



# OUTREACH

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY MARRIOTT SCHOOL | ROMNEY INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT | SUMMER 2015

## SERVICE AS A CELEBRATION

MPA DAYS OF SERVICE GIVE BACK TO COMMUNITIES AROUND THE COUNTRY

Normally people throw a big party to celebrate a golden anniversary. The Marriott School MPA student association’s celebration of the MPA program’s fiftieth anniversary involved a lot more elbow grease and shoveling.

Their celebration took the form of the Romney Institute’s MPA Days of Service, which allowed those with ties to the program to give back in cities around the country. In March and April hundreds of MPA students, alumni, and faculty joined together in six cities to tackle projects from graffiti abatement to repainting fire hydrants.

Students in the MPA Association hoped each gathering would celebrate not only the program’s success but also the ideals of George W. Romney: “There is no substitute for one human being who cares enough about another . . . to get out and help him.”

Service projects were held in Mesa, Arizona; Orem; Provo; Sacramento, California; San Antonio; and Washington, DC. Nearly 150 volunteers attended the Provo and Orem projects, which were held 3 April at Paul Ream Wilderness Park and Nielsen’s Grove Park. Volunteers spread mulch, cleared under-



Alums Ryan Hendricks, Joel Jenks, and Scott Swindler at Graffiti Wipeout Day in San Antonio.

brush, and repainted benches at the two parks.

“We wanted to give people a chance to celebrate what they’ve learned and what this program has given them,” says Flint Timmins, a second-year MPA student and MPAA member from Alamosa, Colorado. “We thought giving back to the community would be a good way to honor the spirit of the program.”

Timmins, who organized the Provo

and Orem projects, hopes the MPAA will hold more service days in the future based on this year’s success. He and other volunteers say the event went smoothly and many people were able to make a difference through their service.

“I had so much fun visiting with other alumni and current students of the program,” says Mike Johanson, a 2008 EMPA graduate who participated in the Provo

**Service, cont. p. 3**



### CONTENTS

From the Director of Recruiting . . . . .	2
Alumni News:	
Operation Religious Freedom . . . . .	4
Budget to Mars . . . . .	5

Faculty News:	
Ending Poverty, One Study at a Time . . .	6
Larry Walters: Public Service Career . . .	7
American Red Cross CEO Named AOY . . .	8

# From the Director of Recruiting



## EVERY ALUMNUS A RECRUITER

What is our story? Who are we? What do we do? And why do we do it? As we've

contemplated these questions over the last year we have continued to come back to the same answer: you. Our story is your story, and our goal for the upcoming academic year is to tell it better.

To help us with our storytelling, we have hired an amazing and talented individual named Kip Smith to be our branding and marketing manager. Kip graduated from the program in April and is the mastermind behind the beautiful exhibit that now lines our hallways.

Our branding and marketing strategy is to showcase the diverse interests and common goals that bind MPAs together through "I'm an MPA" visuals, commercials, and marketing materials. We have started by taking photos of current students with props that tell their story. We met Cody Hill, beekeeper; Matthew Taylor, cellist; Yvonne Nsabimana, drummer; and Jessica Pino, boxer—to name a few. Plans are in place to capture the faculty and staff in their garb as well. Picture it: Jeff Thompson, actor; David Hart, runner; Eva Witesman, CrossFit athlete; Lori Wadsworth, mother.

Miller, president and CEO of the World Trade Center–Utah. Press packets, posters, and additional promotional videos are also all in the making.

As we look forward to the future, we ask that you join our effort. Tell your story to others. Why did you pursue a BYU MPA? How has it benefited you?

As materials are finalized we will share them with you. Use them and join our storytelling as you find the next individual who belongs in the BYU MPA program.



Cody Hill, MPA 2015

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather Chewning".

Heather Chewning  
Director of Marketing and Recruiting

If you would like to receive the MPA Outreach newsletter electronically, please let us know by emailing us at [mpaalumni@byu.edu](mailto:mpaalumni@byu.edu).

### OUTREACH

Publisher . . . . . Jeff Thompson  
Managing Editor . . . . . Vicki Okerlund  
Editor . . . . . Megan Hendrickson  
Graphic Designer . . . . . Nina Whitehead  
Student Writers . . . . . Angela Marler and Alex Burch

*Published by the George W. Romney Institute of Public Management at  
Brigham Young University. © 2015 by Brigham Young University.*



Jessica Pino, MPA 2015

In addition to the various photo shoots, we are working on a recruiting video that will come out in the fall. It will show prospective students where BYU MPA graduates are now. Alums from various walks of life will be highlighted as they tell their stories. We already have interviews set up with Francine Giani, executive director of the Utah Department of Commerce; Leli Fotu, entrepreneur; Frank Magana, Latinos in Action director of operations; and Derek



### Service, cont. from p. 1

project. “Everyone who participated seemed willing to roll up their sleeves and work.”

