

Driving Ms. Lilly: *Grace and Grit*, Indeed!

By Betsy Danforth

“Through the grit and sacrifice of generations, American women and girls have gained greater opportunities and more representation than ever before. Yet they continue to face workplace discrimination, a higher risk of sexual assault, and an earnings gap that will cost the average woman hundreds of thousands of dollars over the course of her working lifetime.

As women fight for their seats at the head of the table, my Administration offers our unwavering support. The first bill I signed as President was the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which made it easier for women to challenge pay discrimination.” President Barack Obama, January, 2014

Having Lilly Ledbetter come to our campus was a dream come true! After hearing her speak on a panel at last year's AAUW National Convention, I came back in August fired up about pay equity and the glaring injustices. Apparently, the planets were aligned: Governor Bullock's Equal Pay for Equal Work Task Force was being formed the exact day we returned to campus, a statewide Pay Equity Summit was in the works, and student leader Lindsay Murdock wanted to sponsor a Start Smart salary negotiation workshop for MSU students.

With the help of every MSU Dean and a variety of departments and organizations, we were able to bring Lilly Ledbetter to MSU. After reading her book, I was even more aware that she is a true warrior. Lilly spent nineteen grueling years working at the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Plant in

Gadsden, Alabama, seven grueling years preparing for her legal case and an appearance before the Supreme Court, and has spent the last seven years travelling to every corner of this country to share her story and fight the good fight for gender pay equity. Her hard work in both endeavors has not come without its price, but Lilly's grace, as well as her grit, has seen her through the toughest of times.

Many folks came out to see An Evening with Lilly Ledbetter, but I had the immense pleasure of being her guide and chauffeur as well. I can honestly say that I truly fell in love with Lilly (she hates to be called Ms. Ledbetter, I quickly discovered); she is first and foremost a vision of grace and beauty. Her deep Alabama accent and enormous smile immediately put me at ease and made me realize that everything would be okay (even if we didn't fill the room with 900 chairs)!

Lilly's often horrifying experiences at Goodyear are presented in her book with minimal pathos, and this is true in her conversation as well. There is not a hint of bitterness, anger, or drama—she states instead that she feels truly blessed to have had the opportunities to travel the country, tell her story, work with her attorneys, write her book, and take her place in history. She was delighted by the recent news that her VERY aptly titled book, *Grace and Grit*, had been translated to Japanese and the government is working to make sure that every Japanese college student has a copy.

In the car, we chatted about everything from shoe shopping to the Supreme Court. She had signed up for three rather taxing events in one day, and she was still

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hanging tough. She spoke at a luncheon in her honor at noon--engaging everyone around her in conversation, gave an evening lecture for 850 people, took questions and answers, and then happily signed copies of her book for every single person who bought one. After all this, she joined President Cruzado, Governor Bullock and his staff, Provost Potvin, the planning committee, and select others for dinner at Plonk. She was still a vision of grace at 11:15 when I dropped her at her hotel.

Lilly Ledbetter has indeed made an enormous mark on American history. She pointed out in her lecture that when she discovered the pay discrimination she had suffered at Goodyear, she was less than two years away from retirement. It would have been the easy choice to keep her mouth shut and work out the rest of her shifts. She revealed feeling confused, embarrassed, and ashamed by the pay discrepancies. But more than anything, she was mad and incensed by the injustice, and luckily, for women workers in generations to come, she decided to do something about it. Her landmark case (she was awarded 3.8 million dollars in federal court and never saw a dime), a Supreme Court decision (the wrong one, very publicly dissented by Justice Ruth Ginsburg), and subsequent signing of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, have all made her a pay equity icon and role model.

I am here to tell you that not one iota of this has gone to her head. Lilly Ledbetter is salt of the earth-- a real lady, a real woman, a real hero, a real kick-butt activist, a real author, a real dynamo, and I can only hope a real long-time friend. When we finally parted ways that night, I teared up a bit, telling her that I would miss her the next morning. It was true.

2014 Student of Achievement Awardees

The Women's Center is proud to highlight thirteen students who have enriched our campus through their hard work, team spirit, community activism, and leadership. We are honored to have an opportunity to recognize each of these students who have contributed much to Montana State University. The following is a very incomplete list of their activities and accomplishments. Thanks to each one of you and the best of luck to you upon graduation!

