

Earth Investigators: Understanding our planet  
& its inhabitants with science and art /PG 30

Amazing Alumni: From Congo to Ohio, alumni  
honored for impacts around the world /PG 40

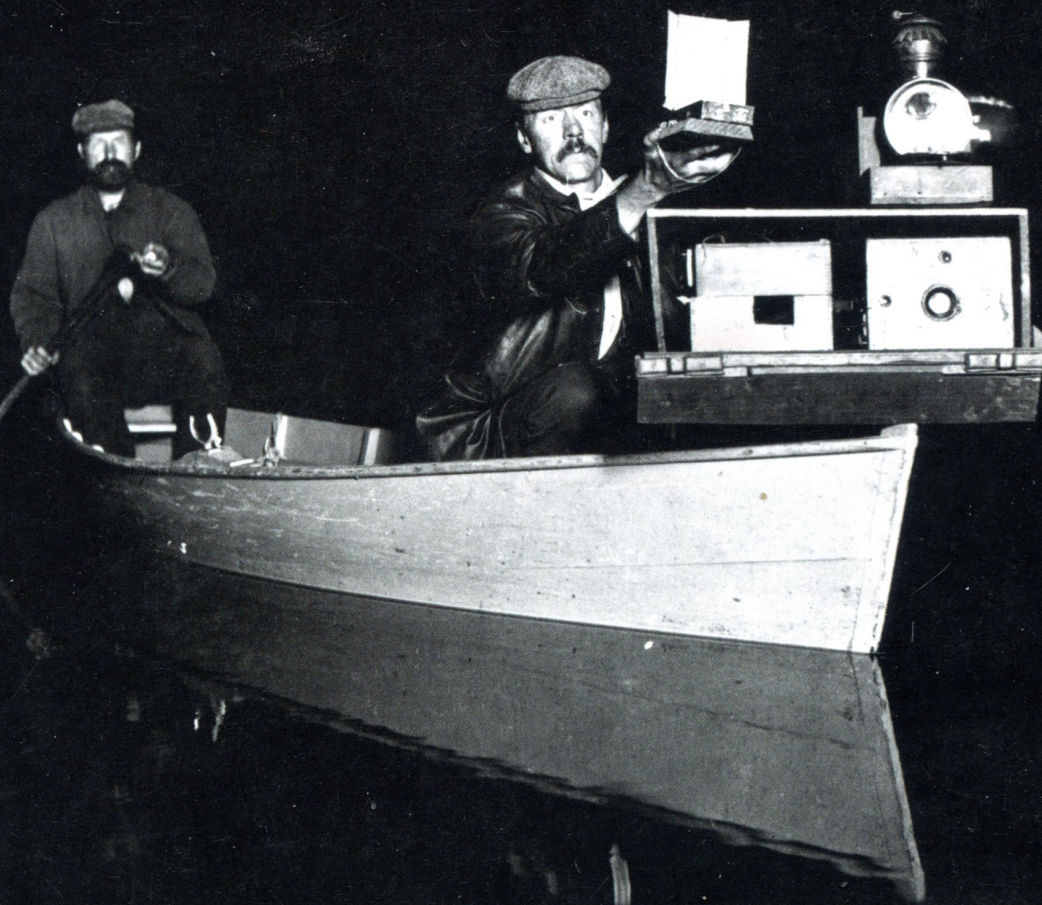
# Northern

MAGAZINE

FOR FRIENDS AND ALUMNI OF NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY FALL/WINTER 2019

## SEARCHING FOR SHIRAS

A professor's quest to shine light on a wildlife pioneer



0-1407 IMAGES



# ALUMNI HONORS

Recognizing the fantastic achievements and contributions of our alumni



## Joseph Evans '80 BS, '82 MA Distinguished Alumni Award

Joseph Evans of Marquette described his journey from "undistinguished freshman" to distinguished alumnus while accepting his award. He has achieved 34 years' success in the

domestic and international defense markets, working with industry and government officials throughout Europe, the Middle East, North Africa and Asia.

Evans is executive vice president and head of strategy for SAAB Technologies Middle East and Africa, headquartered in Washington D.C. and Abu Dhabi. He previously served in two roles with SAAB North America: executive vice president and head of strategy and business development; and vice president of sales and marketing.

"I came from a blue collar family full of love, where both of my parents worked at least one job—most of the time, two—to take care of our family and set enough aside so each of their four boys could get a university degree," Evans said. "They didn't go to college and it was very important to them that we did. But anybody who saw my freshman year at Northern would certainly wonder how I'm speaking here now."

After floundering as a student, Evans said he needed time to grow up and think about whether he was able to live up to the dreams and aspirations his parents had for him. He left school to work at a Detroit auto factory, but soon became disenchanted and returned to Northern ready to commit to his studies. He finished his bachelor's degree in engineering technology in 1981 and added a master's in political science in 1983.

"We all find inspiration at different times and in different places," he said. "It was very important that Northern was there for me when I found mine. Thank you, NMU, for being that someplace special for thousands of students like me over many years; students who needed that special place to fully prepare themselves for the challenges and very interesting and productive lives we all have the potential to live."

With SAAB North America, Evans led the capture of surface-based radar programs with the U.S. Navy littoral combat ship

(LCS) program and the U.S. Army. He was instrumental in the early formation of a strategic partnership with Boeing, which led to a \$9 billion new aircraft development and production program for the U.S. Air Force. He was also responsible for evaluating candidate targets for industrial merger and acquisition initiatives.