In Sacramento, thirty-seven volunteers pulled weeds along a popular bike trail that is being restored following a recent brush fire. Koreen Hansen, a 2002 MPA graduate, organized the project and says people walking on the trail even stopped to help.

“It was very fun and family-oriented,” Hansen says. “It was nice to all come together, see old friends, and perform a service that was needed in our community.”

Romney Institute director Jeff Thompson, who participated in the Orem project, was glad the MPAA students planned the event and that it went so well.

“We wanted to pay homage to the legacy of public service we have inherited, and serving in our communities seemed the best way to get together and to remind us of what we’re about,” he says. “I hoped that it would foster stronger connections among alumni and between alumni and our current students. Overall, the event was a great success.”



David Harris, Ken Driggs, and Kerry Driggs sort beans in Mesa, Arizona.



Alums Melody Stauffer, Brittany Bird, and Vicki Okerlund paint fire hydrants at Nielsen’s Grove Park in Orem, Utah.

### McGovern, cont. from p. 8



Gail McGovern, 2015 administrator of the year.

to turn the organization around through her effective leadership. Innovations introduced while she has been CEO include an overhaul of the Red Cross IT systems and the creation of free apps to help people through emergencies.

Before entering the nonprofit sector, McGovern was a faculty member at Harvard Business School and president of Fidelity Personal Investments. She previously served as executive vice president at AT&T for the consumer markets division. She received a BA from Johns Hopkins University and an MBA from Columbia University.

During her visit, McGovern held a Q&A session with MPA students and was honored at a banquet on campus, where she was presented with the award. At the banquet she addressed MPA students and shared some of the lessons she has learned during her career.

“Since joining the American Red Cross I’ve learned that in the nonprofit world you’ve got to lead through the power of ideas, not through the power of your office, and that has made me a better leader and a more humble person,” McGovern said. “When you see the sorts of disasters that I see, you learn the things that you should truly be thankful for.”

# Alumni News

## OPERATION RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Being a soldier in the armed forces can be physically and emotionally demanding. As an army chaplain, MPA alum Lt. Col. Thomas Helms has been offering soldiers moral support and religious services for nearly two decades.

After joining the National Guard and Army Reserve when he was seventeen years old, Helms was impressed the military let him worship on Sundays. After getting a BA in history from BYU, he was led to the MPA program thanks to his interest in politics and local government. During his studies, Helms decided to focus on a military career.

"It just hit me that being a chaplain would be a fantastic job, so I found out about the additional schooling I needed," Helms says. Chaplains are assigned to each army unit and provide counsel and worship services.

Helms added on some coursework to qualify for chaplaincy and began his career shortly after earning his MPA in 1997.

"A chaplain's responsibility is to make sure the soldiers have the opportunity to worship no matter where they are in the world—on the battlefield or in training—and that everyone has the ability to freely exercise their religion," Helms explains.

Helms's assignments took him many places throughout his career. Assigned to the Eighty Second Airborne Division, Helms was deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq. He

loved the opportunity to minister to soldiers in combat zones. Another notable position was as senior chaplain at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, DC, in 2012. He describes his experience as an incredible honor.

In 2013 Helms joined the Pentagon as a force management officer. "It was interesting to work at the Pentagon because you get the nexus between warfighting, policy, and politics," he says.

He recently started a new chapter of his career as the chaplain of the First Armored Division in Fort Bliss, Texas, where he works with about seventy chaplains and chaplain assistants.

"Tom understands and characterizes what it means to be a leader," says Michael Isom, fellow BYU alum and former coworker at the Pentagon. "He selflessly gives of his time, seeking often for opportunities to lift and sustain others. As one of the senior military chaplains, he continues to serve as an advocate for chaplain and religious liberty issues."

Helms values the training he received in the MPA program and says it taught him how to work well with others. This experience has helped him in the military, where relationships and trust are essential.

"We are involved in the rescue. It's leaving the ninety-nine and spending time with



the soldier who needs help," Helms says. "Whether it's counseling before someone gets married or helping him or her adjust to the military, that's where chaplains do some of their greatest work."

### STUDENTS PAY TRIBUTE TO UNKNOWN SOLDIERS

In front of the white marble sarcophagus, the stoic-looking soldier stepped up to the students and suddenly broke into a wide smile. "Don't worry, just follow me," he said.

Yvonne Nsabimana and Ikaika Kim, both first-year MPA students, reached out to take the wreath he held and carefully placed it on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery.



Nsabimana, who is from Kigali, Rwanda, and Kim, who is from Kapolei, Hawaii, volunteered to participate in the ceremony when their MPA class went to Washington, DC, in November for a career trip.