Kiah Marie Abbey is from Billings, Montana, and will graduate in May with a degree in Political Science and minors in Anthropology, Honors, and Leadership. Kiah has been very active in the MSU community during her college career. She has served as both Student Body Vice President and Student Body President, as President of the Network of Environmental Organizations, and is currently the Program Coordinator for the Diversity Awareness Office and Program Organizer for Forward Montana. Kiah is a contributor to the Undergraduate Pregnancy Policy, and was instrumental in getting the MSU Non-discrimination policy in place. She is founder and President of Sustained Dialogue here on campus, and wants to use her education to change policy in a way that redistributes power to those who have lost theirs to social injustice. She acknowledges her parents as role models who provided her with the trust

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and freedom to explore her identity, and who helped her cultivate her passion for social justice. "It's rare that I meet a peer who was given such unbridled freedom as a child; I think that this unbridled freedom is the foundation for why I am so passionate about social justice and especially social justice via policy."

Madison Cebuhar is from Laurel, Montana and will graduate in May with degrees in both Business Management and Marketing, and minors in Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management. While attending Montana State, Madison has been a member of the MSU Leadership Fellows Program, MSU Leadership Institute, Beta Gamma Sigma Honor Society, and the National Society of Collegiate Scholars. She has volunteered for Service Saturdays through the Office of Activities and Engagement, and served as a Speaker coordinator for the TEDxBozeman program. She has received numerous awards and scholarships during her time at MSU, including the Jake Jabbs Scholarship and a Montana University System Honors Scholarship. With inspiration from the TEDxBozeman series, Madison has found her passion seeking social justice for LGBTQ folks. She plans to use the knowledge gained from her education to develop marketing campaigns geared towards positive social change.

Dominique David-Chavez is from Bozeman, Montana and will graduate in

May with a degree in Earth Sciences and a minor in Native American Studies. Dominique is a member of the Taino Tribal Nation of Boriken and is involved in various MSU programs including American Indian Research Opportunities' STEM Mentoring Program, and as the Student Lead for the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES). She is an active volunteer in numerous community programs including Montana Women Vote and Bozeman Business and Professional Women; is a member of four MSU clubs; and has received fourteen awards and scholarships. Dominique honors her mother for teaching her the importance of diversity full of song, dance, and stories of her culture. She recognizes that her struggle as a first generation college student who had limited emotional and financial support taught her the value of community. These experiences have left Dominique with a passion to help those who, like her, are striving toward academic achievement including graduate school and a profession in education and science.

Sarah Foster is from Boise, Idaho, and will graduate in May with degrees in both Civil Engineering with a Bio-Resources focus, and Earth Sciences with a Snow Mechanics option. Through her work with Engineers without Borders, Sarah was granted the opportunity to travel to Kenya and work on water and sanitation projects. She is also involved with the Society of

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Women Engineers where she has served as treasurer, has participated in the BreaksAway program, and has worked on many Service Saturdays. Through her academic and co-curricular experiences, Sarah has found passion for improving the environment and helping others by sharing the wealth of knowledge gained at Montana State. She intends to harness her passion and one day start her own engineering/water resource company that focuses on community based projects, and hopes to use this company to help those who may not otherwise have received help.

Jordan Kennedy is from Browning, Montana, and will graduate in May with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. Jordan is involved in numerous volunteer opportunities using her engineering education that will benefit her hometown of Browning. She is active in many outreach programs at her old middle school including MSU BRIDGES program science-outreach and the Browning Middle School Outreach-Engaging in Engineering. As a member of the Blackfoot tribe, Jordan feels it is crucial to give back, and has attended various conferences including American Indians into Science and Engineering, and a Leadership Alliance Conference. Jordan was a pow-wow speaker for EMPower/IMSD, and a speaker for the Council of Elders at MSU. She recognizes her work with American Indians in Science and Engineering Society (AISES), and American Indian Research Opportunities (AIRO) as instrumental for her personal support

and motivation. It is her involvement with these organizations and her home town of Browning that have motivated her to work hard. Jordan will pursue a graduate degree in Chemical Engineering at MSU and hopes that this will continue to foster those connections she has made as an undergraduate.

Jacob Losinski is from Idaho Falls, Idaho, and will graduate in May with a degree in Political Science and a minor in Honors. Jacob has been very involved with the MSU Victim Options in a Campus Environment (VOICE) Center during his college career. He has served as the President of Men Stopping Rape, has been a VOICE Center advocate, peer educator, and staff member. Jake has also held leadership positions in his fraternity, Sigma Phi Epsilon, as Vice President and Standards Board member. Last summer, Jake completed an internship with Senator Tester's office in Washington, DC. He has also served as a BreaksAway Service Trip co-leader, an MSU Service Saturday leader, and is a Not in Our House Taskforce member. Jake's studies have helped him discover his interest in government and policy, but his co-curricular activities and engagement are what he credits with helping him settle on a career path-- to become a lobbyist for social justice causes.