Prior to joining SAAB Technologies in 2004, Evans spent 18 years with General Dynamics Corporation. He worked in several areas, including engineering design and development, supply chain management, manufacturing, and strategic planning and international alliances.

Evans' first experience working with Swedish industry and governmental officials began in 1990. He developed a campaign to market major defense articles to the Swedish Army. He also worked as a defense analyst and marketing consultant at the Embassy of Sweden in Washington, D.C.

Evans serves his alma mater as a member of the NMU Foundation Board of Trustees, the College of Business Dean's Advisory Council and the Academic Advisory Board for the Engineering Technology Department. He is a past president of the NMU Alumni Association Board of Directors

In addition to his two NMU degrees, Evans holds a master's in international politics and economics from the University of Detroit and a doctorate in management from the University of Maryland, where he teaches the capstone course in the MBA program.

## Kristine Poole '92 BFA Distinguished Alumni Award

Passion doesn't require a back-up plan or have an expiration date, and it is especially powerful when used in the service of making a difference. Internationally recognized sculpture artist Kristine Poole shared those insights upon receiving her award. She also contributed a piece of work to the campus art museum's permanent collection.

Poole was born into an artistic lineage. Her mother occasionally allowed her to stay home from school so they could draw together. When Poole got to high school, a well-intentioned guidance counselor advised her to have something else to fall back on if she planned to go into the arts. So she said she

enrolled in education courses during her first semester at Northern.



"But back in the Sunset Strip house in Spalding Hall, a roommate was in a class called the Physical Aspects of the Visual Arts," Poole said. "She would come back exasperated with the assignments they were making her do. When she had to design a container

for an egg that they could launch off the Thomas Fine Arts building, I lost my mind. I loved the class and I wasn't even in it.

"I started doing the assignments for myself in my dorm room and that was the first class I enrolled in the next semester. I thought I'd just do this one class to get it out of my system and go back to being responsible. Well, I'm happy to share with you that, nearly three decades later, it is not out of my system. Art is still my passion and it has been an incredible journey."

Poole's work has been featured in several publications, including *The Wall Street Journal*, *The ARC International Salon Catalogue*, *Ceramics Monthly* and *Spectrum 21: The Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art*. It has also been shown in juried and invitational exhibits across the country. She has completed several public art commissions, including sculptures for the Carnegie Library in Howell, Mich.

Based in Santa Fe, N.M., Poole is devoted to championing young artists—something she also did as director of NMU's Student Art Gallery 236. She is responsible for creating the Spectrum Rising Star Award for Fleck Publications. Each year, she juries and presents the award with her husband and fellow artist, Colin Poole. The couple has combined their talents to develop their current style of classically inspired contemporary realism.

Poole also donates her time to give lectures, demonstrations, workshops and panel talks on art and business. In 2015, she was selected to be the featured artist for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northern New Mexico. The sculptures she created for the organization raised more than \$20,000 to help underprivileged children in her area.

Returning to Marquette and NMU is like coming home, Poole said. She and Colin shared a pasty picnic near Lake Superior. They also spent several hours enjoying the water, peace and beauty of Little Presque Isle. "This place is pure magic," she told attendees at the awards brunch. She also shared a memory about preparing for her senior exhibition at Northern.

"I had gone for months with little sleep, I was on intravenous caffeine usage and stressed to the max. On the day before my exhibit opened, my dad showed up at my apartment with a big bouquet of flowers and a little card that said, 'Give it your best shot, babe. It will be more than any prof could ever want.'"

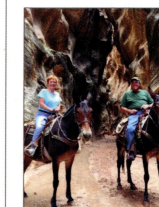
#SHARENMU

And he was right. Many years later, when I had my first solo exhibition in Santa Fe, I was surprised and grateful President Erickson took time to write a personal note congratulating and supporting my efforts in the community. Telling people you're proud of them makes a world of difference."

Another memory involved talking with professor Marvin Zehnder in the NMU "pot shop"—i.e. clay studio. He asked her for some of the seeds from the grapefruit she was eating. Zehnder later brought back a little seedling he had grown from the donation and presented it to her.

**"I feel that's what my time here at Northern did as well," Poole said. "It planted seeds that, throughout my life, have grown to fruition."**

For more on Poole and an online gallery of her work, visit [kristinepoole.com](http://kristinepoole.com)



## Tom Fish '69 BS Alumni Achievement Award

Tom Fish said a realtor once told him "there's a buyer for every house." Those words resonated throughout his personal life and lengthy career working with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

"Those words certainly applied to how I got to NMU because, when I was applying to colleges, there weren't many buyers for this house," he said, pointing to himself. "I wasn't a commodity that a lot of places wanted. Northern was a world apart from the Chicago suburbs, where I grew up, but I immediately felt accepted and valued. There was a genuineness about being here that just took to me right away. This award means everything to me. This place means everything to me. I will continue to love NMU for as long as I live."

While enrolled at NMU, Fish immersed himself in campus activities. He was active in student government, served as a residence hall adviser and was founding president of the NMU chapter of Circle K, an international collegiate organization dedicated to community service and leadership development. He graduated with a degree in elementary education.

"After student teaching in Escanaba in an elementary classroom, I realized I wasn't cut out to be a teacher," he said. "I just couldn't be in the classroom all day. So I went to Boston and got a degree in social work. People said I wasn't suited for it and wouldn't make it. I didn't listen."