"When I heard that the MPA students were coming to visit, I wanted them to be able to be a part of this special ceremony of laying a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier," says Chaplain Thomas Helms, who at the time was the Senior Army Chaplain for Arlington National Cemetery. "Arlington is a sacred place. It's where war hits home to America."

Helms arranged for MPA students to participate in the wreath-laying ceremony, which honors soldiers who have died in battle without being identified.

"It was really special to me because I know many people who have died for their country, including my father," says Nsabimana, who lived through a horrific civil war in her homeland. "This is an awesome country where people can have those kinds of ceremonies to remember what has happened in the past."

Kim says the ceremony had extra meaning for him because a few years ago his brother enlisted in the National Guard and completed a tour in Afghanistan.

"It helped me realize the impact that the military has on our lives," he says. "It was a sacred experience to see the way that these unknown soldiers are treated for their sacrifice."



# BUDGET TO MARS

After receiving his undergraduate degree, Robert Carver was planning on working in international relations, but his MPA degree has taken him out of this world.

Carver, who graduated in 1992, has worked at NASA for twenty-three years, helping create and execute budgets for projects such as NASA's work on the International Space Station, the Constellation Project, and NASA's Earth Science mission. Managing million- and billion-dollar budgets for space missions has taken him around the country, and now he is serving at NASA headquarters as the director of the Office of Budget Management and Systems Support (OBMSS) in Washington, DC.

"It's been a great career," he says. "I love NASA's mission. My budgets let the technical folks perform research and develop hardware to move NASA's mission and vision forward."

His current duties include managing budgets for NASA's administrative offices. Although he's not directly working with space projects anymore, he is enjoying the opportunity to improve the organization. He says his experience earning a BYU MPA prepared him for the quantitative and analysis aspects of his job as well as how to effectively communicate in the workplace.

"The core coursework of the program provides an excellent foundation for government service," Carver says. "I still use those skills every day."

He started as director of OBMSS in January, and with this latest job change also came a federal Senior Executive Service designation. The designation refers to the scope of his position and reflects his years of effective leadership and skill in management.

"It's the federal government's most prestigious status for public servants," says Larry Walters, professor of public policy analysis at BYU and one of Carver's mentors while he was in the MPA program. "It's an indication



that he has done very well and is respected by all those he works with."

Carver began working at NASA headquarters as a Presidential Management Intern, now called the Presidential Management Fellowship. After his two-year internship he became permanent program analyst for the Office of Space Flight at NASA headquarters and has since worked at Armstrong Flight Research Center and Johnson Space Center in various positions.

"It's great to see our alums succeed the way Rob has," Walters says. "He's done well, and I'm glad that we could help get him started."

Carver says it has been rewarding to work at an organization that has visible and exciting programs such as the Orion project, which aims to send humans to Mars. For now, he is working behind the scenes to ensure that administration can operate and carry out those missions. He plans on using his new position to do all he can to further each mission NASA takes on.

"It's a wonderful opportunity to develop my skill set and improve," Carver says. "I hope that I can have a positive influence on the organization."

# Faculty News

## ENDING POVERTY, ONE STUDY AT A TIME

From China to Sierra Leone, Ty Turley's research on development economics has taken him around the world. Last semester he braved a different sort of environment in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he joined MIT's prestigious Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) as a visiting scholar.

At J-PAL some of the top development economists in the world are researching how to reduce poverty by ensuring public policy is effective and backed by research. Turley was accepted as a visiting scholar by one of the directors of the center, and he has spent the past six months performing his own research on aspiration failure and aid policies in Ghana and Paraguay.

"It's inspiring to be around so many great development economists," Turley says. "I want to make my research as good as it can be, and it's really great to hear the way the economists at J-PAL ground their research in theory."

Turley's research involves testing economic theories by running large-scale experiments in developing countries. His current project includes a field study with Paraguayan social enterprise Fundación Paraguaya on aspirations failure—the idea that low aspirations lead to lower performance. He will study whether simply setting higher goals will lead to economic improvement.

Other projects involve helping Ghanaian farmers use sustainable farming techniques and seeing whether people who know an aid group is coming to their village will make complimentary investments in preparation.

J-PAL was founded to conduct and share rigorous evaluations of public policy and development methods in order to find real solutions for combating poverty. Esther Duflo, one of the center's founders, has performed research on aspirations failure, and Turley says he has enjoyed the opportunity to hear her feedback on his research.

"She's been very supportive, and she's given me great feedback on the design of the experiment," Turley says. "It's been invaluable to bounce ideas back and forth with her."

Duflo is regarded as one of the best development economists in the world, and she has won numerous prizes for her scholarship. Turley, who is from Mesa, Arizona, says he feels grateful for the chance to be in an environment with leading development professionals.