Twila Miner is from Chadron, Nebraska, and will graduate in May with a degree in Psychology with an Applied Option, and a minor in Native American

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Studies. Twila is the first in her family to graduate from high school and attend college, though she did not grow up in an environment which recognized the importance of education. However, Twila did recognize this value and the subsequent opportunities which could follow. She is a Family Support Assistant at Youth Dynamics Inc. and a Community Assistant for MSU's Family and Graduate Housing. Twila has received many scholarships including one from her own tribe-- an Oglala Lakota Sioux Higher Education Grant--as well as a Tribal Homeland Scholarship. Once she graduates, Twila plans to continue her education through the accelerated Nursing program at MSU and is applying to the Caring for Your Own Program for Native American students. She wants to continue her career after college to work as an Obstetrics Nurse at an Indian Health Services Hospital. Once she has gained experience there, she intends to obtain certification to become a Nurse Midwife.

Terra Moran is from Calgary, Canada, and will graduate in May with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. She is a NCAA Division 1 Athlete, competing on MSU's alpine ski team. Terra started out at MSU pursuing a degree in architecture, but soon moved on to mechanical engineering when she discovered that engineering knowledge is vital to architectural design. She enjoys being a female in a male dominated field and has become involved in many co-curricular activities

to help other young women interested in this field follow their dreams. She is a member of Society of Women Engineers, has volunteered at the Engineerathon, is a member of American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Engineers, is a student advisor for female engineering freshmen, all in addition to being a member and captain of MSU ski team for four years. She is currently enrolled in an internship with a neuroscience engineering company that creates the tools to solve debilitating diseases like Alzheimer's and epilepsy. She acknowledges strong female role models in her life who helped push her to be her best-- these include her sister who also graduated with a major in Mechanical Engineering, and her mother who pursued twelve years of higher education, received her doctorate, and started her own company.

Lindsay Murdock is from Mt. Airy, Maryland, and will graduate in May with a degree in Sociology with Honors. Lindsay has been very active during her career at Montana State. In her current roles as ASMSU President and Vice President of the Montana Associated Students, Lindsay strives to make changes that will help students reap the greatest benefits from their education. Her academic work and research has focused on finding ways to ensure that women have equal opportunities within the Land Grant System, as well as in other workplaces

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across the state. Lindsay has participated in a wide variety of organizations—she was co-founder and co-chair of the MSU Equal Pay Taskforce; a student participant in Non-Discrimination Policy Expansion; and coordinator, student participant, and facilitator trainee in the \$start\$mart Salary Negotiation Workshop. She was vital in planning the upcoming Lilly Ledbetter lecture and the statewide Equal Pay for Equal Work Summit. Her research on gender equity in higher education administration and her passion for education have informed her pursuit of pay equity justice. After graduation Lindsay plans to continue creating meaningful change for women in the workforce that will “deeply impact people across all walks of life, especially in the state of Montana.”

Mary Peterson is from Missoula, Montana, and will graduate in May with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. Mary has been very passionate about helping others in her community, not only at MSU, but also in her hometown, as well as in the Bozeman community during her college career. She notes that: “I made it my goal to become a mentor and to put my best effort forth to lift others as I rise.” Mary serves as Vice President for the MSU Society of Women Engineers, she is a peer advising coordinator for the College of Engineering, she is on the Women in Engineering student advisory board, and has been active in event coordination and sponsorship in all these organizations. In the larger community,

she has volunteered for the Science Olympiad, at her local food bank, and as a summer counselor in the Flagship Program of Missoula. While balancing school, co-curricular and volunteer activities, she is additionally a member of Tau Beta Pi and Pi Tau Sigma. Mary acknowledges that her elders and peers have helped her with these accomplishments. With the help of Dr. Sarah Codd, and a scholarship and grant, Mary has created a new outreach program designed to help women in engineering succeed.

