds donated are used for resources and equipment to enhance campus accessibility.

All Indiana taxpayers’ donations to BSU Foundation - 8603 are a 50 percent tax credit (a $100 gift costs only $50)!

The DS Communique is published once a semester by the Office of Disability Services for the students, faculty, alumni, staff, and friends of Ball State University.

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If you are a BSU/DS alumni and have news you would like to share with the readers of this newsletter, please drop us a line or two about anything you’d like us to know, such as accomplishments, events, or milestones. Please notify us about a change in address as well.

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