"Ty's invitation to J-PAL is momentous for him and for our department," says Jeff Thompson, Romney Institute director. "J-PAL is a very prestigious program, and it is a testament to Ty's promise as a scholar that he was invited."



In addition to performing research, Turley attended lectures from visiting economists and students and says he is excited to bring back what he has learned to teach at the Romney Institute. Turley won't finish his research for another couple years, but he will return to BYU this summer.

"The experience has been great," he says. "I feel like my research has become better, and now I know how to better prepare students for working in the development field. It's raised my aspirations too."



# LARRY WALTERS: A CAREER OF PUBLIC SERVICE



Whilst digging graves, installing water lines, and plowing streets as a young city marshal in Ferron, Utah, MPA professor Larry Walters first fell in love with public service. This enthusiasm led him to become a professor of public policy analysis and management, and after thirty years of teaching, Walters is on to his next adventure: retirement.

Although Walters initially planned to continue working for local governments, he became fascinated with doing research about public service while going to school. He graduated from BYU with a bachelor's degree in public policy analysis and management and went on to receive a PhD from the University of Pennsylvania in 1987.

After graduation, Walters returned to BYU and eventually joined the MPA program. After working as assistant and associate professor, he was made director of the program in 1995. Wanting to

help the department's growth, Walters had the idea to approach the Romney family about honoring George W. Romney because of his example of public service and volunteerism. Because of this inspired idea, the MPA program is what it is today.

In addition to founding the Romney Institute, Walters is known for giving more than his share at work. "He was the hardest-working colleague I have ever known," says Gary Cornia, former Marriott School dean. "Many nights he would work late into the evening until a solution was found. He was willing to teach any class and was a colleague you could always count on."

Although Walters has taught nearly all the courses in the MPA program, his favorite subject to teach is analysis. In his twenty-six years at BYU, his goal has been to encourage positive change in the world through his research and teaching.

"What I have been trying to do my whole academic career is help government organizations work better," Walters says. "Public service touches everybody's lives."

Walters has taken this dedication all over the globe, working with the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund in countries like Colombia, Jamaica, Latvia, and Egypt. He has provided training, analytic tools, and policy advice to strengthen governments and tax systems in developing countries.

"Larry has done more to raise the Marriott School's international impact than perhaps any other faculty member," says Jeff Thompson, MPA director. "Few within the walls of the Marriott School are aware of the groundbreaking work Larry has done to promote the cause of international development."

Among his numerous accomplishments, Walters's proudest moments are when former students contact him and tell him about the impact he has made on their lives and careers.

"That is probably the most memorable stuff I've done, and I had no idea I was doing it at the time," Walters says. "I was just trying to help people think better, be better, and serve better."

When asked about what he will do post-retirement, Walters says, "I'm not done." With several projects underway, he plans on continuing to work with international organizations that are focused on improving governments in developing nations.

In addition, Walters hopes to spend some quality time with his wife doing long-distance trekking. The pair has already hiked the Wainwright coast-to-coast walk, a 192-mile trail across England.

"It's been a great ride," Walters says of his thirty years of teaching. "Public service is a fabulous career, because you can go home at night and say, 'These are the people who are better off because of what I did today.'"



*"It isn't a great nation that breeds a great people.  
It is a great people that build a great nation."  
—George W. Romney*

## AMERICAN RED CROSS CEO NAMED 2015 ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR

The Romney Institute of Public Management honored Gail McGovern, president and CEO of the American Red Cross, as its 2015 Administrator of the Year for her leadership of the disaster relief and service organization.

"I've been impressed with Gail's career and all she's been able to do in her life, and I believe that she exemplifies what we stand for at the Romney Institute," says Josh Romney, the Romney Institute Advisory Board member who nominated McGovern for the award.

The award is given annually to outstanding administrators in the public and non-profit sectors who have demonstrated ethical and moral commitment to service. Past recipients include Sheila Bair, former chair of the Federal Deposit Insurance Company and David Walker, former US Comptroller

General. McGovern is the forty-third recipient.

McGovern has led the American Red Cross since 2008, successfully strengthening the organization and instituting new technology to further its lifesaving mission. She says the job has been both intellectually challenging and humbling, and she is grateful to be honored for the work she has done.

"It's amazing to me to be honored this way—both on a personal level and on behalf of the American Red Cross, since the LDS Church is one of our most important partners," McGovern says. "I have also developed a lot of values through my own



Gail McGovern, president and CEO of the American Red Cross.

faith, so I see the link between faith and service."

When she began leading the organization, it was deeply in debt and its hundreds of chapters were operating autonomously. She was able to consolidate the chapters and manage the budget

*McGovern, cont. p. 3*