Hannah Elizabeth Stark is from Detroit, Michigan, and is graduating in May with degrees in both Applied Psychology and Microbiology with a minor in Medical Laboratory Sciences. Hannah was hesitant starting college, but notes that her college career has been unbelievably wonderful and fulfilling. Hannah recognizes her professional and volunteer work with MSU’s VOICE Center as a major factor in her perception of her experience at Montana State. Hannah has worked with the VOICE Center as an advocate, educator, and staff member working with programs such as Students Against Sexual Assault, and the Not In Our House Taskforce-- a campaign designed to educate the university population in primary prevention efforts—a program for which she was a co-founder. She has volunteered as a mentor for Girls for a Change through Thrive, at the Heart of the Valley Animal Shelter, as a facilitator for Children’s Group at Congregational Beth Shalom, and at the

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Gallatin Valley Food Bank. After graduating, Hannah wants to continue working with survivors of interpersonal violence. She has many options ahead of her and wants to either pursue a counseling degree to enable her to offer services to survivors; a nursing degree to become a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner in the Bozeman community; or pursue medical school to fulfill her dream of joining Doctors without Borders.

Tara Swanson is from Seward, Alaska, and will graduate in May with a degree in Social Anthropology and minors in Latin American Studies and Biology. After a bit of time at Montana State, Tara realized that she was pursuing the wrong degree for her interest in working with people, and switched from cell-biology to anthropology. She has been an active volunteer with the Eagle Mount Equestrian Program, is a VOICE Center Advocate, an administrative assistant with BridgerCare, a BreaksAway Phoenix-Refugee Program volunteer, a BYEP Mentor, and a Latino Scholars of Promise FAFSA assistant and translator. With the help of Professor Sanchez and Professor Kevane at MSU, Tara discovered many opportunities and began teaching through a program in the Modern Languages department at Irving Elementary School and has been advocating for federally mandated second language instruction in Bozeman elementary schools. Thanks to all of Tara's hard work and dedication, she

will be travelling to Spain in the next year to teach in public schools through a program within the Spanish government. It is her dream to continue social research while abroad, and to be able to utilize her knowledge to integrate language-immersion programs into the public schools in the U.S.

Zachary Winter is from Great Falls, Montana, and will graduate this May with a degree in Physics with Honors, and a minor in Math. Zach recognizes that physics is a male-dominated field and thus he is passionate about helping to resolve gender discrepancies within physics at MSU and in his eventual career. To aid this dream, Zach has been actively involved with MSU's VOICE Center as a student advocate, peer educator, and event planner. During his time at the VOICE Center, he was a committee member of the Survivor Fund, and an educator for Men Stopping Rape (MSR). Zach created the MSR event Love without Borders this past year, was a webmaster for the Society of Physics Students, and a creator and member of the MSU Grub Club. He acknowledges his active participation in the Jazz Ensemble at MSU as giving him the tools to improvise in music and life—this experience gave him the opportunity to find his own voice and to be comfortable sharing his true self with others. Zach hopes to continue on to graduate school and study the physical effects of nanoparticles in materials and nanodevice engineering.

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Thirty-one Dollars for Thirty-one Years!

The **MSU Women's Center** is celebrating our 31st Anniversary this year! We continue to provide quality **programming** and **resources** for MSU students, faculty, staff, and Bozeman community members. We keep an ear open to contemporary issues and concerns and provided **seminars** that addressed topics such as women's healthcare, engaging women and girls in STEM, the challenges of prosecuting sexual assault cases, eating disorders, and gluten-free living. **New programs also included** \$start \$mart salary Negotiation workshop, screening and discussion of *Killing Us Softly, Part 4*, Latex and Lace Condom Fashion Show, women on the Mexican border, Irula Women of South India, "A Conversation with Ida B. Wells," and an evening with **LILLY LEDBETTER!** We house a lending **library** that contains over 1,000 books and

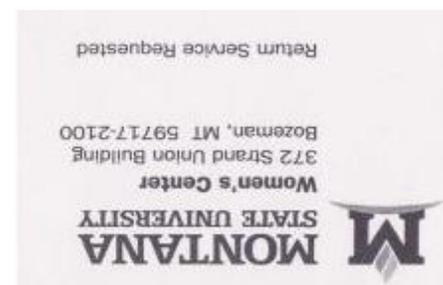
journals and publish a semi-annual **newsletter** featuring student and staff editorials, news items, and more.

With your help we can continue to expand our resources and sponsor more exciting and relevant lectures on campus! Celebrate 31 great years of the MSU Women's Center!

Yes! I'd like to be a part of the \$31 for 31 Years Campaign!

Enclosed is my check made out to the Women's Center.

Your name (and address if you'd like to be added to our mailing list).



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